

DOI 10.4467/2543733XSSB.23.001.18427

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POLISH WAR REFUGEES INTERNED IN PALESTINE IN THE LIGHT OF “MAZRA’A CHRONICLE”¹

Abstract

In the autumn of 1940, the British Mandate authorities interned approximately twenty Polish war refugees at the Mazra’a camp in Palestine. In the subsequent months, over a dozen more were detained. The majority of the refugees were interned at the behest of Polish military intelligence, which accused them of collaboration with foreign agencies. The events concerning the detention of the Poles are detailed in the “Kronika Mazryjska” (“Mazra’a Chronicle”) by Czesław Horain. This document is part of the collection at the Archives of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London. The narrative was penned by one of the internees and covers topics such as everyday life in the camp and the situations leading to the arrests of the Poles, and the mood among the inmates. As these issues have not been explored in research thus far, publishing the “Mazra’a Chronicle” is both necessary and recommended.

Keywords: Mazra’a Internment Camp, Palestine, Polish war refugees

In the autumn of 1940, the authorities of the British Mandate detained approximately twenty Polish war refugees in Palestine on suspicion of espionage, subsequently interning them in the Mazra’a (al-Mazra’a) camp. The circumstances surrounding the arrest of the Poles and the fact that it occurred due to factors linked to Polish military intelligence stirred strong feelings within the refugee community. It was noteworthy that among the detainees were individuals of considerable social prominence. Whilst references to the internment have surfaced in studies², the specifics of the Poles’ stay in the camp have yet to be thoroughly researched.

¹ I would like to extend my gratitude to the Board of Trustees at the Polonia Aid Foundation Trust in London for awarding me a scholarship. This support allowed me to conduct research in British archives.

² The internment of the refugees in Mazra’a is mentioned (on the margins of other considerations) by, among others, R. Buczek, *Człowiek do złotych interesów*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 109–110, 115–116; Z. Kotkowski, *Na*



The camp was situated a few kilometres north of Akka, once the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, near the Arab village of Mazra'a. Positioned on a vast plain between the western Galilee hills and the Mediterranean coastline, it went by various names: "Mazra'a Internment Camp Acre", "Internment Camp No. 1 Acre" and also as "Farm Labour Camp, Acre", as such a labour camp was previously located there³.

Under the Defence Regulations of 1939, the British authorities interned at Mazra'a those that posed or could have posed a threat to the British war effort and the security of the Palestine Mandate⁴. This included individuals suspected of collaboration with foreign intelligence, as well as Palestinian residents and citizens of enemy states. Among those detained were civilians, refugees, and political prisoners alike. The camp accommodated passport holders from a range of nations, with the majority being from enemy countries such as Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. However, there were also individuals from allied nations occupied by the enemy, including Czechoslovakia, Greece, Lithuania, and Poland. Additionally, there were residents from countries like France and Spain, and the camp housed Palestinian Jews and Arabs as well⁵. A report from the Central Agency for Prisoners of War of the International Committee of the Red Cross noted that there were seven such internment centres in Palestine during the war⁶.

We have limited knowledge regarding the circumstances that brought the first Poles to Mazra'a. Among those interned were Zygmunt Hauptmann, who was not yet 20 years old, and his peer Dawid Traubman, both from Kraków, and both apprehended for illegal border crossing. Following the onset of the war, they travelled to Romania and subsequently to Syria, from which they entered Palestine illegally in April 1940. After their arrest by the British, they were deported to the French Mandate within two months. By early July, both had returned as part of a Polish military transport evacuated from Syria. Once again detained by the British, they found themselves interned at Mazra'a⁷.

A significant number of Polish refugees ended up in the camp due to their involvement in the so-called Kuttan affair. While there is already existing literature on this subject⁸,

kontynencie afrykańskim: oddział służby transportowej S.B.S.K. i glosy na drogach żołnierzy brygady, Londyn 1972, pp. 171–180; W. Michniewicz, "Szkodliwa książka"?, "Zeszyty Historyczne", vol. 20, Paris 1971, pp. 159, 163; *Ja, kabareciarz. Marian Hemar – od Lwowa do Londynu*, ed. A. Mieszkowska, Warszawa 2006, p. 98; O. Terlecki, *Szkice i polemiki*, Kraków 1987, p. 274. Also: J. Jasińczyk, *Słowo o bitwie. Tryptyk powieściowy*, Londyn 1955, pp. 189–191, 207–208 (novel, the author used distorted surnames and names for safety reasons).

³ Cf. The National Archives, London (hereafter: NA). HO 215/72, "Camp d'internement d'Acre. Visite au début de juillet 1941" (report of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC); Archive of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (hereafter: PISM), Col. 551 folders 28, 59, 75 (outgoing correspondence from the camp, cf. postmarks); *ibidem*, Col. 551/43, Cz. Horain, "Kronika Mazryjska" ["Mazra'a Chronicle"], p. 1.

⁴ Detainees received a letter stating that they were detained by a decision of the Palestinian High Commissioner under the Defence Regulations, point 17. See: PISM, Col. 551/38.

⁵ According to the ICRC report, in mid-1942, among the 256 interned civilians there were 74 Italian citizens, 54 German, 20 Romanian, 13 Hungarian, 10 Bulgarian and 77 from other countries. NA. FO 916/289, "Camp No. 1", no data.

⁶ NA. FO 916/83, Letter from Agence centrale des prisonniers de guerre to Foreign Office, Prisoners of War Department, 6 October 1941, p. 3. Several camps accommodated German settlers from the pre-Mandate era, notably the Templars, who were members of the Tempelgesellschaft religious association.

⁷ PISM, Col. 551/59, Letter from Ludwik Rozen-Ronski to the Central Intelligence Department (CID) in Jerusalem, 21 June 1941, pp. 1–2. The sender was one of the internees and had been in the camp since 7 February 1941.

⁸ T. Dubicki, *Sprawa Wiktora Kuttana w rozpoznaniu Ekspozytury "R" (Bukareszt) Oddziału II Sztabu NW, in: Kontrwywiad II RP (1914) 1918–1945 (1948)*, vol. 5, part 1, ed. K. Paduszek et al., Warszawa 2018, pp. 95–111;

it is worth noting that Wiktor Kutten (who pre-war was the president of the Związek Polskich Fabryk Portland-Cement [Association of Polish Portland-Cement Factories]) was arrested by the British authorities upon his arrival in Palestine on 17 September 1940. This arrest was at the behest of Polish intelligence authorities due to suspicions that he had spied for Germany in Romania, where he had evacuated to in September 1939. Kutten's connections with Samson Mikiciński, who was under suspicion of collaborating with the Abwehr⁹, as well as his association with a German intelligence officer, Captain Erich Nobis, further implicated him. During his time in Romania, Kutten had partnered with Mikiciński for various financial endeavours, including smuggling money into the country.

Along with Kutten, his associates Stanisław Kašinowski (pre-war director of Polskie Towarzystwo Asfaltowe SA [the Polish Asphalt Society]), journalist Bronisław Syrokomla-Stefanowski, and poet and satirist Marian Hemar were also detained in Haifa on the same day¹⁰. They had all journeyed to Palestine from Romania, embarking from the Turkish port of Mersin on the SS Warsaw ship¹¹. Within days, they were all placed in the Mazra'a camp. Throughout November and December 1940, an additional dozen refugees were detained, and as evacuation transports continued to arrive from Romania, more joined them in January 1941 and the subsequent months. Based on the records of one of the internees, around fifty Polish citizens had been through the camp by July 1941¹².

R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, pp. 101–111; *Polsko-brytyjska współpraca wywiadowcza podczas II wojny światowej*, vol. 2, *Wybór dokumentów*, selected and compiled by J.S. Ciechanowski, Warszawa 2005, pp. 143–145.

⁹ See, for further detail: R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, passim; K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Afera Mikicińskiego*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", vol. 32: 1975, pp. 187–200; Z.J. Kapera, *Niemieckie świadectwa o Samsonie Mikicińskim*, "Scripta Historica", No. 27: 2021, pp. 59–78; J. Kurcysz, *Na przedpolu Jalty. Wspomnienia z tajnej służby w dyplomacji*, Katowice 1995, pp. 43–50; L. Michniewicz [W. Michniewicz], *Opération Hafa*, adaptation de J. Helle, [Paris] 1969 (cf. critical review: K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Szkodliwa książka*, "Zeszyty Historyczne", vol. 18: 1970, pp. 221–229); P. Rutkowski, *Sprawa Samsona Mikicińskiego*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Szkoły Wyższej Przymierza Rodzin. Seria Humanistyczna", No. 2: 2014, pp. 207–238; O. Terlecki, *Szkice...*, pp. 243–288.

