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FOREIGN RESIDENTS IN WARSAW, 1945–1956¹

Abstract

Although it was not before 1989 that Warsaw gradually became a genuinely multi-ethnic environment, a group of aliens had inhabited the city in 1945–89. Somewhat paradoxically, the Polish capital city's foreigner landscape proved to be the most variegated, diverse and vivid in the first post-war decade. The Russians, Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Italians already residing in Warsaw were joined, as part of post-war voluntary and forced (political-refugee) migration, by nationals of Spain, Greece, Korea, Persia, Yugoslavia, or even Canada. The article shows the ways along which they reached Poland and Warsaw, and the various aspects of everyday life of those aliens: work, assimilation, and political entanglements.

Keywords: Warsaw, foreigners, Stalinism, migration, political refugees

That Warsaw today is populated by foreigners who tend to form their own milieus, publish journals, teach languages, run restaurants, and so on, seems nothing astonishing. We make references to the long tradition of the city's multiethnic and multinational heritage, which was brutally destroyed by WWII. And it was only after 1989 that Poland's capital city slowly regained its multicultural tint, albeit it is much different today compared to that before the war cataclysm. Still, Warsaw was nowise an ethnically homogenous city between 1945 and 1989, as a group of aliens always lived in it, having chosen Warsaw – more or less consciously – as the place to live and, oftentimes, live

¹ This essay has been compiled as part of 'Multinational Warsaw: Foreign Inhabitants of Poland's Capital City, 1945–89', carried out in 2010–12 by History Meeting House (*Dom Spotkań z Historią*), Warsaw and the Institute of History, University of Warsaw. Based on the project, a book has been produced: Jerzy Kochanowski (ed.), *Warszawiacy nie z tej ziemi. Cudzoziemscy mieszkańcy stolicy 1945–1989* (Warsaw, 2013).

and die. This essay focuses on such foreigners who lived in Warsaw for years – rather than on diplomats, tradesmen or journalists who stayed there rather shortly.

Although it is somewhat of a paradox, the ‘foreign’ landscape of Warsaw was the most colourful and diverse during the first post-war decade, the number of aliens permanently residing in the city being probably not much lower than before the war. One could hazard a guess that the conflicts caused by a new post-war division of the world made Warsaw more exotic (though less cosmopolitan) a place. The Russians, Germans, Englishmen, French, or Italians living there earlier were joined by rather considerable groups of Spaniards, Greeks, Koreans, Chinese, Persians, or Yugoslav citizens. The caesuras of the ‘Warsaw under B. Bierut’s rule’ were marked by the end of the war, on the one hand, and the post-Stalinist ‘thaw’, on the other – but there was more to that, as those developments were accompanied by great waves of people’s migration. The Bierut years were not ones of stagnation in this respect, all the same.²

The subject-matter in question implies, however, considerable methodological problems. First of all, the construction of the image of post-war Warsaw had a different foundation than multiethnicity. It was homogeneity that basically acted as the legitimising agent, and corresponded with the propagandist slogan of the time, ‘The Whole Nation Builds Our Capital’. This has translated into a refocused scholarly perception: a painful lack of relevant research has produced a historiographical gap covering the period 1945–89. Characteristically, urban multinationality was more frequently researched for hubs such as Łódź, Gdynia or Żyrardów, to the detriment of Warsaw.³

² As far as the period after 1956 is concerned, see Jerzy Kochanowski, ‘Życiorysy (nie)codzienne. Cudzoziemscy mieszkańcy Warszawy z lat 1945–1989’, in *idem* (ed.), *Warszawiacy nie z tej ziemi*, 11–41. For other relevant essays, see Patryk Pleskot (ed.), *Cudzoziemcy w Warszawie 1945–1989. Studia i materiały* (Warsaw, 2012). For a sociological view on the topic, see Andréa Carvalho and Paolo de Carvalho, *Postawy mieszkańców Warszawy wobec grup etniczno-rasowych* (Warsaw, 1987). For a discussion on the legal situation of aliens in People’s Republic of Poland, see M. Fleming, R. Gomułka, and T. Kłęska, *Cudzoziemcy* (Warsaw, 1973).

³ Iwona Jakimowicz-Ostrowska, *Mniejszości narodowe w Gdyni w latach 1944–2005* (Gdynia, 2008); Leszek Olejnik, ‘Kres autonomii. Rosyjskie stowarzyszenia w Łodzi po II wojnie światowej’, *Kronika miasta Łodzi*, 2 (2006); Andrzej Góralski, *Cudzoziemcy w Żyrardowie na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Żyrardów, 1980). An increased focus on the problem occurred in the recent years, as attested by the

As a matter of fact, in the mid-1950s Warsaw was home to more aliens from capitalist countries than the whole of Voivodeship of Katowice, the area whose industrial development attracted not only Poles after the war. Owing to the Greek refugees settled in Wrocław area, the city and Voivodeship of Wrocław were ranked first as far as the number of foreign settlers was concerned.⁴

The availability of sources is also problematic for the first post-war years. A large number of foreigners settling in Poland at that time – Italians or Frenchmen among them, apart from USSR or Yugoslav citizens – were low-educated people with no high professional aspirations; Warsaw was not really an exception to this rule. Such people rarely generated narrative sources; in fact, the authorities, including security services, were not quite interested in them.⁵ Hence, comers of this sort are only traceable in case they happened to run afoul of law, request Polish citizenship (or annulment of it), or endeavour to leave the country. With an almost complete lack of primary sources for this group (which is comprehensible, for generational reasons), the use of the available official materials limits the research capacity to a mere few issues, such as paths of recruitment or contacts with the authorities. Yet, establishing exact statistics is impossible; similarly, not much can be said of the strategies of finding one's feet in the new environment, contacts and conflicts with the local community, work,

aforesaid books and other publications – e.g., Paweł Średziński and Mamadou Diouf (eds.), *Afryka w Warszawie. Dzieje afrykańskiej diaspory nad Wisłą* (Warsaw, 2010).

⁴ In late 1957 and early 1958, most foreigners from capitalist countries resided in the Voivodeship of Wrocław – 189 (plus 6,704 Greeks, who were found hard to classify), the city of Warsaw – 157, and Voivodeship of Katowice – 136. Łódź, the city and voivodeship, was home to 61 of them, Voivodeship of Gdańsk – 56, Voivodeship of Poznań – 48. Other voivodeships had some 20 to 30 people of foreign descent living in each, those of Kielce, Białystok and Rzeszów having 5, 6, and 7, respectively. Italians were the largest group (309), the Swiss – rather astonishingly – coming second (147), the French third (128); see Warsaw, Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (hereinafter: AIPN), 00231/195, vol. 1, Notatka służbowa dot. obywateli państw kapitalistycznych stale zamieszkałych w PRL [Memo re. capitalist nationals residing on a permanent basis in the People's Republic of Poland], 26 Feb. 1958, p. 252.

