

CREATIVE WORK HOUSE IN OSIECZNA

After WWII, for almost nine years the Osieczna Castle was a property leased to the Institute for Western Affairs and old employees and associates of the Institute have fond recollections of the Castle and events hosted there. The Castle was a retreat, a place where national and international conferences and symposia were held and employees of the Institute and the regional Education Authority spent their holidays. Today, few people know that some land surrounding the Castle was also rented to the Institute and that in 1945-1953, the Castle was an important centre where research was done and social life was vivid and both had an impact on the Institute history in those difficult times.

The town of Osieczna is located in southwest Poland, about 9 kilometres from Leszno. The Castle is situated in the eastern part of the town, next to picturesque Łoniewskie Lake. The Castle was first mentioned in the 1450s. Originally, it was a property of the Borek family. Its subsequent owners were the Górkas, Czarnkowskis, Przyjemskis, Opalińskis, Gajewskis and the Skórzewskis. From 1793, it belonged to German families. From the 1850s to 1945, the Osieczna estate (12,000 hectares) and the Castle belonged to the von Heydebrand und der Lasa family. Their last German owner was Heinz von Heydebrand.¹ The Heydebrand family commemorated previous Polish owners of the Castle by mounting plaques informing about alternations to the Castle they had introduced. In the early 1900s, the Castle was rebuilt and the original Renaissance portal remounted. The shape of older parts of the Castle remained unaltered or underlined within the rebuilt parts.²

A well-known member of the last German family was Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa. He was an important chess master and author of highly valued publications on chess history and theory. Born in Berlin on the 17th of October 1818, in 1845-1864 he was a Prussian diplomat. After he retired from the diplomatic service, he moved to Osieczna (Storchnest) and devoted himself to the world of chess and to cataloguing his rich collection of manuscripts, old prints, periodicals and books on chess. That special and valuable collection was kept in a "chess room" furnished for that purpose only. Today, the collection is kept in the Kórnik Library (Chess Collection) of the Polish Academy of Sciences.³

In 1908-1911, the Castle was thoroughly refurbished by Reimer & Körte Architects from Berlin. Sanitary and technical installations were fitted including water and sewage pipes, and electrical wiring. New facilities included also a laundry, an ironing room and a mangle. After the refurbishment, the Castle had 3 floors. There were 39 rooms and a ballroom, a terrace, 6 corridors, 2 kitchens, pantries and other storage rooms, 7 bathrooms and separate water closets. The Castle was well furnished including carpets, lamps and other items many of which were highly valuable. That refers to some furniture, Meissen porcelain including tableware sets, and silverware.⁴

¹ The WWII Archive of the Institute for Foreign Affairs, File I.Z.Dok.I-833: Personal documents and correspondence of Heinz von Heydebrand, a German, owner of Osieczna, found at the Osieczna Castle after its takeover by the Institute for Western Affairs. At present, a rehabilitation hospital is there.

² M. Michalski, *Osieczna (Storchnest). Dawne widoki*. Osieczna - Poznań 2005, p. 38. See also B. Cynalewski, *Zamki i pałace Wielkopolski*, Poznań 1986.

³ http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasillo_von_der_Lasa [accessed 4 June 2014]; recollections of Maria Całkowa from Poznań. Tassilo Heydebrand und der Lasa died at Osiecznej on 27 July 1899. His restored tomb stone and those of other family members are at the Osieczna lapidarium established at the former evangelical cemetery in 2007.

⁴ *Walne zebranie Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 5-6/1955, p. 328.



The Osieczna Castle in the 1920s.
Photographs from the Institute
collection.

In documents available, there is no explanation how and why it happened that in spring 1945 a group of people working on the structure of the Institute for Western Affairs gathered at the looted Osieczna Castle. Furniture, paintings, other objects were gone then. There is only a short notice informing that since a large part of Poznań had been destroyed during the Poznań Battle in February 1945, some thought was given to locating a library supporting German studies in Osieczna. In spring 1945, a branch of the Institute was registered at the Starost's Office in Leszno and removed from the registry on the 1st of January 1946. Actually, the Institute got its first seat in Poznań at Chełmońskiego Street No 1 only in June 1945. Earlier its "premises" were but 2 rooms at the former Industry and Commerce Chamber at Mickiewicza Street No 31.⁵

On 12 May 1945, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform authorized the Institute for Western Affairs to use the Osieczna Castle and an attached plot (the land was subdivided) which included a park, horticultural land and a house, for a year. The horticultural land was to be cultivated and produce vegetables and fruit for the staff and guests of the Castle. Possible surplus crops in great demand were to be sold and profits invested in the horticultural farm. Earlier, all those properties were taken over by the Ministry for the purpose of the land reform.