¹⁰ PISM, A.20.4/60, "Sprawa Kuttana, Kašinowskiego i Stefanowskiego" ["The case of Kutten, Kašinowski and Stefanowski"], no data, p. 1; *ibidem*, "Notatka w sprawie Kuttana i towarzyszy, sporządzona na podstawie aktów nadesłanych przez Komisję Badawczą w Jerozolimie" ["Note on the case of Kutten and comrades, drawn up on the basis of the files sent by the Research Commission in Jerusalem"], 20 April 1945, p. 3. On this subject, numerous documents in the collection of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, collection of MFA, ref. No. 800/42/0/-/304, folder 16; *ibidem*, ref. No. 800/42/0/-/310, folder 5; *ibidem*, ref. No. 800/42/0/-/313, folder 11; *ibidem*, ref. No. 800/42/0/-/325, folder 2.

¹¹ Between 1939 and 1941, the SS Warsaw ship was employed to evacuate Polish soldiers and civilian refugees, including volunteers for the Polish Armed Forces, primarily from Hungary and Romania to France. Following France's surrender, it redirected evacuations to Palestine. The ship also functioned as a troop carrier in the Mediterranean. Tragically, by the close of 1941, the SS Warsaw was sunk after being struck by a German torpedo. List of transports: M. Borowski, *Wspomnienia*, selected and compiled by S. Kudela and W. Pater, Gdynia 2007, pp. 210–211.

¹² PISM, Col. 551/43, Cz. Horain, "Kronika Mazryjska"; *ibidem*, draft notes to "Kronika...". In the collection, two postcards have been preserved, both dated 24 December 1940, bearing the signatures of 27 and 30 inmates respectively, with several from different nationalities, PISM, Col. 553/38 and 43. The 40 detainees were also referenced by Lieutenant Colonel Władysław Michniewicz, who was then the head of the Agency (branch) of the Second Department in the Middle East (military intelligence). W. Michniewicz, "Szkodliwa książka"?, p. 159. According to B. Syrokomla-Stefanowski, there were "several dozens of Poles" in Mazra'a. PISM, A. 49/176, Letter from B. Syrokomla-Stefanowski to Gen. W. Sikorski, Latrun, June 1943, p. 2.

Transports ferrying refugees evacuated from Romania and other Balkan countries were arranged with the consent of the United Kingdom by the government led by General Władysław Sikorski. Priority was given to individuals whose pre-war roles, such as government officials and political activists, made them particularly vulnerable once these countries fell under German influence. The inaugural transport of refugees docked at the port of Haifa on 12 November 1940. Additionally, the British consented to the temporary stationing of Polish army units in the region. Following France's capitulation in June 1940, the Carpathian Rifle Brigade (renamed the Polish Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade, or SBSK, from January 1941) was relocated to Palestine from the French Mandate in Syria¹³. Subsequently, other military formations, including the 2nd Polish Corps under General Władysław Anders, were also stationed there.

A significant portion of those detained at Mazra'a were held at the behest of the Polish "second department" (intelligence). This was due to suspicions surrounding their potentially ambiguous affiliations with either Kutten or Mikiciński. Acts that raised eyebrows included the transfer of money to families back home through these individuals. The camp also housed other Poles arrested on varying charges, such as alleged collaboration with USSR services (as in the case of Anatol Ungurian)¹⁴, Italian intelligence (like Czesław Horain)¹⁵, or the forging of passports, "an act believed to be possible only with the significant aid of hostile foreign agents" (Józef Wentland)¹⁶. Merely staying in an enemy country post-September 1939, as was the case with Horain, was enough to arouse suspicion. A letter penned by the commander of the SBSK, General Stanisław Kopański, reveals that certain Poles were detained based on "directives from English authorities, independent of any requests from our 2nd department"¹⁷.

The backgrounds of the internees were diverse. They spanned various professions, religions, and ethnicities, including Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, and German origins. Notably, many of the detainees held significant social positions prior to the war. Among the list of detainees were officers, lawyers, engineers, journalists, writers, and even an opera singer named Paweł Prokopieni. In addition to those already mentioned, the group included individuals such as Karol Hirschberg, a sports journalist; Eugeniusz Janicki,

¹³ See memoirs of the commander: S. Kopański, *Wspomnienia wojenne 1939–1946*, Warszawa 1990, chapter: "Z Brygadą Karpacką na Lewancie", pp. 110–128.

¹⁴ Anatol Ungurian was editor of the weekly magazine – "Kino dla Wszystkich i Teatr" before the war. He arrived in Palestine from the USSR (via Iran and Iraq), detained by the British authorities on 5 March 1941. In December 1941, he was released on condition that he joined the Polish army, but when he failed to do so, he was interned again. PISM, A. 20.4/60, Letter from Maj. Franciszek Wierzbicki from the Agency of the Information Department of the Supreme Commander's Staff, 16 May 1944; *ibidem*, Col. 551/25, Letter from Cz. Horain to Xawery Glinka, 13 April 1950, p. 10; *Habeas Corpus for Polish Journalist*, "The Palestine Post", 23 February 1945, p. 3.

¹⁵ PISM, Col. 551/19, Letter from Cz. Horain to J. Korwin-Gosiewski, 21 July 1950, p. 2. Gosiewski was director of the Elektro S.A. plant in Łaziska Górne, where Horain worked before the war.

¹⁶ Józef Wentland (b. 1912) – before the war, owner of the company "Dom Handlowy Józef Wentland – Wentland Surowce Zamorskie" in Warsaw. Detained on 8 September 1941 in Haifa, on arrival in Palestine. PISM, A. 20.4/60, Letter from Maj. F. Wierzbicki, 16 May 1944; *ibidem*, A.XII.24/100, Reports of Maj. Franciszek Berstling, Head of the Information Post of the 2nd Department of the Staff of the Polish Army Command in the Middle East, 12 September 1942 (p. 2) and 1 September 1942 (p. 88).

¹⁷ PISM, Col. 251/19, Letter from Gen. S. Kopański to the Commander of the Polish Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade (SBSK) Reserve Centre, 27 January 1941.

who was a lawyer and journalist; engineer Witold Kocay; Franciszek Kwiatkowski, an advocate; Dr Zygmunt Matusik, an investigating judge; Janusz Poray-Biernacki, an advocate and journalist who post-war became an émigré writer known by the pseudonym Janusz Jasińczyk; Major in reserve Józef Poznański; Bernard Rand, an entrepreneur; and Lieutenant Jan Szczepkowski, a former worker of the Polish military attaché in Moscow¹⁸.

The circumstances facing the internees were rather extraordinary. Weeks went by without any formal indictments being presented. They remained in the dark regarding which authorities had ordered their detention. It was not until mid-December 1940 that Captain Wojciech Lipiński from the SBSK's Reserve Centre in Latrun visited the camp. A month later, on 19 January 1941, they received a visit from the Polish Consul General in Jerusalem, Witold Korsak¹⁹. The living conditions were far from ideal. As one detainee recounted, "The barracks [...] were non heated and, when going to sleep, I was obliged instead of undressing to put on anything possible in order to be able to sleep more or less. We suffered from a considerable number of insects"²⁰.

On 15 and 16 January 1941, the internees staged a hunger strike, demanding either "release or a proper prosecution"²¹. Poles also participated in collective hunger strikes in both April and June 1941, with the latter lasting a full ten days. Some also embarked on individual hunger strikes. By the end of February, frustrations over the deplorable living conditions had erupted into riots²². It is plausible that these protests led to the internees finally being presented before the British Advisory Committee in Jerusalem²³. The Poles were also questioned by officers from the "second department", including Second Lieutenant Edward Szarkiewicz, an intelligence officer working on the Kutten case²⁴. To Polish Mazra'a "citizens", he was perceived as one of the key reasons for their confinement²⁵. The bleak sentiment of the internees was captured in a poignant song penned by Hemar during the internment. Informally termed the "Hymn of Mazra'a", it opens with the lines: "In Mazra'a we convened, / Bound by barbed ink's decree, / It was our own kin that sent us / To hunger, squalor and filth"²⁶.

Nevertheless, life had its demands, and the Poles endeavoured to occupy their time productively to stave off despair. They commemorated religious festivals, established a choir under Hemar's direction, and the incarcerated bass-baritone Paweł Prokopieni graced them

¹⁸ See footnote 12. PISM, Col. 551/25, Letter from Cz. Horain to M. Hemar, 30 June 1947.