⁵ Rather than potential collaborators, the secret services perceived the foreigners – if employed with state institutions, mostly as a “substructure for pursuance of espionage activity on behalf of foreign intelligence services”; cf. AIPN, 01355/188, Informacja o obcokrajowcach z krajów kapitalistycznych [Note on foreigners from capitalist countries], 15 Oct. 1955, p. 1.

assimilation and acculturation (or failure to accomplish the same). Simplifications or generalisations in tackling the phenomenon have been unavoidable. On the other hand, although scarce in number, Warsaw-residing foreigners were so diverse that it is impossible to apply a uniform template for this group.

The legal questions related to nationals of other countries are not quite easy even today. Immediately after the war, they were burdened with the omnipresent chaos, mass migrations, altering frontiers, a rather careless attitude toward nationality and documents confirming it, easy construction of new biographies and destruction or loss of the existing ones. As a result, even the Stalinist authorities admitted that exact count of foreigners was beyond their potential. The reasons were diverse: some foreigners living in Poland (Warsaw) for dozens of years held no citizenship certificate and thus avoided being noticed by the Biuro Rejestracji Cudzoziemców (the Foreigners' Registration Office). In many cases, the countries of their birth had long ago ceased to exist, which did not make the clerks' job any easier; 'stateless person' was the status usually attached to such people. Some were made foreigners by coincidence and without even knowing about it – particularly if coming from one of the ethnically mixed areas which have been relocated to another country resulting from the war. This is illustrated by the case of Michał Kostek, a man whose background was the area of Uzhgorod, in Transcarpathian Ruthenia, which between the two world wars was part of Czechoslovakia. He lived there till 1940, and in 1944 joined the Polish Army. Demobilised in 1946, he requested the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Warsaw

for a permit to leave Poland for Czechoslovakia – he recounted in 1954. What they told me in the Embassy was that it's too late now and there's no return. Then, I decided to stay in Poland. In 1946, I got employed with the Central Committee of PPR [the Polish Workers' Party] as a car driver, and I still do this job, presently with the *Trybuna Mazowiecka* Editorial Office.⁶

Michał Kostek first encountered problems in 1953, the moment personal IDs were first issued. This was an opportunity for him to

⁶ Archiwum Państwowe m.st. Warszawy, Prezydium Rady Narodowej m.st. Warszawy, Kancelaria Tajna (hereinafter: APW, PRNW, KT), vol. 23, Michał Kostek do Prokuratury Generalnej [Michał Kostek to the Public Prosecutor's Office], 10 May 1954, p. 215.

verify his nationality. No ID was eventually granted to him, as he was found not to be a Polish national.

The citizenship held by someone not necessarily reflected one's real nationality or sense of national identity. Many a French, German, or English national, of either sex, inhabiting Warsaw for several dozen years, essentially identified themselves as Poles while still holding a passport from their once-home country. A considerable number of U.S., Canadian or Brazilian nationals dwelling in Poland (and in Warsaw) never visited the countries on the other side of the Pond. Among the 117 aliens "from various capitalist countries" recorded in Warsaw as at the end of 1957, holding no Polish citizenship, Poles who "have obtained the citizenship of another country [usually, through marriage with a foreigner] and have kept it to date" amounted to over a fourth (33, to be specific). "There are such among them who never travelled abroad – to the country they hold the citizenship of."⁷ The case of Czesław Bobrowski's wife Nora Cornelia, who became a French national two years before she came to Poland in 1956, was not an isolated case. Romanian by birth, she lived in Hungary since 1937, had a Hungarian husband, and was member of the Hungarian Communist Party and Hungarian Labour Party in 1946–9. She was posted to Paris in 1948, and once there, refused to come back. Cornelia acquired her French citizenship through naturalisation; once a French national, she got married, in 1956, to a Polish economist.⁸ The comers who, for various reasons, assumed Polish citizenship whilst not identifying themselves as Poles were deleted from the official lists of aliens. This is true especially for the USSR citizens, of whom there were many in the post-war Poland: for a number of them, quick change of citizenship was part of their personal strategy to prevent them from compulsory return to the Soviet Union. It was not infrequent that Russians or Ukrainians (mostly, females) acquired Polish citizenship by marriage, as a matter of course. The Polish-Soviet consular convention of 1958 finally enabled the choice of citizenship.

Neither is our description facilitated by the variety of ways in which foreigners residing in Warsaw in the first post-war decade

⁷ AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 1, Notatka informacyjna [Information note], 3 Jan. 1958, p. 241.

⁸ AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 2, Notatka dot. środowiska obywateli francuskich [Memo re. the French citizens' milieu], 25 May 1963, p. 125.

were recruited. The individual national groups were analysed in 1963: it was identified, for instance, that over a fifth of French people permanently residing in Poland (27 of 138) arrived in the interwar years, 15 during WWII, and 96 after the war – mainly as spouses of Polish nationals repatriated in 1947–8. Of the 306 Italians, less than 50 per cent had dwelled on the Vistula or the Warta before the war; another 62 came in the war years, and 131 after the war ended. Again, “Italian citizens who after the capitulation of Germany entered into marriages with Polish nationals and arrived in Poland, together with their spouses, on a permanent residence basis”, prevailed. Warsaw has attracted a major number of these Frenchmen and Italians (31 and 43 residents, respectively).⁹

It was for the capital city that the highest percentage of Frenchmen and Italians with tertiary or secondary education background was recorded. Characteristically, most of them had dwelled in Warsaw already in the two interwar decades, many of them dealing with teaching languages. English, French or German women caring about home-based education of children, command of languages in the first place, were no rarity in well-off Polish houses. Nothing out of the ordinary was their settling into the families they worked for as well as ‘taking root’ in the city. In most cases, they were solitary women, often unable to find employment in their home country and staying loosely in touch with it. There was quite a number of former alien residents who survived the German occupation of the capital, or returned afterwards. The biography of Adolphine B. (‘Else’) Pfeiffer, a German woman who resided in Warsaw since 1920, is perhaps not fully representative but makes a broader point. For hiding her former Jewish employers, Adolphine was imprisoned between December 1942 and May 1945 at Pawiak, Majdanek, and Ravensbrück. By 2 June 1945, a month after KL Ravensbrück was liberated, she was