The Castle, leased to the Institute for a year, was to be used as a place for scientific work, training administration officers and teachers working in the Regained (western) Territories, and for cultural and social purposes. Izabela Drobnikowa was responsible for the Castle management on behalf of the Institute, and her task was to prepare the Castle to serve as a Creative Work House.⁶

The formal handover of the Osieczna Castle encountered difficulties however. In 1945, a local Peasants' Self-Help Union was registered and claimed its rights to the Castle, the attached park and some land which was to be subdivided. Its head, Feliks Stępniewski, and employees had already seized some valuable furniture, porcelain, a Bechstein piano, carpets, table linen and other items and stored them at the Union premises.⁷ Some other Castle belongings, mainly silverware, were "kept safe" at the local police station. Also several dozen pieces of furniture and other household furnishings had been "rented" to private persons against a signed receipt, for a "short" time.⁸

The Institute intervened appealing to various bodies of the state administration and finally, on 30 August 1945, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform issued a document ordering that:

1. the place [Castle], together with the park and waters, in the post-German Osieczna estate near Leszno, shall be rented for 1 year to the Institute of Western Affairs and solely for its use;
2. in addition, a farm of 16.5 hectares formerly owned by Jämer, a German, shall be allocated to the Institute for Western Affairs;
3. a regulation shall be issued and addressed to the Leszno Powiat Authority [Powiatowy Urząd Ziemski] to the effect that movables removed from the Castle are returned to it;
4. following the ordered allocation, all possible measures shall be used to help the Institute for Western Affairs to be supplied with the necessary livestock and furnishings.⁹

Finally, the Institute for Western Affairs formally started the lease of the Osieczna Castle and its surroundings through the Leszno Powiat Authority on 29 September 1945. On 30 July 1947, the final lease agreement for almost 10 years (2 October 1946 - 30 June 1956) was signed.

⁵ M. Pollak, *Instytut Zachodni. Powstanie i rozwój organizacyjny w ciągu dwudziestolecia*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 3-4/1955, p. 472; Archives of the Institute for Western Affairs [henceforth WIZ], File 85/1. Osieczna; H. Kuryłowa Sosnowska, *Gościńce i rozstajne drogi*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 2002, p. 191.

⁶ WIZ, Files 85/1 and 85/2. Osieczna.

⁷ WIZ, File 85/1-3. Osieczna.

⁸ WIZ, File 85/2. Osieczna.

⁹ WIZ, File 85/1. Osieczna.

Jerzy Celichowski, Deputy Head of the Agriculture and the Land Reform Department at the Voivodship Office in Poznań signed it on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform, and Julian Hubert signed it on behalf of the Institute of Western Affairs in Poznań. The agreement covered the lease of the Osieczna Castle and the plot. An important paragraph read that the Institute would not pay a rent for the plot and, instead, it would bear all Castle refurbishment costs.¹⁰

After the document was signed, the Institute tried again to have some Castle furnishings returned as they were illegally possessed by the local Peasants' Self-Help Union, the police and private persons. According to archived correspondence, most removed furnishings were recovered. A dozen or so pieces of furniture and other items were used to furnish the Institute premises in Poznań and of its Warsaw branch. Efforts to make private persons return the "rented" items were not successful.¹¹

Shortly after the Institute started to manage the Castle, called also the palace by the Institute employees, the Institute decided that its means were insufficient to run its activities there and keep the Castle in good condition. What was needed was an income yielding farm together with livestock. To make the situation more difficult, the plot allocated was subject to mandatory crop quotas production. Consequently, on 2 June 1945, the then director of the Institute formally applied to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform to allocated to the Institute a former German farm. The application was supported by the Voivodship Office in Poznań.¹² On 20 October 1945, the Ministry consented to the takeover of the farm of 16.5 hectares identified already in its decision of 30 August 1945 quoted above. The farm consisted of a fully furnished family house, a stable and other facilities for keeping livestock, agricultural tools and machines. At the time, however, the farm was informally possessed by Franciszek Gola who viewed it as an abandoned property. Gola had no intention to pass the farm to the Institute. His letter of 19 September 1945, addressed to the Poviast Authority in Leszno read:

Having returned from captivity to my liberated country, until today I have worked with vigour and joy, and first of all I have been very happy that I, long time a physical worker, have finally been given a piece of my own land and that I no longer be a slave of capitalists and landowners. However, as it has turned out, I was deeply mistaken for now members of the landowners' group and alleged representatives of the Institute for Western Affairs speak up. Citizen Professor Wojciechowski who is close to Minister Mikołajczyk is their mentor. They were able to introduce confusion arguing that the farm was uninhabited and with this lie effectively argued that my farm should be passed to the Institute for Western Affairs in Osieczna. As a worker I thus conclude that although the landed gentry and landowners were removed from their estates, new landowners have replaced them. Doctors, professors and other representatives of the so-called scientific world try to snatch the land from a peasant using mean and vicious measures and to turn peasants into stooges and farm-hands again.

A month later, on 25 October 1945, Franciszek Gola sent his handwritten statement to the Institute which read:

I hereby declare that the content of the letter was composed by Citizen Stępniewski. The letter signed by me and its copy were immediately [underlined] taken by Citizen Talarczyk. I also declare that I do not agree with the appeal content and I withdraw allegations made against the Institute for Western Affairs and persons mentioned there, and I apologize.¹³

¹⁰ WIZ, File 85/1. Osieczna.

¹¹ WIZ, File 85/1-3. Osieczna.

¹² Polish Academy of Sciences, Archives in Warsaw, Poznań Branch, Materiały Zygmunta Wojciechowskiego [Zygmunt Wojciechowski archive], File P III- 8 [henceforth PAN Archive, Poznań Branch]

¹³ WIZ, File 85/2. Osieczna.

In the end, on 20 October 1945, the farm was taken over by the Institute in the presence of its deputy director Wanda Kielczewska. For 3 years, the farm was run by Stanisław Mikołajczak, his wife and his brother Franciszek.¹⁴

On 18 May 1945, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform decided that the Institute would get a one-year lease of the Jeziorki estate of 283.7 hectares, including a residential house, outbuildings and livestock. The post-German estate, located 1.5 km from Osieczna and 10 km from Leszno, had been designated to undergo the land reform. After putting it back to use, the potential profits were to finance scientific publications of the Institute and to cover expenditure on the administration and management of the Osieczna Castle as a creative work retreat and a training and holiday centre.¹⁵ Some surplus crops were to be used by the Institute canteens at the Castle and in Poznań. In July 1946, Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk, secretary general of the Institute, was made responsible for supervising the Jeziorki estate in July 1946. The estate was first managed by Mieczysław Kryśka and from 1 November 1947 to 31 March 1949 by Marian Woźny. The Institute also operated (lease) a controlled hunting zone which was part of the estate but had no right to organise hunting there.¹⁶

Making the Jeziorki estate operational was difficult. To the end of 1948, the situation was described as follows:

The estate was allocated to the Institute for Western Affairs by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform for 10 years. The initial condition of the estate, in particular the lack of workforce, workhorses and the needed equipment, made its management very difficult, both in terms of the estate operation and its financial situation. Gradually, the condition of the estate keeps improving and it is expected that next year the estate will yield some profit.¹⁷

On 30 June 1947, the lease of the estate was extended from 20 May 1946 (backdating) to 30 June 1956. However, Article 16 of the agreement read:

Shall the need to subdivide the Jeziorki estate arise before the date specified in Article 1 of this agreement, 'the lessor' has the right to terminate the agreement unilaterally giving a 3 month notice and to do so without any compensation for 'the lessee'.¹⁸

The Jeziorki estate was leased by the Institute for 3 years only. In the first 2 years, the focus was on its proper management. In the 3rd year, when the estate started yielding profit, it turned out that the estate was to be taken over by the PGR that is State Agricultural Farms to which estates started to be allocated in 1948. The Institute tried hard to block the takeover. It proposed that the Osieczna Castle would serve academics not only from Poznań but also from Wrocław and Cracow and its operations would be backed up by the Jeziorki estate. At the same time it suggested to the Department of the Agricultural System Restructuring at the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform that an experimental field station would be located at the Jeziorki estate and serve research carried by the newly established Commission for Agricultural and Forestry Sciences at the Poznań Society of Friends of Sciences. However, on 2 August 1949, the Ministry took the decision that the Jeziorki estate was to be overtaken by the PRG and that "there is no need to establish an experimental station and the scope of research proposed can be carried in any experimental agricultural station, the number of which is already too high considering the needs of the State".¹⁹ Formally, the Jeziorki farm was passed over to the PGR on

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ WIZ, File 85/8. Jeziorki. The letter of 20 May 1947 written by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Reform and addressed to the Poznań Voivodship Office read: "he Jeziorki lease agreement should include a reservation that the user will return the estate or its part with no compensation if the need of land allotment arises".