¹⁹ PISM, Col. 551/43, "Kronika Mazryjska", p. 6; R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, p. 115.

²⁰ PISM, Col. 551/38, Letter from Tomasz Łepkowski (in English, no addressee), 28 June 1941.

²¹ PISM, Col. 251/19, Letter from the organisers of the strike to the Reserve Centre of the Polish Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade, 2 January 1941; PISM, Col. 551/43, draft notes by Cz. Horain; R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, p. 115.

²² PISM, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain; *ibidem*, Col. 551/59, Letter from L. Rozen-Ronski, p. 1.

²³ According to Horain's notes, the first round of interrogations took place in January and February and the next in May 1941, PISM, Col. 551/43.

²⁴ *Polsko-brytyjska współpraca...*, pp. 117–118, 144–145; PISM, Col. 551/59, Letter from L. Rozen-Ronski, p. 2.

²⁵ PISM, Col. 551/19, Letter from Cz. Horain to J. Korwin-Gosiewski, p. 3.

²⁶ Originally in Polish. *Ja, kabareciarz*, p. 98; O. Terlecki, *Szkice...*, pp. 274–275. Typescript of the work dated 31 January 1941, with a handwritten dedication to Horain: PISM, Col. 551/25. Cf. Horain's letter to Hemar, 30 June 1947 (*ibidem*).

with several concerts²⁷. A testament to the internees' distinct dark humour was the "Macabre Poems, inspired by the hunger strike at «Internment Camp IV»" penned in January 1941. They bore resemblance to comedic epitaphs, yet poignantly referred to the living inmates. For instance, one went: "Here Hauptmann rests in shade, / Fled from the army, in prison he stayed."²⁸

As there were no legitimate reasons to continue the internment, the majority of the detainees were progressively released. At the behest of the "T" Agency from Second Department of the Supreme Commander's Staff, E. Janicki, B. Rand, and F. Kwiatkowski were released on 13 March 1941, followed by M. Hemar and Z. Matusik on 28 March. They were subsequently directed to the SBSK Reserve Centre²⁹. Shortly after, in June 1941, P. Prokopieni was also released³⁰. According to a letter from Ludwik Rozen-Ronski, who oversaw a group of prisoners in one section of the camp (Camp I), roughly thirty Polish refugees remained in Mazra'a as of 21 June 1941³¹. Eventually, the three detainees, Kutten, Kašinowski, and Stefanowski, were moved to the British camp at Latrun (POW Camp No 321, situated between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem)³², where they remained interned until the end of the war³³.

The events surrounding the internment of the Poles are depicted in the "Kronika Mazryjska" ["Mazra'a Chronicle", in Polish] by Czesław Horain, of which we present an extensive excerpt translated into English. Horain (1904–1966) trained as an engineer and graduated from Lviv Polytechnic³⁴. Before the war, he served as an authorised representative at the Elektro S.A. plant in Łaziska Górne, Silesia. His whereabouts after September 1939 are somewhat obscure. He claimed to have left the country between 17 and 18 September 1939 via the Kutry border post as a civilian refugee³⁵. By the spring of 1940, he was in Italy and then departed for Turkey in June. In November 1940, he and

²⁷ PISM, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain.

²⁸ PISM, Col. 551/43 (here typescript of 9 such "macabre epitaphs").

²⁹ PISM, Col. 251/19, Letter from Maj. Józef Bińkowski, head of the "T" Agency, to the Commander of the SBSK Reserve Centre, March 1941, pp. 73–74; *ibidem*, Letter from Maj. J. Bińkowski to Gen. J.K. Zamorski, 19 April 1941, p. 75. The "T" Agency was an intelligence cell and was established in Jerusalem in the autumn of 1940. A. Peplowski, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 144–157.

³⁰ PISM, Col. 551/59, Letter from L. Rozen-Ronski, p. 4; *ibidem*, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain.

³¹ PISM, Col. 551/59, Letter from L. Rozen-Ronski, p. 1.

³² In February 1945, there were 50 Polish nationals at the British camp in Latrun. PISM, A. 49/176, "Wykaz uchodźców polskich internowanych w obozach «Latrun» lub «Wilhelminie»" ["List of Polish refugees interned in camps in «Latrun» or «Wilhelmina»"], 9 February 1945, pp. 82–83; *ibidem*, Letter of interned Polish citizens to Henryk Rosmarin, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Tel Aviv, 21 December 1942, pp. 4–6 (signatures of 10 individuals); *ibidem*, Col. 25/31A, Letter from B. Syrokomla-Stefanowski to Minister Stanisław Kot, 16 March 1943. About the camp: NA. FO 916/289.

³³ T. Dubicki, *Sprawa Wiktora Kuttena...*, pp. 109–111. Contrary to what is mentioned in O. Terlecki's *Szkice...* (p. 274) and W. Michniewicz's "*Szkodliwa książka*"? (p. 158), not all three were interned in Mazra'a until the end of the war. Cf. NA. FO 371/39515, "Detention of Dr. Viktor Kutten in Palestine".

³⁴ See, for further detail: M. Kłakus, *Czesław Horain – życie i działalność*, in: Cz. Horain, *Na tropie Polaków w Ziemi Świętej. Rejestr pielgrzymów i podróżników polskich do Ziemi Świętej przybyłych w latach 1845–1921; 1931–1947. Edycja źródeł*, foreword and compilation by M. Kłakus, Katowice-Toulon 2022, pp. 18–30; A. Patek, *Kolekcja Czesława Horaina w zbiorach Archiwum Instytutu Polskiego i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego w Londynie jako źródło do badań nad dziejami Polaków w Ziemi Świętej*, "Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny", vol. 47: 2021, No. 1 (179), pp. 245–250.

³⁵ PISM, Col. 551/43, "Kronika Mazryjska", p. 4 (states 17 September 1939); *ibidem*, Col. 551/19, Letter from Cz. Horain to the Polish Legation in Madrid, copy, 6 July 1949, p. 1 (states 18 September 1939).

other refugees were evacuated to Palestine. Upon arrival in Haifa, he was detained and interned in Mazra'a. The allegations against him, specifically collaborating with foreign intelligence, were not substantiated, and he was freed on 16 July 1941 after eight months. He then settled in Jerusalem, where he resided until his passing. He immersed himself in scholarly pursuits, gathering data about the Polish presence in the Holy Land. He worked for his own satisfaction, without any formal employment. His *magnum opus* was the "General Polish-Palestinian Bio-bibliography (A.D. 990–1950)" [Polish: *Bio-bibliografia polsko-palestyńska generalna (A.D. 990–1950)*], comprising over 15,000 entries, and it remains in typescript³⁶. While Horain's collection has endured, it is dispersed among various institutions: The Bibliothèque de Genève, the Polish Library in Paris, the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, and, in part, the Archives of the Custody of the Holy Land in Jerusalem and the Central Military Archives in Warsaw.

The edited document originates from the PISM Archive in London and forms part of the "Czesław Horain's Collection". It bears the signature of Col. 551/43. Another copy of the "Chronicle" was discovered in the Archives of the Custody of the Holy Land³⁷. It closely resembles the "London" version, suggesting that the author made duplicate copies³⁸. In a catalogue of his works, Horain dated the "Mazra'a Chronicle" to the summer of 1941³⁹.

The original document spans five and a half typed pages, with no spaces between lines. Likely created on a typewriter without Polish characters, it omits specific letters such as "ą", "ę", "ł", and "ź". The text includes handwritten corrections and sections marked with dots, suggesting areas the author intended to fill in later. The "Chronicle" has a memoiristic quality. Within it, Horain details incidents he either observed first-hand or learned about. The document chronicles events from 17 September 1940, marking the detention of Kutten and his companions at Haifa harbour until 30 December 1940. Since Horain only arrived in Mazra'a on 16 November, he likely sourced accounts of earlier camp occurrences from inmates who had been imprisoned before him.

The reason Horain ceased work on the chronicle remains uncertain. Years later, he incorporated a brief segment of it into a manuscript titled "Curriculum vitae en Palestine (1940–1948)"⁴⁰, wherein he offers a personal account of events within the Polish refugee community. The extracted sections pertain to the life of Stanisław Kašinowski⁴¹.

³⁶ Cf. J. Kowalik, *Czasopiśmiennictwo*, in: *Literatura polska na obczyźnie 1940–1960*, ed. T. Terlecki, vol. 2, Londyn 1965, p. 439.