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 119, Notatka dot. środowiska obywateli włoskich [Memo re. the Italian citizens’ milieu], 10 Jan. 1963, pp. 160–2. For Poland’s post-war relations with France and Italy (incl. French and Italian nationals residing in Poland), see Dariusz Jarosz and Maria Pasztor, *Robineau, Bassaler i inni. Z dziejów stosunków polsko-francuskich 1948–1953* (Toruń, 2001); *idem*, *Między Paryżem, Warszawą i Moskwą. Stosunki polsko-francuskie w latach 1954–1969* (Toruń, 2003); *idem*, *Stosunki polsko-francuskie 1944–1980* (Warsaw, 2008); *idem*, ‘Władze polskie wobec problemu roszczeń finansowych w stosunkach z Włochami w latach 1945–1956’, *Studia z Historii Społeczno-Gospodarczej XIX i XX wieku*, 11 (2013), 135–45.

back in Warsaw. The decision to come back was obvious for her: “I am not going to Germany”, she wrote in 1946, “as there is no-one close to me there; I would feel alien there, for it’s been twenty-five years of my uninterrupted stay in Warsaw”.¹⁰ Many a foreigner who had earlier settled in Warsaw must have thought similarly, although their returns to the devastated and deserted city were certainly not easy – their former life, milieus, and acquaintances having gone, many never to return. Habit and progressing acculturation undeniably prevailed in them, but a hope that life might go on, roughly, along the grooved track under new political realities ought not to be denied. The names of aliens residing in Warsaw since the early interwar years reappear in the breakdowns until the 1960s. Among them was Thérèse Bellat, a Frenchwoman (since 1920); Englishman August Browne arrived in the Polish capital a year later (he taught languages and was employed with the Polish Ministry of Culture and Arts – surprisingly enough, in the year 1954); Kathleen Mary Smith, who was Irish, moved to Warsaw in 1924 and died there in 1960.¹¹

Typical, in a way, was the biography of a Greek confectioner Alexander Kokkinakis from Chios. He settled in Warsaw in 1921 and until the war worked with various confectionary manufactories as a master halva-maker. In the occupation years, he found employment with ‘Mazur’ chocolate and candy factory at 8 Zygmuntońska St.; after the plant was taken over by the Germans, he run a confectionery at 141 Marszałkowska St. The year of 1945 saw him open a “three-man candy workshop”; in 1948, he started a halva production plant, which was nationalised in June 1950. He never obtained Polish citizenship, for which he applied in 1952; Alexander died on 8 December 1953.¹² Not much is known, for a change, about a Turk who owned a bakery before the war and during, and (surprise!) after the occupation ran an oriental restaurant called ‘Słoń’ (The Elephant) at the corner of Targowa and Białostocka Sts., in the right-bank district of Praga.¹³

¹⁰ Warsaw, Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, ref. no. 5217; Jerzy Kochanowski, ‘(Nie)zwykła Niemka Adolfina Pfeiffer’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31 Dec. 2011–1 Jan. 2012, pp. 44–5; *idem*, ‘Kto pamięta Adolfinę?’, *Stolica*, 3 (2012), 15–17.

¹¹ AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 1, Wykaz cudzoziemców zamieszkałych w Polsce na pobyt stały, styczeń 1954 [List of aliens on permanent residence in Poland, Jan. 1954], pp. 42, 144, 146.

¹² Archiwum Akt Nowych, Kancelaria Rady Państwa, 26/1 [n.p.].

¹³ Wiesław Wiernicki, *To były knajpy* (Warsaw, 2001), 132.

The explosion of public activity, characteristic to the earliest post-war days and months, was a delusory return to the normalcy. Among the (literally) hundreds of societies, associations and other organisations emerging or revived in Warsaw after the liberation, some were associations of aliens. The one of Belgians residing in Warsaw was reinstated very early, in 1945.¹⁴ The Polish-Yugoslav Friendship Society (Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Jugosłowiańskiej, abbr. TPP-J) was formed a year later,¹⁵ and in 1949 the Polish-Hungarian Association (Towarzystwo Polsko-Węgierskie) appeared.¹⁶ While Poles usually presided the like organisations, their members included foreigners settled in Warsaw. Stalinism put an end to those associations, their responsibilities were taken over (based on a Law of 18 July 1950) by the Committee for Cultural International Cooperation (Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą) affiliated to the President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister).¹⁷

Only the Russians have managed to preserve their association throughout the Stalinist period.¹⁸ Symptomatically, the 1945 initia-

¹⁴ APW, Zarząd Miejski, Wydział Społeczno-Polityczny (hereinafter: APW, ZM, WS-P), 110, Kolonia belgijska w Polsce 1945 [The Belgian colony in Poland 1945], pp. 1–4.

¹⁵ On 14 February 1946, a team led by Jan Grubecki, head of the Control Office with the Presidium of the State National Council (KRN) requested the Municipal Board of Warsaw for approval of the TPP-J statute. The President (Mayor) of Warsaw finally granted his approval on 16 May 1946. Ironically enough, the organisation had its registered seat at Al. Stalina 26 (Stalin Avenue), see APW, ZM, WS-P, 489, Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Jugosłowiańskiej, p. 77.

¹⁶ The Chairman of the Association was Jerzy Sztachelski, member of KC PZPR, the Vice-Chairmen being Tadeusz Rek, vice-minister of Justice, and Tadeusz Ćwik, secretary general of the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions (CRZZ). The secretaries were Irena Rozya, an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and Raoul Kamil Porge, a Polish Radio commentator; APW, ZM, WS-P, vol. 460, Towarzystwo Polsko-Węgierskie, pp. 41–7.

¹⁷ *Dziennik Ustaw*, 36 (1950), item 324, ‘Ustawa z dnia 18 lipca 1950 r. o organizacji współpracy kulturalnej z zagranicą’ [Act of 18 July 1950 on organisation of international cultural cooperation].

¹⁸ It was emphasised in the late 1950s and early 1960s that the Russian minority consisted of four basic groups: (i) Old Believers, settled since the 18th century in Mazuria and Suwałki region (cf. Eugeniusz Iwaniec, *Z dziejów staroobrzędowców na ziemiach polskich XVII–XX w.* [Warsaw, 1977]); (ii) former tsarist officials or merchants inhabiting the Polish lands before WWI; (iii) Revolution and civil-war emigrants; lastly, the largest group being (iv) USSR citizens who arrived in Poland