¹⁶ WIZ, File 85/2. Osieczna and Jeziorki.

¹⁷ *Z życia Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 12/1948, p. 676.

¹⁸ WIZ, File 85/7 and 8. Jeziorki.

¹⁹ WIZ, File 85/8, Jeziorki. It is worth to mention that according to an inspector overseeing the takeover of the Jeziorki estate on behalf of State Agricultural Farms: "the estate has been managed in an exemplary way and that refers also to crop cultivation (though the yields could be higher but the soil is poor and fertilizers are not

27 August 1949 and from that moment the Institute had to bear all expenditure on the Osieczna Castle alone.²⁰

The Osieczna Municipality Administration together with the mayor (Gosiewski) and presidents of the local Peasants' Self-Help Cooperative were against the Castle being used by the Institute. They put much effort to make running the Castle by the Institute difficult. Those two institutions and their leaders thought that the Castle should house an agricultural school or, possibly, a children's home. In 1946 and in two following years, in winter, the Institute usually rented 3 rooms in the Castle to the agriculture school in Osieczna to meet the demands of the Municipal Authority. However, the worries of the Institute that it would be difficult to repossess the rented rooms in summer, turned out to be true and that situation did not ease relations between the Institute and the Municipal Authority.²¹

To improve those relations, the Institute, including Zygmunt Wojciechowski, organised special meetings at the Castle to which the Municipality authorities and the starost of the Leszno Poviát were invited. At those meetings the work and objectives of the Institute in the area of German studies and its current operations were presented. Professor Wojciechowski underlined that the headquarters of the Institute were in Poznań but its unit in Osieczna, leased for 10 years, was also important to the Institute. He appealed to the local community to appreciate the work of the Institute and "to establish relations to the satisfaction of both parties".²²

Already in November 1945, the first of several of the so-called "western" courses for teachers and educational officers working in western Poland was held at the Castle on the initiative of both the Institute and the Office for Regained Territories at the Ministry of Education. Those courses were taught in 1945-1948. They were 7 to 10 days long and the number of participants was 30 to 40 persons including middle school teachers, inspectors and other educational officers working in the Regained Territories. The courses were managed by Maria Kielczewska, Vice-Director of the Institute. Their focused on history, geography and current affairs in the western territories of Poland. Other topics covered included historical and linguistic bonds of the western lands with Poland, and settlement issues including recent migrations of Poles from the former eastern lands of Poland. Speakers were mainly the employees of the Poznań University and of the Institute e.g. Florian Barciński, Karol Górski (Toruń University), Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk, Roman Pollak, Bożena Stelmachowska, Stanisław Waszak, Zygmunt Wojciechowski, Stanisława Zajchowska; and younger scientists like Antoni Czubiński, Witold Hensel, Gerard Labuda, Bogumił Krygowski, Kazimierz Kolańczyk, Maria Kielczewska, Zdzisław Rajewski, Władysław Chojnacki, Maria Gosieniecka, Władysław Nawrocki and Mieczysław Suchocki. Among speakers were also journalists – Stanisław Kubiak and H. Barański, and Leopold Gluck who then headed a department at the Ministry for the Regained Territories. Inspectors from the Ministry of Education and the Poznań Educational Authority participated in those courses. In addition to those courses, seminars were organised to discuss some presented issues in depth.²³

available), meadows are in a very good condition, the condition of buildings is very good – the condition of the dairy and pigsty is exemplary. The estate administration is professional and vigorous". (Report on the condition of the Jeziorki State Agricultural Farm managed by the Institute for Western Affairs until 19 August 1949, dated 20 August 1949).

²⁰ *Z kroniki Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 5-6/1055, p. 328. According to the settlement, the Institute was to be paid over 2 million PLN (1949) for its investment in the Jeziorki estate. That sum was denominated (890 000 PLN) in 1950. As late as in November 1951, the Institute kept enquiring about the payment at the Ministry of Finance but to no avail.

²¹ In June 1948, two men came to the Osieczna Castle. They identified themselves as employees of the Social Care Department at the Poznań Voivodship Office and said they searched for facilities for a future children's house. They suggested that the Castle was not used properly and might well be used as a children's house. The memo about that "visit" ends with a note by Wojciechowski saying: "that visit was not on the initiative of the Voivodship Office (WIZ, File 85/6, Osieczna).