³⁷ L'Archivio storico della Custodia di Terra Santa in Gerusalemme (ASCTS), Czesław Horain 7.

³⁸ The two copies have a singular difference. On the London-held copy, the second part of the title has been amended by the author's hand to read "Mezryjska" ["Mezra'a"].

³⁹ PISM, Col. 551/82 part 1, "Maszynopisy Czesława Horaina" ["Czesław Horain's Typescripts"], no data, (after July 1949).

⁴⁰ PISM, Col. 551/50, Cz. Horain, "Curriculum vitae en Palestine (1940–1948). Deuxième Partie: Événements et observations polono-palestiniennes des derniers mois du mandat britannique, expirant moitié Mai 1948". The PISM houses an excerpt from the study (pp. 46–100). Full text: Bibliothèque de Genève, Ms. fr. 8595/9. Despite the foreign-language title, the material is in Polish.

⁴¹ Cf. "Curriculum vitae...", p. 88.

A handwritten summary of the “Mazra’a Chronicle” still exists⁴². Titled “Notes”, it comprises 15 sheets in a 190 x 145 mm format, pre-lined. The pages are inscribed on both sides in ink, with numerous pencil annotations made by the author in many spots. The script is expansive, verbose, challenging to decipher, and features many strikeouts. These notes chronicle events from 17 September 1940 to 16 July 1941, the date of Horain’s release. The entries under these dates are concise, typically spanning only a few words. The section detailing events from September to December 1940 was expanded upon in the “Chronicle”. The majority of the content (12 pages) remains in draft form. Some entries highlight the Poles who were incarcerated in 1941 (mentioning several names) and various forms of protest by the detainees against their extended confinement, such as hunger strikes. It is possible that these note segments were intended for use in a subsequent memoir instalment, which, however, never materialised.

The publication of the “Mazra’a Chronicle” is deemed important for several reasons. Primarily, it provides the earliest known account of the internment of Polish citizens in Mazra’a. Although the incarceration of Poles at this camp was previously acknowledged, such mentions were typically brief, discussing merely the event and its reasons; only a handful of names of those detained were cited⁴³. Descriptions of the camp’s living conditions, detention circumstances, and the detainees’ sentiments were notably absent in literature until now. Horain’s narrative fills these gaps and sheds light on over twenty interned Polish individuals. The Chronicle’s significance lies in its direct source – written by an inmate based on notes he kept during his internment. Obviously, this has various consequences. The work is replete with second-hand information and carries a somewhat gossipy tone; the author does not hold back on criticism and often seems too close to the subjects he discusses. Conversely, we possess a distinct and immediate account of the time, offering a “first-hand” perspective that is abundant in factual detail. Despite any criticisms, the “Mazra’a Chronicle” substantially enriches our understanding and merits scholarly attention. It can also lay the groundwork for further research.

When preparing this document for publication, efforts were made to retain the original characteristics of the source, minimising editorial modifications. Nouns “Jew” and “German” are consistently capitalised. While the lowercase is consistent with Polish orthography for religious references, Horain’s use of lowercase when referring to Germans remains puzzling. Possibly, this was influenced by emotions related to the ongoing war against the Third Reich. Technical alterations, such as these, were not highlighted in this version. All other interventions, including abbreviation expansions and omitted segments, are marked by square brackets – []. The author’s handwritten annotations are highlighted in *italics*. Due to the document’s length, the edition excludes sections not pertinent to the primary subject or of minor significance, and those concerning private matters or rumours that are difficult to verify.

⁴² PISM, Col. 551/43.

⁴³ Cf. footnote 2.

Mazra'a Chronicle^a

Mazra/ Acre, 1940/41.

17.9. They were detained in Haifa by the British authorities, under the command of Captain of the Second Department Szarkiewicz⁴⁴, the following passengers of the SS Warsaw ship, arriving from the Turkish port of Mersin: Dr. Wiktor Kuttén⁴⁵, 51, originally from Horodenka⁴⁶, was the primary shareholder of the Firley-Łazy cement factory, and a prominent industrialist, he was also the president of the association of Polish cement plants; Stanisław Kašinowski⁴⁷, 42, originally from, was the owner and director of the Polish Asphalt Society (located in Warsaw, Niemcewicz 28), an industrialist and road-building entrepreneur, he also owned a mining estate and the "Antoni" mine (now closed) in Jaśkowice, Upper Silesia⁴⁸; Bronisław Syrokomla-Stefanowski⁴⁹, 35, originally from, was a member of the "Kurier Warszawski" editorial team and its correspondent, he was a national activist and publicist; Jan Marian Hemar (Herscheles)⁵⁰, age: ..., originally from Lviv (?), was a poet, writer, and director in both theatre and film; Józef Poznański⁵¹, 52,

^a In the original, this was hand-corrected to: Mezra'a ("Mezryjska").

⁴⁴ Edward Szarkiewicz (actually Mojżesz Szapiro, 1900–1953?) at the time was an officer (with the rank of lieutenant) of "R" Agency of the Second Department in Bucharest. He was involved in the unfolding and subsequent abduction of Mikiciński to Palestine, whom he was supposed to eliminate on 28 March 1941. Subsequently, he worked for British intelligence. He was a figure who elicited polarising opinions. Personal file: NA. KV 2/517 and 518; R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, passim; K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Powołanie i przeznaczenie. Wspomnienia oficera Komendy Głównej AK*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 590–592. See footnote 24.

⁴⁵ Wiktor Kuttén (b. 1890) – prior to the war, he was an entrepreneur in the cement industry and sat on numerous supervisory boards, amassing a considerable fortune. He authored several pieces, including the study *Cement Cartel in Poland* (Warszawa, 1933). He faced trial for financial misconduct. After September 1939, he moved to Romania and was interned in Palestine from 1940 to 1945. T. Dubicki, *Sprawa Wiktora Kutténa...*; *Polsko-brytyjska współpraca...*, pp. 143–144; PISM, Col. 25/31A, Letter from W. Kuttén to S. Kot, Mazra'a, 22 October 1942.

⁴⁶ Horodenka – city in Pokuttia, until 1939 in Poland's Stanisławów Province; now in Ukraine.

⁴⁷ Stanisław Kašinowski (b. 1898) – following his release on 31 May 1945, he resided in Jerusalem. From 1946 to 1948, he managed the Polish company "Asphaltna Co. – Factory for Insulation Materials", established at the initiative of officers from the Second Department. In March 1948, he departed for Lebanon. PISM, Col. 551/50, Cz. Horain, "Curriculum vitae...", pp. 81, 99; R. Buczek, *Był taki czas...*, Toronto 1981, pp. 147–148 (Polish edition: *Rozgrywka o dolary*, Kielce 1991, p. 106); A. Patek, *Palestyńskie Soplicowo 1939–1948. Studia z dziejów polskiego uchodźstwa wojennego w Ziemi Świętej*, Kraków 2022, pp. 183–186.

⁴⁸ The mine was called "Szczęście Antoniego" ["Antoni's Happiness"] and was closed down in 1936. Today Jaśkowice is a district of Orzesze. J. Jaros, *Słownik historyczny kopalń węgla na ziemiach polskich*, ed. 2, Katowice 1984, p. 100.

⁴⁹ Bronisław Syrokomla-Stefanowski (1906–1996) – journalist, member of the Polish Association of Journalists and the International Federation of Journalists. Following the outbreak of the war, he left Poland and collaborated with the Information and Documentation Center of the Polish Government-in-Exile. In May 1940, on behalf of this center, he transported government mail and funds for the Polish underground to Romania. He was interned in Palestine from 1940 to 1945. After the war, he settled in Australia. PISM, A. 20.4/60, "Sprawa Kutténa, Kašinowskiego i Stefanowskiego" ["The case of Kuttén, Kašinowski and Stefanowski"], pp. 1–2, 4, 6; ibidem, Col. 551/67, "Odpis memorandum Bronisława Syrokomli Stefanowskiego" ["Copy of a memorandum by Bronisław Syrokomla Stefanowski"], no data, [1941]; *Polsko-brytyjska współpraca...*, pp. 144–145.

⁵⁰ Author's error. Hemar's original surname was Heschels.