tive of Lodz-based Russians to reinstate the pre-war Russian Charity Society (Rosyjskie Towarzystwo Dobroczyńności) fell through; only the endeavours taken a year later by the Russian community in Warsaw ended in a success. The Society's new byelaws were approved as of 7 December 1946 by decision of the president (mayor) of Warsaw. The organisation managed to take over its predecessor's assets.¹⁹ A plan was made, but never carried out, to liquidate the Society as part of unification of the association movement – the aforesaid Polish-Yugoslav, Polish-Hungarian and other like organisations fell victims to it. How important was those 'Polish' Russians' option (threat, perhaps) to refer the case directly to Moscow, is hard to establish. Whatever the case, the local authorities finally suggested that the Russian Charity Society be transformed into a Russian Cultural and Educational Society (Rosyjskie Towarzystwo Kulturalno-Oświatowe, abbr. RTK-O). The new byelaws were accepted at the constituent meeting of 25 June 1950 and approved by the Warsaw's authority on 22 September 1950.²⁰ The retention, be it in a sort of hibernation, of the organisation's structures as well as the assets has facilitated the Society's bloom, particularly in the economic aspect, in the 'thaw' period after October 1956. The business activities of the RTK-O managerial team became so advanced that both the Supreme Chamber of Control (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli) and the Public Prosecutor's Office soon began examining them with a fine-tooth comb. The abuses detected appeared so gross that any other organisation would have been immediately dissolved. RTK-O, however, inspired by a tacit suggestion from the authorities, made another about-turn, getting converted, in May 1961, into a Cultural Association 'Zvenya'; renamed

during and after the war. Characteristically – and thoroughly understandably – that it was the latter group that was found “usually not to reveal their Russian descent”; AIPN, MSW II 1585/6831, p. 41. An example of an individual who has survived through all the historical turmoils of the former half of the 20th century was a certain Luba Chernishenko: born 1888 in Moscow, she lived in Warsaw since 1914 but it was only in 1969 that she took efforts to receive Polish citizenship; APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 62, p. 52.

¹⁹ Olejnik, 'Kres autonomii'; *idem*, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960* (Lodz, 2003), 530–4.

²⁰ AIPN, MSW II 1585/6831, Sprawozdanie z kontroli Zarządu Głównego RTK-O w Warszawie [Report on the control of the Central Board of RTK-O in Warsaw], 28 Sept. to 12 Oct. 1959, p. 11; *Monitor Polski*, B-49 (11 Oct. 1950).

a year later as the Russian Cultural Society (Rosyjskie Towarzystwo Kulturalne), the organisation ceased to exist in 1974.²¹

Back with the roads that led foreigners to post-war Poland (and Warsaw): it is quite obvious that not all pre-war alien residents of Poland's capital who had survived the war returned afterwards. As there were more aliens inflowing during the war and, especially, after its conclusion, their overall number probably remained similar. Not only Polish people were scattered all around the world resulting from the war: the lives of the French, Italians, the nationals of the USSR, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia were stirred considerably, some of those people straying down winding paths into Poland.

Clearly standing out in the sources are the comers from the West and South, although they were much lesser in number than the citizens (especially, female citizens) of the Soviet Union settled in Poland and Warsaw. What, among other things, made them graspable because when moving to their Polish wives or cohabit ees, the Italians, Frenchmen or Yugoslavs did not (at least, not immediately) assume Polish citizenship, in principle. On the other hand, most of the USSR nationals settling in Poland after WWII were women – those who had until recently been coerced labourers and met a Polish partner while in Germany and, likewise, female partners of Polish repatriates from the USSR. As for the former group, a typical example was the biography of Lena Czasowska, a Russian woman who was deported during the war to Magdeburg; as a worker at the local Krupp factory, she met a Pole, Mieczysław Włodakow, with whom (and with their two children) she arrived in Warsaw in 1946. There, she got employed for years later as a tram ticket inspector.²² While former female forced labourers came largely from the occupied areas, the previous abodes of the women accompanying the repatriates from the Soviet Union precisely reflected the geography of wartime deportations of Polish people. Along with Russians and Ukrainian women, there were Georgian or Buryat females, plus one “Soviet citizen of Korean nationality”. However, regardless of the background, they would acquire Polish citizenship on marrying a Pole – not even being aware of this fact. This was fostered by simplified procedures; in Warsaw, the body called

²¹ AIPN, MSW II 1585/6831, p. 107. Olejnik, ‘Kres autonomii’; *idem*, *Polityka narodowościowa*, 538.

²² APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 28, p. 48.

Presidium of the [municipal] National Council could directly grant the citizenship, also the 8 January 1951 Law had an immediate effect in this respect.²³ Some of those women learned of their altered nationality when personal IDs became issued in the early 1950s. This, in some cases, led to desperate attempts at regaining Soviet citizenship – as in broken-down marriages or some other crossroads situation.²⁴

While women prevailed among the comers from the East, men were migrants from the West and South, in most cases. Italians, Frenchmen or Yugoslav nationals prevailed among those who arrived as POWs or forced labourers in Poland or Germany, where they met their Polish partners. Many of them would join the Polish resistance movement.²⁵ For them, the decision to remain in Poland was rather easy as immediately after the war the living standard was not much different there – or even higher indeed – than in the south of Italy or in Serbia. “The will to remain in Poland is conditioned with the majority [of them] by marriages with women being Polish citizens and the possibility to earn a good living”²⁶ – this opinion refers to Yugoslavs but proves representative also for Italian or French people.

²³ A considerable number of decisions made by Warsaw’s National Council Presidium was about legalising and ‘improving on’ the vestiges or ambiguities inherited from the pre-war period; APW, ZM, WS-P, vol. 21, *Nadania obywatelstwa przez PRN m.st. Warszawy* [Citizenships granted by the Presidium of the National Council of the Capital City of Warsaw], 1947–50, pp. 2–6.

²⁴ One example being Lena Czasowska, whose husband died in 1952, another one was Nina Szul, deserted by her Polish husband in 1954; APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 27, pp. 110–11; vol. 28, p. 44. Olga Tyłkina, then eighteen years old, wrote in March 1955 to the Council of State: “In 1946, aged nine, I arrived together with my mother, the citizen Raisa Blank, who had married a Polish national, from the Soviet Union to Poland, thus immediately losing my Soviet citizenship. Now that I have come of age, I can make decisions regarding my life (I turned eighteen as of 1.2.[19]55), and thus with all my heart I seek to be a citizen of the Soviet Union, for which my father had laid down his life. I therefore hereby request your consent for restoration of my lost Soviet citizenship, which would enable me to return to my homeland – the Soviet Union.”; *ibidem*, vol. 26, p. 141.

²⁵ For more on foreigners in the Polish Underground, see Stanisław Okęcki, *Cudzoziemcy w polskim ruchu oporu 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1975).

²⁶ AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 1, p. 139; Yugoslav nationals differed from the dispersed Italians or French people that they formed “considerable clusters, grouped mostly in the voivodeships of: Wrocław, Zielona Góra, Gdańsk, Koszalin, Szczecin, Poznań, Stalinogród [formerly and afterwards, Katowice] and Cracow as well as the Capital City of Warsaw”.