⁵¹ Józef Szeliga-Poznański (1893–1975) – major (not captain) in the Polish Army, he participated in the Polish-Soviet War and was honoured with the Silver Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari for his efforts. He was released from Mazra'a in early February 1941. Post-war, he resided in Chile and was actively involved in Polish organisations there. "Biuletyn / Koło Lwowian", vol. 14, No. 28: 1975, p. 95 (obituary); PISM, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain; K. Smolana, *Dzieje Polaków w Chile*, "Studia Polonijne", vol. 14: 1992, pp. 84, 95.

originally from, was a captain in reserve in the Polish Army and a recipient of the *Virtuti Militari* honour, a senior inspector in the Ministry of Transport; Andrzej Łepkowski, 39, from Katowice, was a landowner and an oil industry magnate. Kutten and his two brothers,, practised the Mosaic faith. Hemar was of Calvinist faith, having converted upon marrying theatre artist Maria Modzelewska⁵², who later left him in Bucharest. Pozna[ń]ski was Roman Catholic, originating from a family of neophytes; he was on his way to join his wife, née Janiszewska (?), the daughter of a chocolate manufacturer in Chile. Stefanowski was married to Wanda Nebelska, who was in Cap-d’Ail on the French Riviera at the time. Kašinowski’s wife, Luba, and their son, Janusz, stayed in Warsaw, residing in a flat on Koszykowa Street, number 6. Łepkowski’s wife, Zofia née Lewandowska, remained in Poland.

The Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.)⁵³ confiscated from Kašinowski about 1 kilogram of platinum and approximately \$500. After a brief detention at the “Lock-up”⁵⁴ in Haifa, he was moved to an internment facility situated roughly 5 kilometers north of Acre, which is alternatively referred to as Akko or St. Jean d’Acre. This internment center was officially labeled the “Mazra’a Internment Camp Acre” or simply the “Farm Labour Camp”. The latter designation stemmed from the fact that the site had formerly served as a labour camp. In Arabic, the term for a farm is “mazra’a”. Upon his arrival at the Mazra facility on 17.9. [19]40, Kašinowski discovered that several fellow Polish nationals had already been interned there. These included Stefan Huculak, Frąckowiak^{b55}, Dawid Traubman^c, and Zygmunt Hauptmann⁵⁶. These individuals had come to Palestine from Syria, accompanying a Polish military convoy. Upon their arrival, they were detained and subsequently interned at Mazra. Interestingly, a hunger strike initiated by these Polish internees led to the release of about 40 individuals after only two or three days. However, Huculak, Traubman, and Hauptmann were exceptions to this release, and their stay at Mazra would extend considerably longer. Frąckowiak^b, on the other hand, appears to have been freed sometime in October of 1940. Mr Pike, a lieutenant of Irish descent in the British Army, oversaw the camp. He was married to a woman who was either German or of German heritage. The facility was divided into six different sections or camps, each overseen by supervisors chosen from among the internees. The supervisor for the camp where the Polish detainees were housed was a man named Izaak Koschewnik. He was a Russian Jew and had formerly been a Polish national. However, after spending an extended period in Palestine and not returning to Poland, he lost his Polish citizenship due to a specific law enacted in Poland just prior to the outbreak of the war. Koschewnik’s

⁵² Maria Modzelewska (1903–1997) was regarded as “one of the most outstanding actresses of her generation”. From 1939 to 1994, she resided in the USA. She passed away in Skolimów, near Warsaw. *Słownik biograficzny teatru polskiego*, vol. III: 1910–2000, part 2, Warszawa 2017, pp. 93–95.

⁵³ Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police Force – the investigative department of the British Mandate Police. See: E. Harouvi, *Palestine Investigated. The Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police Force, 1920–1948*, Chicago 2016.

⁵⁴ From English: “lock-up facility”.

^b *In the original*: Fronckowiak.

⁵⁵ Stanisław Jan Frąckowiak (b. 1910) – before the war, clerk of the Sales Office of the concern Huta Pokój. Śląskie Zakłady Górniczo-Hutnicze SA in Katowice. He arrived in Palestine via the Balkan countries, Turkey and Syria; interned at Mazra’a on 13 June 1940. PISM, Col. 551/15, bibliographic flashcard.

^c *In the original*: Traubaman.

⁵⁶ According to Horain, Traubman worked in one of Kraków’s car repair shops, and Hauptmann was the son of the owner of Kraków’s “Royal” café. PISM, Col. 551/43, “Kronika Mazryjska”, p. 3.

profession in Tel-Aviv was either as a stockbroker or as an agent representing an Italian shipping line. It is speculated that his internment was a result of suspicions arising from his occupation. [...]

18.9. Hemar and Poznański, for whom Szarkiewicz seemingly showed more favour, stayed overnight in Haifa's finest hotel, the "Savoy", from where they were taken by police car to Jerusalem for questioning. Others were temporarily held at the "Lock-up" in Haifa.

19.9. Ms Lola Randova (*Kitajewicz*)⁵⁷, the wife of Bernard Rand⁵⁸, was taken to the "Lock-up" and released after a few to several days. A. Łepkowski was returned to Jerusalem for questioning and detained at the "Central Prison".

22.9. Stefanowski was taken to Mazra, but after an hour, he was returned to the "Lock-up" in Haifa for questioning. Hemar and Poznański arrived at Mazra from Jerusalem. They were detained in Camp IV alongside Kašinowski.

28.9. Kutten arrived in Mazra and met his travelling companions.

5.10. Stefanowski was detained in Mazra, sharing huts with his comrades; he was elected as the hut leader⁵⁹.

7.11. Andrzej (Murcio) Łepkowski, later nicknamed "Stokrotka", was transferred to Mazra from the "Central Prison" in Jerusalem. Benefiting from the so-called "special treatment", he had been permitted to stay and sleep in the prison's "library", adjacent to the p[ri]son? warden's office (?).

9.10. [11?] Dr Zygmunt Matusik, detained in Mazra, was an investigating judge from Kraków and a reservist captain. Aged between 40 and 50, he came from a peasant family near Kraków. He travelled to Palestine from Romania on a military transport and was subsequently detained at a camp on K[h]ayat Beach/ Haifa.

12.11. The SS Warsaw ship docked at Haifa port before noon, having arrived from Mersin via Cyprus. In Cyprus, several Poles⁶⁰, including Dr. Surzyński, were disembarked⁶¹. The ship had approximately 500 passengers, amongst which were about 50–100 Czechs, including Prof. Vlastimil Hoffman⁶², an artist and painter from Kraków, a Polish civilian con-

⁵⁷ Helena (Lola) Kitajewicz (1915–1993) was an actress and singer who lived in the United Kingdom from 1950 onwards. She was among the most renowned artists in "Polish London". *Lola. Helena Kitajewicz. Szkic do portretu*, edited and with photo selection by A. Mieszkowska, Warszawa 1995; *Słownik biograficzny teatru polskiego*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 516–517; Polish Library of the Polish Social and Cultural Association (POSK) in London (hereafter BPOSK), Emigration Personal Archive (obituaries, memorial articles).

⁵⁸ Bernard Rand (1907–1999) – entrepreneur. During the war, he served as a soldier in the SBSK and fought at Tobruk. Subsequently, he lived in exile in the United Kingdom. BPOSK, Emigration Personal Archive (obituary, memoir article); *Samodzielna Brygada Strzelców Karpackich: 2 IV 1940 – 2 V 1942. Spis żołnierzy*, compiled by Z. Picheta, London [ca.1998], pp. 71 (part 1), 74 (part 2).

⁵⁹ The superior of a group of prisoners, serving as their representative before the camp authorities.

⁶⁰ In the autumn of 1940, with the consent of the British authorities, around 500 Polish war refugees, most of whom had previously been in Romania, were given temporary refuge in Cyprus, a British colony. J. Pietrzak, *Polscy uchodźcy na Bliskim Wschodzie w latach drugiej wojny światowej. Ośrodki. Instytucje. Organizacje*, Łódź 2012, pp. 44–48.

⁶¹ Probably Leon Surzyński (1891–1967), Deputy Speaker of the Sejm from 1938 to 1939. While in Palestine, among other things, vice-chairman of the Committee of Polish Refugees in Jerusalem (1941–1942). Since 1945 in the United Kingdom. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 46, Warszawa–Kraków 2009, pp. 44–47 (author of the biographical note: J. Karwat).