Contrary to the aliens settled in Poland (Warsaw) already between the world wars, simple people, without a refined education or aspirations, tended to prevail among the post-war migrants. Two biographies, one of an Italian and the other one of a Serb, are certainly representative for a major part of this group. Mario Graziani, born 1921 in Rome into a working-class family (himself a worker at a Pirelli tyre factory), mobilised in 1940, fought in Albania and after the upheaval of September 1943 was taken captive by the Germans. He was initially placed in a camp in Toruń; then, in mid-1944, in Cieszyn, and finally, in Trinec, where he encountered the liberation. After the war, he worked at the 'Katarzyna' Steelworks in Sosnowiec. Having met a Polish woman, he arrived in June 1945 in Warsaw, where he initially did casual jobs and in 1947 got employed with the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society (Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej). He became Polish citizen in 1957.²⁷ Drogomir Nikolić, a Serb from Belgrade, was put, after the seizure of Yugoslavia in 1941, in the Sandbostel camp, where he spent six months, and worked afterwards as a farm labourer. As he wrote in 1954:

And I met a Polish woman there, whom I got married to in 1945, being together with Poles till 1946, I returned in that year with my wife and many a Pole to Poland, to Szczecin, living there for a whole year. When my wife found her family, we came to Warsaw in 1947, and there I have been working till present. I have grown to love this country and its people, and wish with all my heart to stay in Poland.²⁸

The men who have settled after the war in Poland enjoyed much a better position than their female peers, even if the latter had come from the West. As for females, they usually adopted their husband's citizenship, with all its consequences – especially if their social position used to be low in their native country. In case their marriage got disintegrated, they would face a tough situation as they could not return straight away. The fate of Odette Jabłońska, a French woman who got married to a Pole in 1946 and arrived with him and with their daughter in Warsaw a year later, and finally altered her citizenship 1952, was not as isolated case. As she complained (in 1955):

²⁷ APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 24.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. 28, Prośba Drogomira Nikolica o przyznanie obywatelstwa polskiego [Request from Mr. Drogomir Nikolic for granting of Polish citizenship], 21 Oct. 1954, pp. 20–4.

My married life with my husband was very hard: my husband was getting drunk, beating me and the children, giving no livelihood, so I decided to conduct the divorce case.²⁹

She obtained her divorce in 1955, but remained virtually destitute. She sought refuge in returning to France, but this option implied a time-consuming bureaucratic procedure.³⁰

The wartime and post-war comers not infrequently wound their ways to Poland tortuously, ignoring the set patterns. Spaniard Mariano Sanchez, a veteran in the 1936–9 civil war, interned in France afterwards, was a case in point. Conscripted to the French army in 1940, he was taken prisoner by the Germans and in August 1940 penetrated to Vichy. Employed with the local BMW agency, he was delegated in November 1942 to Warsaw where he worked in Luftwaffe car service stations, among others.

At that time ... Sanchez received passes from the Germans and used them a few times to go out to Paris with ... And there ... he would buy various haberdashery materials, to sell them, afterwards, within the area of Warsaw. August 1943 saw the aforesaid [Mr. Sanchez] enter into marriage with Halina Szafarz and cease working with the Luftwaffe service stations; this was the reason why the occupational authorities told him to leave for France; however, the aforesaid stayed in Poland, and received from the Francoist consulate a permit for continued stay in Poland. It has been found in [corr., with regard to] the Warsaw Uprising that he joined an AL [People's Army] troop; but disappeared from it after some time.³¹

Taken in mid-September 1944 by the Gestapo, together with some other Spaniards, he was transported to Włochy outside Warsaw and

²⁹ APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 30, Odette Jabłońska do Prezydium DRN Warszawa-Śródmieście [O. Jabłońska to the Presidium of Warsaw-Śródmieście District National Council], 12 Oct. 1955, pp. 53–4v.

³⁰ Leaving Poland was much easier for men, most of whom had retained the citizenship of their previous country of abode. The decision to leave was furthermore facilitated as there existed an option for the father to choose his child's citizenship. For instance, the Italian Pasquale Petti, who lived together with his Polish wife in the Warsaw district of Praga, made (as they emphasised) a joint decision to choose Italian citizenship for their daughter, born in 1954; APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 26, pp. 23, 26.

³¹ AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 1, Informacja na temat Mariana Sancheza [Information on Mr. Mariano Sanchez], 3 June 1955, pp. 63–4.

released there. He soon afterwards reached the Spanish Consul residing in Częstochowa, and used his help to go to Czechoslovakia and then, via Switzerland, to France. In August 1947, in Italy then, he entered into contact with the Polish Consulate which permitted him to go to Warsaw where he was appointed manager of a car plant.

He is arrested in July 1950 ... for suspected participation in an illegal organisation, and thereafter sentenced to thirty months in prison for giving false details in his pers[onal] file. He leaves the prison on 24 January 1951 and goes to his mother-in-law in Lodz. He presently stays in Warsaw. The wife of the aforementioned, who was also implicated in assisting the illegal organisation, has erroneously been listed by the Public Prosecutor's Office as a German war criminal and deported to West Germany where she has remained to date, staying in touch with her husband. There is a series of unclear moments in the case of the aforementioned, such as, for instance, his participation in the fighting as part of the Republican troops and his membership with the Communist Party of Spain – as evidenced by the fact that he proves unable to specify the name of any comrade from that time. There is, therefore, a reasonable suspicion that the aforementioned could even have fought together with the fascists. It moreover seems awkward that he stays permanently in touch with the Francoist authorities, which gives rise to a presumption that the aforementioned might have been taken advantage of by them.³²

While Polish women brought with them their French, Italian or Yugoslav husbands, the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West or civilian émigrés would be accompanied by British, French or Italian women. Wives were also 'provided' by foreign institutions operating in Poland, one example being the UNRRA.³³ Owing to these women's background as well as their husbands, most of whom had served with the Polish Armed Forces or (if met within Poland) the Home Army, they became the focus of the security authorities, with varied result. The feature film *Kuchnia polska* [The Polish cuisine] directed by Jacek Bromski shows a tragic history of Margaret Szymanko (played by Krystyna Janda) who engaged in a relationship with a Polish airman, which cost her life. While not all such (real-life) cases were equally sad, some could certainly be a point of departure

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ For a literary description of such contacts see Alceo Valcini, *Ballo all' hotel Polonia* (Il fermatempo, 2, Brescia, 1979); I have used the Polish edn., *Bal w hotelu "Polonia"*, trans. Anna B. Dutka (Warsaw, 1983), 79–81, 84–5.

for a melodrama or spy movie. One case in point is Stella Traynor-Morawska, an Englishwoman who worked in Warsaw since January 1946, first with the UNRRA and then in the British Embassy. In October 1947, she got married in church (which was to appear of relevance later on) to Witold Morawski, former Home Army officer, member of the legendary 'Zośka' battalion in the Warsaw Uprising. On 13 January 1949, on the tenth day after the birth of his daughter, Witold Morawski was arrested and finally sentenced, resulting from the so-called 'Radosław' and 'Zośka' case trial, to twelve years in prison. When imprisoned, he began suffering of schizophrenia and was released in 1955.³⁴

The fact that Witold and Stella were only married by church, such marriage being formally invalid (as from 1946, only civil wedding ceremonies had been legally valid), weakened the English woman's position, but was of advantage to the Security Office, which appeared to have a plan with respect to her. Endangered with expulsion from Poland, Stella signed in June 1949 a consent for collaboration, and based on that supplied information on the British Embassy, among other things.³⁵ She would not conceal that she did that in order to rescue her husband and to be able to stay in Warsaw herself. It was noticed, however, that "in the course of this cooperation, she has not been sincere and did not give the entire information she had been acquainted with".³⁶ When the Department I of the Ministry of Public Security resolved to have her expelled from Poland, she in parallel signed a document whereby she broke off her contacts there and was instructed to collect information on the Polish diaspora in Britain. This might have been a way for her to preserve her contacts with

³⁴ AIPN, 1218/22341, p. 46.

³⁵ AIPN, 00945/1592, p. 87.

³⁶ *Ibidem*. On the other side, aliens had a potential to defend themselves against attempts at being recruited. Two Frenchwomen, Cecilia Breton and her daughter Sophie, living in Mińsk Mazowiecki ("in very tough conditions", as was emphasised), proved that it was true. The younger woman "was being prepared for the recruitment by the former Dept. I of this Office, to no avail, however, as following the several meetings an Office employee had had with her, the aforementioned realised what it was that she would be used for and told everything to the French Consul. This being the case, the recruitment option had to be quitted." See AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 1, Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Warszawie do Komitetu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego [Provincial Office for Public Security of Warsaw to the Public Security Committee], 7 Oct. 1955, pp. 159–60.

Poland, and to increase her chance to return there someday, as she was told to supply the materials thus obtained on her next visit to Poland. Stella left, together with her daughter, on 31 October 1949. Whether she has met her obligation is not known; in any case, she was back in Poland in March 1957.³⁷

While Stella Traynor-Morawska (along with, probably, a number of other aliens) was chased away from 'Bierut's' Warsaw by the political circumstances, many others were attracted to the city – some staying there for a while, longer or shorter, more or less forcefully. Germans were definitely ones of those who arrived there involuntarily, willing to leave possibly soon. Adolphine Pfeiffer, who was mentioned before, was probably an exception to the rule, as she returned to Warsaw after the war of her own free will. Incidentally, she evaded the attention of the secret services until the early 1960s as she held no identity documents. Those pre-war Reich's citizens who during or after the war found themselves in the Polish lands and for a variety of reasons (work, imprisonment, chance, etc.) remained non-displaced till 1950, had no chance to pass unnoticed. Early in 1954 Warsaw still had twenty-six Germans registered, whose exit was conditioned upon a special agreement with either of the two Germanys. There were no more camps for Germans existing then in the city; those people had to seek employment and abode on their own: eleven Germans were employed with state-owned collective farms (mainly, Mysiadło), others (chiefly, women) working "as home helps, or remaining in common-law marriages as their husbands' dependants". Herbert Bachor was, as of 1954, a blue-collar worker with 'Rekord' Unloading Work Cooperative. In 1947, he escaped from captivity in the USSR and was caught at the border of Poland and the Soviet occupational zone of Germany. The 'repatriation' of former POWs from Poland came to an end before he terminated his three-year sentence; Herbert decided to stay in Warsaw and wait till more favourable times come about. So did car assembler Edmund Linke, residing, in mid-1953, in Kapitulna St.,

³⁷ After her return, Stella was employed (to 1959) with the Embassies of Britain, Canada and the U.S. and afterwards as a teacher of English, including in 'Lingwista' Cooperative and secondary school. She left Poland again in 1966, and was listed in the following year as an undesirable person in the People's Republic of Poland; this ban was withdrawn in February 1989, AIPN, 1218/22341, p. 46; *ibidem*, 00945/1592, p. 327; *ibidem*, 1218/2234, pp. 9–9v.

or Else Berger, a hairdresser settled in Targówek quarter.³⁸ All of them waited till they could leave for the West (9 to West Germany and 17 to the GDR); yet, reverse transfers were sometimes the case even in the early 1950s. Christine Knedler moved in 1953 from East Germany to her daughter's Warsaw abode: she "has willingly come to Poland, feels very good here, and is glad of the conditions she presently has".³⁹

It is hard to say whether it was Mrs. Knedler that was the only German featured in an October 1955 breakdown of 659 aliens with permanent residence registered for Warsaw. That the Germans in post-war Warsaw were at the bottom of the list of foreign dwellers comes as no surprise – as opposed, in any case, to the opening items: the Spanish and Koreans formed the largest groups of all (101 and 96, respectively). There were 69 officially listed Soviet nationals (in reality, they formed the largest group), and almost as many Greeks (68). These were followed by Italians (57), the Chinese (52), Yugoslav and Czechoslovak nationals (36 each), the French (34), Albanians (22), the Swiss and the Persians (13 each), Hungarians (10), U.S. and Canadian citizens (9 each), Britons (8), Romanians (6), Swedes, Bulgarians, and the stateless (4 each), and Belgians (2). Then came one each for Austrians, Germans, Iraqis, Brazilians, Portuguese, and Vietnamese.⁴⁰

This proportion, rather astonishing as it appears, was prevalently informed by the international political developments. In the early days of September 1950, the French authorities expelled from the continental France a group of Spanish veterans of the Civil War and resettled them temporarily in Corsica and North Africa. This gave the Soviet Union an opportunity to launch a loud propaganda action. On 20 September 1950, Dolores Ibárruri summoned the Presidents

³⁸ APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 21, Lista Niemców ubiegających się o wyjazd do NRD [List of Germans requesting relocation to the GDR], Aug. 1953, p. 14.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, vol. 24, Informacja o Niemcach zamieszkałych na terenie m.st. Warszawy [Information on Germans inhabiting the Capital City of Warsaw area], 11 Jan. 1954, pp. 30, 134.