⁶² Wlastimil Hofman (Vlastimil Hofmann, 1881–1970) – a Polish symbolist painter of Czech origin, he is regarded as a successor to the artistic principles of Jacek Malczewski. After the war, he returned to

tingent, and a military transport. Notable figures on board included Min[ister] Poniatowski⁶³ and his wife, Min[ister] Jędrzejewicz⁶⁴ and his wife, and General Kordian-Zamorski⁶⁵. Civilians onboard included editor Then⁶⁶, and his wife and son, Belg[ian] consul from Łódź , Monic⁶⁷, and his wife and daughter (a wealthy Jewish industrialist who had fled to Russia and then to Istanbul), Uderski, Jortner, and editor Dąbrowski of the I[lustrowany] K[urier] C[odzienny] from Kraków⁶⁸ (not Marian D.). Among the military was Zajde. The Czech passengers, primarily women and children and wives of Czech officers from Russia, were released immediately since they had arrangements with the Czech consul waiting at the port. Professor Hoffmann [!] had, at his own request, been separated from the Czech group. He was promised a Polish passport since he was a Polish citizen who had only joined the Czech group evacuated from Russia out of necessity. Hoffmann's father was Czech and his mother Polish; he was childless and married to a Czech woman. Following the disembarkation of the Czech group, the Polish military transport was offloaded. The civilian group waited in vain for the Polish consular authorities, who either were not informed of the transport's arrival or did not wish to make the journey from Jerusalem. However, Tomasz Łepkowski and Landau⁶⁹, were released on land, then arrested and detained in the "Lock-up" in Haifa.

Poland. *W Szklarskiej Porębie wszystkie drogi prowadzą do Wlastimilówki. Rok Wlastimila Hofmana*, ed. B. Danielska, Szklarska Poręba 2017; *Autobiografia / Wlastimil Hofman*, foreword and compilation by B. Mielczarek, Warszawa 2020.

⁶³ This refers to Juliusz Poniatowski (1886–1975), who was the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reforms from 1934 to 1939. In Palestine, he was among the leading figures of the Piłsudski circle. A. Bienkowska, *Juliusz Poniatowski. Biografia polityczna*, Warszawa 2012; H.M. Drozdowski, *Juliusz Poniatowski (1886–1975). Zarys biografii*, Warszawa 2012.

⁶⁴ Janusz Jędrzejewicz (1885–1951) was previously the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (1931–1934) and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (1933–1934). In Palestine, he served as the president of the pro-Piłsudski's Związek Pracy dla Państwa [Union of Labour for the State]. Since 1947 in the United Kingdom. Z. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz. Piłsudczyk i reformator edukacji (1885–1951)*, Lublin 2007.

⁶⁵ Józef Kordian Zamorski (1890–1983), Commander-in-Chief of the State Police from 1935 to 1939; after arriving in Palestine, Commander of the Reserve Centre of the SBSK. R. Litwiński, *Kordian Józef Zamorski, "granatowy" general*, Lublin 2018; T. Kryśka-Karski, S. Żurakowski, *Generałowie Polski niepodległej*, updated and revised ed., Warszawa 1991, p. 67.

⁶⁶ Aleksander Then (1892–1958) worked as a journalist for the Polish press in France and Romania and served as a correspondent in Paris and Berlin. Following the outbreak of war, he moved from Romania to Istanbul and subsequently to Palestine, where he worked at the Biuro Studiów Bliskiego i Środkowego Wschodu [Middle East Studies Office]. In 1946, he returned to Poland. *Materiały do słownika publicystów i dziennikarzy polskich*, "Zeszyty Prasoznawcze", vol. 15: 1974, No. 1 (59), pp. 118–119.

⁶⁷ Kazimierz Monitz (died 1951) was an industrialist and the honorary consul of the Kingdom of Belgium in Łódź. During the war, he served as the president of the Polish Red Cross in Jerusalem. He later passed away in the United Kingdom. K. Grodziska, *Polskie groby na cmentarzach Londynu*, vol. 2, Kraków 2001, p. 94.

⁶⁸ This could refer to Mieczysław Dąbrowski (1883–1967). From 1925 to 1939, he was the editor of the "Kurier Literacko-Naukowy", a weekly supplement to the "Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny" (IKC). He was the brother of Marian, the owner of the IKC concern. P. Borowiec, *Jesteśmy głosem milionów. Dzieje krakowskiego wydawnictwa i koncernu prasowego Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny (1910–1939)*, Kraków 2005, p. 217.

⁶⁹ According to Horain, Landau hailed from Łódź and was arrested by the British authorities due to concerns about his visa, which was issued by the British consul in Kaunas. He was incarcerated in Akka and was released after a month once the situation was clarified. PISM, Col. 551/43, "Kronika Mazrzyjska", p. 4 (text passage omitted from this edition).

13.11. Following a telephone summons, Consul Jan Weber⁷⁰ eventually arrives from Jerusalem. Without acknowledging or informing the waiting emigrants, who have been there for two days, he discreetly enters the captain's office. By the afternoon, rumours circulate that all newcomers will undergo an examination aboard the ship. This rumour is soon confirmed, with an added instruction for everyone to present all documents, papers, letters, books, etc., for this review. The examination is, as it later emerges, conducted by the Insp[ector] of the Port Police (Migration Dep[artment]), Tavery – supposedly a Jew from Łódź with impeccable Polish⁷¹ – and Captain Lipiński from the Second Department⁷². A select group of individuals (possibly including members of the second department and informants), ship captain Borowski⁷³ Meissner⁷⁴, and Consul Weber are present to oversee the procedure. The interrogations continue into the next day.

14.11. At noon, the hearings concluded. After lunch, the passengers were scheduled to be disembarked. The first to be called to the ship's captain were: Barański (real name: Schilling), Bielski Zygmunt (real name: Weissmann) and Horain Czesław⁷⁵. They were escorted ashore by an English sergeant and were subsequently arrested. They were then transported by armoured car to the nearby harbour police building and placed in a cell. Not long after, they were taken to the "custom house" where their luggage was thoroughly searched and they were required to declare any currency and foreign exchange. From there, they were shuttled to the "Lock-up" in northern Haifa.

15.11. B[a]rański, Bielski, and Horain were summoned for interrogation by Inspector Tavery. They were transported by armoured car to the port police building and placed in a cell. Barański was the first to be interrogated, for over an hour, followed by Bielski for a similar duration. Horain was informed that due to the late hour, his questioning would be postponed to the following morning. When escorted to the "Lock-up", Bielski and Barański

⁷⁰ Vice Consul Jan Weber (b. 1901) was the Acting Head of the Polish Consulate General in Jerusalem from December 1939 to December 1940. He assumed the role following the dismissal of Consul Witold Hulanicki and held the position until his successor, Witold Ryszard Korsak, was appointed. He also temporarily took charge of the consulate in 1943 and 1945, during the illness of Consul Aleksy Wdziękoński. PISM, Col. 551/75, bibliographic material; *Rocznik Służby Zagranicznej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej według stanu na 1 czerwca 1939*, Warszawa 1939, p. 248.

⁷¹ According to notes from General J. K. Zamorski, Tavery's original name was Chaim Borenstein, and he arrived in Palestine in 1919, PISM, Col. 251/20, p. 8.

⁷² Wojciech Lipiński (1900–1966) was, at the time, the head of Referat II of the SBSK Reserve Centre in Latrun, and later became the head of Second Department of the same centre from January to April 1941. He was transferred to the United Kingdom in 1943. After the war, he returned to Poland and was arrested in 1952, but was acquitted in 1957. T. Dubicki, A. Suchcitz, *Oficerowie wywiadu WP i PSZ w latach 1939–1945. Słownik biograficzny*, vol. II, Warszawa 2011, pp. 185–191.

⁷³ This pertains to Lieutenant-Commander Michał Borowski (1897–1968), who was the commander of the military onboard the SS Warsaw ship. For details on his service aboard the ship, see: M. Borowski, *Wspomnienia*, pp. 49–58, 138–143, 200–215.

⁷⁴ Tadeusz Meissner (1902–1966) was a captain in the grand navy (master mariner). He participated in the Polish-Bolshevik War and the Third Silesian Uprising. He also served as the captain of the SS Warsaw ship from 1940 to 1941. Additionally, he was a member of the Sejm of the Polish People's Republic between 1957 and 1961. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 20, Wrocław 1975, pp. 395–396 (author of the biographical note: J. Pertek); *Kawalerowie Virtuti Militari 1792–1945. Słownik biograficzny*, vol. 2, part 2, ed. B. Polak, Koszalin 1993, pp. 136–137.

⁷⁵ Author of the "Mazra'a Chronicle".

were handcuffed. During the night, police officers subjected a woman (possibly a prostitute?) to hours of beating and torture. Her harrowing, inhuman screams will forever remain unforgettable.