⁴⁰ AIPN, BU, 00231/195, vol. 1, Wykaz obcokrajowców zamieszkałych w Warszawie na stałym pobycie [Breakdown of aliens with permanent residency living in Warsaw], 4 Oct. 1955, p. 156. Warsaw Voivodeship apparently had 446 foreigners 'with permanent residency', incl. 420 from socialist countries (384 from USSR) and 26 from capitalist countries (11 from France alone); *ibidem*, Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Warszawie do Komitetu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, 7 Oct. 1955, p. 159.

of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to offer political asylum to the deported communists – a proposal they could not refuse. Diplomatic and logistic preparations went on in Poland for over six months, and it was only in June and July 1951 that Polish vessels brought the first group of 113 Spaniards to Gdynia. By November 1951, more than 200 Spanish refugees reached Poland altogether, half of whom were settled in Warsaw and the others in Upper Silesia as well as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Most of those new residents of Warsaw were offered dwellings in the then-recently completed Praga II housing estate and got employed with the Passenger Automobile Factory [FSO] in the district of Żerań. Those envisioned to join the Polish Radio staff were assigned apartments in the area on the left bank of the Vistula.⁴¹

Persians, some of whom settled in Poland after Muhammad Mosaddegh was overthrown in August 1953, formed another group of political refugees; Greeks formed yet another, and quite considerable, such community. The Greeks and Macedonians, a dozen-or-so thousand of whom arrived to Poland after the civil war came to an end,⁴² were initially to be settled not in Warsaw. In late 1949, most of the refugees were concentrated in Zgorzelec, but it soon turned over that there are no jobs available for them in that frontier locality, while the army needed to take over the buildings they occupied. Once the settlement potential of Lower Silesia area was exhausted, the Greek and Macedonian people were (re)located elsewhere within Poland, some 200 of them moving to Warsaw. Regardless of the administration orders, the Greeks were pushed toward urban hubs, Warsaw among them, as they sought education and job opportunities.⁴³ Education was probably the reason why the Koreans were ranked so high: it is possible that the group of Korean children placed in the years 1951–9

⁴¹ Justyna Soliwoda, 'Uchodźcy hiszpańscy w Polsce 1951–1969', Warsaw, 2013 (MA thesis compiled, under the tutelage of the undersigned, at the Institute of History, University of Warsaw).

⁴² The refugee statistics vary by author: while M. Wojecki gives the estimate of 13,384, K. Pudło has 14,525, see Mieczysław Wojecki, *Uchodźczy polityczni z Grecji w Polsce 1948–1975* (Jelenia Góra, 1989), 24; Kazimierz Pudło, 'Grecy i Macedończycy w Polsce 1948–1993. Migracja, przemiany i zanikanie grupy', *Sprawy Narodowościowe. Seria Nowa*, iv, 1 (1995), 135.

⁴³ Wojecki, *Uchodźcy*, 51–3. As of 1973, Warsaw – the city and voivodeship – was still home to a total of 220 former refugees; *ibidem*, 56.

at the special-purpose education centre in Świder near Warsaw were classified as 'permanently resident' aliens.⁴⁴

Some of the registered Yugoslavs and (surprise!) Canadians should also be ranked among political refugees. Among the 36 Yugoslav people were former coerced labourers and POWs (Drogomir Nikolić being one of them) along with students and grant beneficiaries who had arrived in Warsaw in the period of good relationship with Belgrade and remained there when the relationship worsened. To obtain asylum in Poland in late 1948 or early 1949, the applicant's declaration that s/he disagreed with Tito's policies sufficed; however, this usually implied a tribute one had to pay.⁴⁵ Some asylum seekers, such as the Bosnian Alija Dukanović, Macedonian Dimitar Atanasov or Montenegrin Stefan Živanović, joined anti-Tito actions out of their political conviction and also because they realised that such was the condition for those who were willing to complete their studies commenced in Poland or provide for their families set up there.⁴⁶ The only 'independent Yugoslav' residing in Warsaw in the late 1940s and

⁴⁴ Ewa Willaume-Pielka, 'Koreańscy w Świdrze', <<http://www.michalin.pl/swider/?modul=niusy&id=80>> [Accessed, March 20, 2012]; Jacek Kałuszko, 'Z Korei na otwockie wydmy', *Linia Otwocka* (19 March 2004); Marian Brandys, *Koreańscy z Gołotczyzn* (Warsaw, 1954).

⁴⁵ E.g., one of the basic tasks of the Polish-Yugoslavian Friendship Society was, as of 1950, "cooperation with the group of Yugoslav political immigrants in Poland". The articles translated (probably, with their help) from "the emigrant Yugoslav press", spoke for themselves – just to quote some titles in English trans.: 'Yugoslav nations fighting amidst Titoists' bestial terror'; 'Titoists' violently size rye from small- and medium-holder farmers, with the help of *kulaks*'; 'Titoists, the imperialists' garbage collectors'; APW, ZM, WS-P, 489, Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Jugosłowiańskiej, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Alija Dukanović got involved in the communist movement in 1940, when he was only fourteen. Since October 1947, he held a Polish Government scholarship and studied at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and then at the University of Warsaw (Polish Studies faculty). In as early as 1948 he joined a 'campaign against the leaders of the CP of Yugoslavia'; the Polish Radio's Yugoslavian Editorial Board was one of his employers. A man of a similar background and political experience, Dimitar Atanasov arrived in Poland in December 1947 and obtained political asylum in the following year. In 1949–53, he studied architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology and worked, in parallel, for the Polish Radio. Thanks to the asylum received in 1948, Stefan Živanović also completed his technology studies in Warsaw. Dukanović and Živanović started their families in Poland while in the college, see APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 53, pp. 182–3; vol. 59, pp. 61–3.

early 1950s who refused to accept collaboration or asylum was Branko Cirlić, journalist, historian and linguist. Such attitude caused, however, that he lived under permanent threat and regular surveillance.⁴⁷

Article 75 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland of 1952 provided that

The People's Republic of Poland shall grant asylum to citizens of foreign countries who have suffered persecution for their defence of the interests of working masses, struggling for social progress, acting in defence of peace, national liberation combat or scientific activities.

Asylums were granted all the more willingly that they could be discounted by the authorities. The largest rate of propagandist return indisputably occurred not so much with Yugoslavs or Persians but rather, Britons, Americans or Canadians, particularly if in their own countries they had used to occupy adequately prominent positions. It is hard to specifically define how many citizens of countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain, of those aforementioned 1955 break-down, were granted political asylum in Poland. The Canadian couple Grace and David Shugar was certainly a case in point. Both were left-inclined intellectuals, of the sort of those who indeed often found it hard to find a place for themselves in the West. David Shugar (who was born 1915 in the Polish town of Opatów and moved to Canada in 1919), a biology professor, with considerable achievements in this field to his credit, worked in 1948–51 in France and subsequently in Belgium. How the Polish authorities established contact with him is not known; in any case, he arrived in Poland, together with his wife, in early 1952,

as a guest of the KC PZPR [Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party], and assumed a job in the State Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw. Shugar said that he had left Canada, France and Belgium owing to political difficulties. He arrived in Poland, first of all, as he hoped to go on with his scientific work in conditions free of political difficulties, which are otherwise continually encountered in the countries specified above. Secondly, he intends to contribute, to the extent possible, to the development of Polish scientific research.

⁴⁷ Archiwum Historii Mówionej, Dom Spotkań z Historią w Warszawie, Relacja Branko Cirlicia [Branko Cirlić's account], 2010.

And indeed, he was offered a liberty Polish researchers could only dream of (including problem-free trips abroad). His wife took her place in Polish society, too. Like some other intellectual refugees, she was initially employed in Polish Radio's foreign programme editorial team, taught languages since 1957, and later on (from 1962 on) pursued a scholarly career with the University of Warsaw, crowned with a professorship she was promoted to in 1987.⁴⁸

The 1955 breakdown does not mention George Chandos Bidwell, probably the most important foreigner who 'chose Poland' at the end of 1940s and the beginning of 1950s, and became Polish citizen in 1949. Bidwell deserves a separate comprehensive study; let us just outline his peculiar story. Born 1905, G.C. Bidwell lived a stable life as a journalist and bank official before WWII. He volunteered to join the army in 1939 and then, as a captain, was delegated in 1943 for a post with the British Council. Appointed Director of BC's Polish Branch, he appeared in 1946 in Warsaw, instantly becoming a focus of the Ministry of Public Security. The 'stalking' applied to him was a rather standard procedure, while the outcome proved untypical. The meticulously prepared action culminated in the Englishman's request for political asylum and Polish citizenship, which he was immediately granted!⁴⁹ The step he made was grounded in George's personal considerations and genuine pacifistic views.⁵⁰ On the one hand, he was a propagandist gift for the Polish authorities, and this aspect was ruthlessly exploited. On the other, his intentions were mistrusted, and his desperate step was believed to have been made "on command of the English intelligence; thus he became its resident pursuing espionage activities".⁵¹ The observation carried out within the operational case codenamed 'Ramzes', which showed no connection between the new

⁴⁸ AIPN, 1281/29289, Dokumenty paszportowe Grace Shugar [Grace Shugar's passport documents]; AIPN, 00231/195, vol. 2, Naczelnik Wydz. II Dep. II MSW, Raport o obywatelach brytyjskich, kanadyjskich i australijskich w Polsce [Head of Section II, Dept. II of the Ministry of Interior, Report on British, Canadian and Australian citizens in Poland], 17 July 1964, pp. 102-3; <http://www.psych.uw.edu.pl/onas.php?id=2&sub_id=5.3> [Accessed: Jan. 1, 2012]. Cf. Ross Lambertson, *Repression and Resistance: Canadian Human Rights Activists, 1930-1960* (Toronto, 2005).

⁴⁹ AIPN, 01286/2320, p. 12.

⁵⁰ See George C. Bidwell, *Ani chwili nudy* (Katowice, 1976).

⁵¹ AIPN, 01286/2320, Ocena informacji w sprawie obserwacji Bidwella [Evaluation of the information re. the observation of Mr. Bidwell], Wrocław, 29 June 1968, p. 30.

Polish national and the Intelligence Service. That he devoted himself to writing books, as he argued while requesting for asylum, proved to be true. In as early as 1950, 'Książka i Wiedza' published his official ideological declaration (titled *Wybrałem Polskę* [Poland, My Choice]). His following books: *Na fali pokoju* [On the peace wave] (1953), *Od Aldershot do El Alamein* [From Aldershot to El Alamein] (1954), or *Świt nad Afryką* [Africa at Dawn] (1955), were not free of propaganda burden. 1956 saw Bidwell leave, together with his family, Warsaw. He ceased to function as a political instrument and was perceived as man-of-letters ever since. Before he died in 1989, he wrote some fifty books, winning for himself a host of loyal readers and deservedly won acclaim as one of the most sought-after Polish authors.

The year 1956 marked an irreversible close of a period in the history of aliens dwelling in Poland. As was the case with most citizens of the People's Republic, 'the thaw' primarily gave them courage and potential to breathe; how considerable the change was, is evidenced by the case of Jerzy Wiktorow, a Russian. Born 1922, a native of Moscow, he was taken captive in 1941 and then, in 1943, joined the Vlasov army – as he explained, "as I was threatened by getting dispatched to a concentration camp". The war over, he assumed a false surname of Możajski and, then already as a Pole, was kept for some time at displaced persons camps. 1946 saw him enrol with the UNRRA University in Hamburg; he 'repatriated himself' to Poland in the following year. In 1951, he graduated from Law faculty at the University of Warsaw and was subsequently employed with government offices. In 1956, using the opportunity of amnesty, he disclosed his true personal details at the General Public Prosecutor's Office; the only consequence he suffered was his expulsion from the Polish United Workers' Party (which he had joined in 1948). He retrieved his Soviet passport and was permitted to permanently reside in Poland.⁵² Wiktorow lived and worked in Warsaw until his death in 1989.

Many other foreigners could now simply pursue their careers as doctors, teachers, engineers, or scientists. This is not to say that politics ceased affecting their lives completely; it is true, however, that coercion, dos and don'ts, did not prevail any more. Poland was no more a 'waiting room' for refugees (many of whom began returning home); coming and staying there were now mainly a matter of one's

⁵² APW, PRNW, KT, vol. 53, pp. 57–8.

autonomous and conscious decision. Like before, the reason behind it was, in most cases, love bond and will to accompany the Polish husband or wife. There were a plenty opportunities to meet, since the border gates cracked open after 1956 enabled more contacts, especially with citizens of other socialist countries.⁵³ While earlier Poland offered an illusion of freedom to the scarce leftist refugees from the West, with the 1956 breakthrough it became a real Promised Land, attracting Hungarians, Bulgarians, citizens of the GDR, Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union who lusted for a bit of freedom. While most of them arrived just to take a fresh breath, some stayed for a longer time – if not for good.

trans. Tristan Korecki

⁵³ See Włodzimierz Borodziej and Jerzy Kochanowski (eds.), *Bocznymi drogami. Nieoficjalne kontakty społeczeństw socjalistycznych 1956–1989* (Warsaw, 2010); *üdem*, and Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.), “Schleichwege”. *Inoffizielle Begegnungen sozialistischer Staatsbürger zwischen 1956 und 1989* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2010); Dariusz Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski 1949–1989* (Warsaw, 2010).