16.11. Before noon, a letter from Insp[ector] Tavory arrived at the “Lock-up”, directing that Bielski, Barański, and Horain be transported to the Detention Camp Mazra/Acre. Despite Horain’s protests, reminding them of the scheduled hearing that was supposed to take place that day, his objections were dismissed. Police officers stole Horain’s cane and trouser belt and threatened to send him to the high-security prison in Akko. All three were taken by police ambulance, alongside handcuffed Arabs, to the high-security Akko prison in Acre. This prison, a historical fortress from the Crusader era, had also witnessed unsuccessful sieges by Napoleon’s forces and the Polish Legions led by General [Józef] Zajączek. After registration and a prolonged wait outside the bridge leading to the prison, they were moved to Mazra. During an initial search, which was relatively gentle, Horain’s documents and letters were confiscated following Tavory’s directives. However, they left him with his books and mark collection. An electric torch he had was placed in storage but was later discovered to have been stolen. Their money was counted and stored. Pike miscalculated Horain’s amount by \$100 less. When Horain pointed it out, Pike responded curtly but corrected the mistake, albeit angrily. From the office, they were guided behind the internal barbed fence to Camp IV. There, Koschewnik warmly received them, helping to fetch intern essentials from storage: 2 stands, 3 planks, a mattress, an enamel plate and cup, an aluminium canteen, a knife, a spoon, and a fork. They were allocated to three separate barracks: Bielski to the “Old People’s”, Horain to the Jews, and Barański to another. The Polish inhabitants of the camp were somewhat distant to newcomers.

In Horain’s barrack, the hut leader was an Italian Jew from Trieste, Dr Deitel Tiburzio, known as Chanania. However, he stepped down after a few days, replaced by Leo Görlitz, a German who converted to Judaism upon marriage, relocated to Palestine, worked as a waiter, and eventually divorced his wife. Over 20 men lived in this barrack [...].

In Bielski’s barrack, notable inhabitants (“elders”) included Dr R. Feige^{d76}, around 50 years old, a renowned meteorologist who was previously employed in a government post in German Silesia. After Hitler came to power, he moved to Palestine with his German wife, securing a chief meteorologist position in Palestine. Despite being interned, he continued to receive his salary of LP 50⁷⁷ monthly. Other notables were Mr de Lacluse, a Legion military officer of Austrian nobility, whose real name was said to be [?] Kuncka (?); Father Lesain from French Switzerland, a secretary to an episcopal curia in Syria or Palestine; and Dr Heidemann, about 50 years old, a Berlin Jew who acted in Mazra as a subcontractor, i.e. he took orders for the contractor, supplying the internees with foodstuffs and articles of daily necessity.

^d In the original: Feigge.

⁷⁶ Rudolf Feige (1889–1948) was born in Wrocław and moved to Palestine in 1935. He was a co-founder and the inaugural head of the Palestine Meteorological Service. He died during the siege of Jerusalem. H. Gutfeld, *Death of Weather Expert Loss to Science. Dr. Rudolf Feige*, “The Palestine Post”, 2 June 1948, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Palestine pound – the currency used in the Palestine Mandate between 1927 and 1948. It was pegged to the British pound sterling. As cited in: *The Statesman’s Year-Book. Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1947*, ed. by S.H. Steinberg, London 1947, p. XXIV.

The following information was gathered about the last five interned Polish citizens: *Artur Schilling*⁷⁸, approximately 30 years old, was either from Kościerzyna (?) or Gdańsk. A German defector, he spoke Polish with an accent but was fluent in French. Before the war, he served as a German-language broadcaster at a Warsaw radio station. He fled to Romania and was later evacuated using a passport under the name of *Barański. Zygmunt Weissmann*, around 42 years old and from Jarosław, practised the Mosaic faith. He worked as an insurance agent and had previously been employed in Palestine. Later, he settled in Lviv and worked for the Italian insurance firms *Assicurazioni Generali* or *Riunione Adriatica* as an authorised representative [...]. In Romania, he made a living as a chauffeur and was occasionally hired by Kutten to help in the campaign to send money to Poland⁷⁹. [...]

Czesław Szreniawa Horain, aged 36 and originally from Lviv, was of Roman Catholic faith. An engineer, he also served as a commercial proxy for the company "Zakłady Elektro Sp. Akc." in Łaziska Górne, Silesia, and lived in Mikołów. On 17 September 1939, he crossed the Polish-Romanian border. By 20 VI 1940, he had arrived in Istanbul and was evacuated with the first batch of civilian refugees on 1 XI 1940. His journey was to take him from Palestine to Japan, passing through Iraq, India, and Ceylon. His eventual goal was to reach Canada. Travelling at his own expense, he carried a substantial sum of money with him. Horain did not have military service and was classified under "D" category.

*Tomasz Łepkowski*⁸⁰, a cousin to Andrzej, 42 years old, originally from He was a landowner and oil industrialist. While in Romania, he continued to work on his inventions and undertook some tasks for the British embassy, particularly enjoying the patronage of Ambassador Hoare⁸¹ and his wife. In recognition of his services, the ambassadorial couple even held a reception in his honour upon his departure from Bucharest. During his stay in Bucharest, he was briefly arrested by the "green shirts"⁸² but was released shortly after. He was then urgently set to be evacuated to Cyprus but ended up joining a transport to Palestine

⁷⁸ While in Palestine, Artur Schilling (Krzywosiński, b. 1901) published *Tomorrow in Germany* (Jerusalem 1943, also available in Hebrew) and a collection of poems titled *Polnische Lieder* (Jerusalem 1944), using the pseudonym Antoni Krzewina. He was employed at an outpost of the (Polish) Interior Ministry in Jerusalem. After the war, he returned to Poland. PISM, Col. 551/33, bibliographic material; K.M., *Jutro w Niemczech*, "Gazeta Polska", 18 June 1943, p. 4; M. Brod, *Poezje niemieckie A. Krzewiny*, "W Drodze", 1 January 1945, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Cf. Weissmann's letters to Horain from Mazra'a, 7 October 1941 (postmark), 10 January 1942. Both letters signed with the name "Bielski" (PISM, Col. 551/75).

⁸⁰ Engineer Tomasz Łepkowski (b. 1898) came from a noble family and owned an oil mine in Brzozowiec near Sanok. He was released from the Mazra'a camp on 28 March 1941. While in Palestine, he patented two inventions in the military-technical domain. In 1943, he moved to the USA, where his brother Rafał (1903–1991) served as the secretary of the Polish embassy in Washington. PISM, Col. 551/38, material relating to T. Łepkowski (curriculum vitae, 19 October 1942; correspondence in Polish and English, 1941–1943).

⁸¹ Sir Reginald Hervey Hoare (1882–1954), British Envoy (not Ambassador) in Romania from 1935 to 1941. H. Batowski, *Z dziejów dyplomacji polskiej na obczyźnie (wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1941)*, Kraków–Wrocław 1984, pp. 313, 314, 432.

⁸² The movement being referred to is the fascist political movement known as the Iron Guard (Garda de Fier), which from 1940 was called the Legion Movement. Representatives of this movement became part of Ion Antonescu's pro-German government in September 1940. The "green shirts" were part of this organisation's uniform. It was disbanded following an unsuccessful coup attempt in January 1941. T. Dubicki, K. Dach, *Żelazny Legion Michała Archanioła. Z dziejów ruchu faszystowskiego w Rumunii*, Warszawa 1996.

instead. While in Istanbul, he encountered disputes over accommodation with a transport manager, possibly named Bielski (?). In 1920, he took part in a military campaign holding the rank of platoon sergeant. After this service, he did not join the army again due to a duodenal ulcer, placing him under “E” category.

[...]

20.11. T. Łepkowski was interned in Mazra. Upon arrival, he was noticeably ailing and exhausted.

23.11. Julian Zajde arrived from the “Lock-up” in Haifa. He had voluntarily arrived with a military transport to Haifa on 12 XI 1940 and was placed in a military camp at K[h]ayat Beach (a few kilometres south of Haifa). However, he was arrested on 16 XI and sent to the “Lock-up”. Zajde, aged 35 and originally from, was a co-owner of the “Argus” travel agency in Łódź, which he operated alongside his older brother⁸³. [...]

25.11. Bernard Rand, aged around 30 and originally from Hutsul Kosovo where his father ran a textile, or kilim, factory, worked as a travelling representative for the company. He was released from a high-security prison in Akko. He practised the Mosaic faith. He was married to Lola *Kitajewicz*, a Jewish singer. While he assisted Kutten in Romania, his primary role was as a chauffeur, driving Kutten to meetings with “Erich”⁸⁴ and others. His wife was transported from Poland to Bucharest by Miki[ciński]⁸⁵, who was compensated with some jewellery. Rand reached Palestine, arriving in Haifa via ship from Mersin. The ship was likely Egyptian. He arrived a few to several days ahead of Kutten since he was pressed for time due to his visa nearing its expiry. In Haifa, he perhaps unexpectedly encountered Szarkiewicz, who was responsible for both his and his wife’s arrests. He was detained in Akko, whilst his wife was held in a “Lock-up” in Haifa.

29.11. During a stormy night, Huculak managed to escape from the camp. He took advantage of the fierce storm that raged throughout the night, making his way out of the barracks through a gap in the fence. With great skill, he cut a hole in a corner of the high barbed-wire fence, granting him access to the administrative building’s courtyard. From there, he navigated through a lower outer fence, all the while evading the watchful eyes of the guards and the vigilant mastion rifle posts. H[uculak] had been residing in Kutten’s barrack alongside his comrades and had displayed apparent loyalty. Stefanowski even took care of him, organising morning marches around the barracks. Huculak’s father was a Rusyn, his mother was a Pole, he considered himself a Ukrainian; he studied law in Lviv. During the Bolshevik invasion, he assumed the role of a commissar or a similar position, claiming to have saved the lives of numerous Poles, although accusations to the contrary were made against him⁸⁶. The way he got into Mazra was mentioned above. Prior to his escape, he received an internment sentence until the end of the war, which served as the immediate catalyst for his flight to

⁸³ According to Horain’s notes Zajde was released on 30 June 1941, PISM, Col. 551/43. Cf. *ibidem*, Col. 551/59, Letter from L. Rozen-Ronski, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Erich Nobis (b. 1898?) – German intelligence officer from the Abwehr delegation in Wrocław. PISM, A.20.4/60, “Notatka w sprawie Kuttena i towarzyszy...” [“Note on Kutten and comrades...”], p. 1; R. Buczek, *Człowiek...*, pp. 10, 83–84.

⁸⁵ This references Samson Mikiciński, who was introduced earlier in this edition. See footnote 9.

⁸⁶ According to a letter from Major F. Wierzbicki to the Research Commission [Komisja Badawcza] of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Poland in Jerusalem of 16 May 1944, Huculak was to be imprisoned on the charge of “shooting and acting to the detriment of Polish citizens in the position of a head of the town of Bitkowo after it was occupied by the Bolsheviks in 1939”. PISM, A. 20.4/60.

Syria. He left behind a letter, expressing gratitude to his Polish comrades for their supportive response and issuing threats to the fleeing Polish authorities responsible for his arrest. Opinions regarding Huculak and his escape were divided at the time. It was deduced from his pursuit of French language acquisition that he had long harboured plans to flee to Syria⁸⁷.

1.12. A Mass was conducted by Fr. Lesain in an unoccupied barrack within Camp Vb. Following the service, the Arabs, situated in one of the camp's barracks, welcomed the Poles with gracious hospitality, serving them black coffee.

[...]

3.12 (?) the following individuals arrive in Mazra: Józef Brzeziński⁸⁸ aged about 35, originally from, professor of physical education in one of the secondary schools in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, corporal in the Polish Army. He stayed in Czerniowce, where he fell under Bolshevik occupation and then fled to Romania; a friend of Matusik, he arrived in Palestine on a military transport. Juliusz Rudnicki, aged 30–35, originally from, was employed before the war at the Lviv airport in the meteorological service or as an observer pilot; a very skilful precision mechanic and amateur watchmaker, and a violinist. Wilhelm Ptak⁸⁹, aged about 35, originally from Tarnów (?), official of the Polish Consulate in Berlin, and found his way to Vienna during the war. There, he was recruited to work on a cargo ship or tanker on the Danube, which eventually sailed to Romania. He managed to escape from the ship and arrived in Haifa aboard a Polish military transport.

5.12. (?) The following individuals arrived: Jan Okoński, who worked as a bookkeeper at the salt works in Wieliczka, served as an official of the embassy or a delegate of the Government in Bucharest during his exile, Franciszek Frezer⁹⁰, originally from Poznań, Kordaszewski⁹¹, an Armenian, who held the position of manager at the Café Club in Warsaw, he was married to an Englishwoman.

8.12. Second Sunday service and visit to the Arabs.

14.12. Tavory arrived alongside Lipiński, with whom both group and individual interviews were conducted. There was also the matter of the Christmas wafer.

16.12. The Poles were in a single barracks, except for Traubman. There was a choir rehearsal under Hemar's direction.

⁸⁷ In January 1941, Huculak was expelled from Syria and subsequently handed over to the British authorities. He was then reintegrated into imprisonment at Mazra'a on 6 March 1941. PISM, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain.

⁸⁸ He was released on 13 March 1941. Later, he served as a scoutmaster of the Polish Scouting Association in the East, engaged in scouting activities in Kenya, and served as the head of the Nairobi branch of the Polish Aid Society. PISM, Col. 251/19, Letter from Maj. J. Bińkowski, March 1941, p. 73; *Harcerstwo w Afryce 1941–1949*, ed. B.M. Pancewicz, London 1985, pp. 18, 72, 101, 118.

⁸⁹ Later, he was interned in the British camp at Latrun. In January or early February 1948, Ptak (b. 1904) was murdered in Jerusalem by unknown assailants. PISM, Col. 551/53, bibliographic flashcard.

⁹⁰ He was released at the end of March 1941, PISM, Col. 251/19, Letter from Maj. J. Bińkowski, March 1941, p. 73; *ibidem*, Col. 551/43, notes by Cz. Horain.

⁹¹ Antoni Kordaszewski (1902–1956) held the role of director at the Café Club in Warsaw before the outbreak of the war. Subsequently, in Jerusalem, he obtained a lease for the Loy Café, which he managed until 30 November 1947. Later, he relocated to the United Kingdom, where he established and owned the company A.C. Korda in London (mortgage loans). PISM, Col. 551/30 (bibliographic flashcard); A. Suchcitz, *A Polish Field in Central London. Poles Buried in Brompton Cemetery*, London 2021, p. 66; *Rocznik Polonii 1954/5*, ed. B.O. Jeżewski, London [1954], p. 98 (company advertisement).

13.12. Roughly speaking, Kordaszewski was released, and a few days later, Barański, who had previously been questioned once or twice by Lipiński.

17.12. First assemblies of Poles on passive resistance (non-cooperation) against collective punishment introduced by Pike. Around 15.12, the first meeting on the hunger strike of the Poles was held, with a telegram being drafted to the Consul General in Jerusalem, W.R. Korsak⁹², demanding his arrival. Lack of water.

19.12. Korsak sent ŁP 5 for Christmas via a special official from the Consulate. However, the donation was not accepted following a unanimous decision by the assembly of Poles in the camp.

20.12. Kazimierz Józefczyk⁹³, a Second Lieutenant in the Polish Army, who escaped from the “Oflag” in Stargard near Szczecin, has arrived. Before the war, he was a cashier at one of the oil companies in the Krosno basin.

22.12. A. Łepkowski was ill for several days with dysentery and received no medical attention. This situation was compounded by an incident involving Dr Tofah, an Arab.

23.12. Łepkowski was taken to a hospital in Haifa. Okoński was released.

24.12. Ptak was taken to a prison in Jerusalem for interrogation. On Christmas Eve, there was a “tree”, choir performances, Kutten’s speech, among other festivities.

27.12. Traubman was ill for several days with typhoid fever and was taken to a hospital in Haifa.

30.12. Completing objection forms for the Advisory Committee.

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A. 20.4/60, A. 49/176, A.XII.24/100, Kol. 25/31A, Kol. 251/19, 20,
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MSZ 800/42/0-/304, 310, 313, 325

⁹² Witold Ryszard Korsak (1897–2003) assumed his position in Jerusalem on 1 December 1940 and headed it until the end of February 1943. After leaving Jerusalem, he was Consul-General in Beirut (1943) and Istanbul (1944–1945), among other places. Since 1957 in the USA. *Polska służba zagraniczna po 1 września 1939 r.*, London 1954, p. 108.

⁹³ Józefczyk (b. 1914) was one of 22 officers who attempted to escape from Oflag II B Arnswalde (located in present-day Choszczno) on the night of 12/13 May 1940. Of those, 17 were captured by the Germans while the others successfully escaped. After being released from Mazra’a in March 1941, he made his way to the United Kingdom, where he served in the air force. S. Giziński, A. Szutowicz, *Oflag II B Arnswalde. Jenieckie losy*, Wrocław 2013, p. 98.

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