²² *Z życia Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 7/8/1946, p. 715.

²³ *Kronika*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 6/1945, pp.369-370, and 6/1947, p. 586.

In the summer of 1945, the Institute started to work on publishing several series including one on the western lands of Poland. In 1949-1950, at the Osieczna Castle, many discussions and conferences were held on over a dozen monographs to be part of the *Ziemie Staropolski* [Old Poland's Lands], *Monografia Odry* [River Oder Monographs], and the *Biblioteka Ziem Odzyskanych* [Library of Regained Territories] series. Their authors included Andrzej Grodek, Marian Friedberg, Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk, Maria Kielczewska-Zalewska, Kazimierz Kolańczyk, Józef Kostrzewski, Gerard Labuda, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Bolesław Olszewicz, Kazimierz Piwarski, Władysław Rusiński, Mikołaj Rudnicki, Michał Szaniecki, Stanisława Zajchowska and August Zierhoffer.

It was also in Osieczna where meetings devoted to the preparation of and editorial work on the *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich* – an encyclopaedia of Slavs' culture history, were held. Editors of the "Przegląd Zachodni" and "Życie i Myśl" [Life and thought] and the supervisory board of the Institute held their meetings there too.

In 1946-1951, the Institute had frequent contacts with members of the cultural and academic life in Czechoslovakia. In November 1946, an exhibition titled *Czechoslovakia 1939-1945* was held at the Museum of Greater Poland in Poznań, and writers, journalists and activists in the area of culture from that country were invited. In result of their talks with Józef Kostrzewski (Poznań University) who was vice-president of the Slavonic Committee and a member of the Institute, a cooperation agreement was reached. It included exchanging publications, organising meetings with their authors and cultivating direct contacts.²⁴

An outcome of the thus established cooperation was a Polish-Czech conference aimed at discussing further scientific and cultural cooperation. It was held in Osieczna on 9-10 September 1947 and the delegation of 20 people from Czechoslovakia spent several days in Poland. Members of the delegation were scientists specialising in various fields, writers, poets and journalists. Among them were Jan Filip specialising in prehistory (Prague), Józef Macurek specialising in history of Eastern Europe (Brno), Karol Krejčí specialising in Polish and Czech literature (Prague), Jan Pilař, poet and translator of Polish poetry, and Jarosław Šalada, director of the Melantrich Publishing House in Prague. Polish participants of the conference included Jan Czekanowski – anthropologist and ethnologist, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński – linguist and Slavist, Karol Górski, Karol Maleczyński and Kazimierz Tymieniecki – historians, Roman Pollak and Zygmunt Szwejkowski – literature historians, and director of the Institute Zygmunt Wojciechowski – lawyer and historian. New resolutions concerned establishment of a new Czechoslovak Studies group at the Institute, continuation of cooperation between Polish and Czechoslovak universities on education of young researchers and language teachers, as well as student exchange and scholarships. It was decided to encourage joint publications in Polish and Czech languages in scientific periodicals, to exchange publications to complete old library collections and to regularly update collections of recent publications.

On 9 September 1947, an official dinner was held. At the dinner, poet and translator of Polish poetry Jan Pilař read his yet unpublished poem titled *Greetings from Poland* and Tadeusz Różewicz, then a young poet and playwright, instantly translated it into Polish (see below).²⁵

The guests from Czechoslovakia also participated in Jan Amos Komensky-Comenius - celebrations in Leszno. Comenius was a Czech philosopher and pedagogue who lived in Leszno in 1628-1656. Celebrations were attended by Stefan Wierbłowski, Poland's ambassador to Czechoslovakia, and Józef Hejret, ambassador of Czechoslovakia to Poland. Czechoslovakian guests visited Szczecin where an industrial convention on Western Pomerania was held and they also participated in meetings at Wrocław and Poznań universities.

²⁴ *Z życia Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 12/1946, p. 1083.

²⁵ PAN Archive, Poznań Branch, File PIII-8.; *Z życia Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 10/1947, pp. 912-914.

Pozdravení Polsku

Jan Pilář

Na špičky stoupám a hledím
přes zemi širokou,
kde ještě kouří
z ulitých požárů,
kde v ruinách tlejí křídla včerejších bouří
a osleplí dýmem si nevidí dosud
do očí na dno.

Jen děti je učí říkati
Mír
tak snadno,
jak by byl odjakživa.

Slyším, skřivan v povětří zpívá
nad člověkem, který převrací zemi
ohnivým rádlím.
Vidím, cihly řežavě rudé
dávají znamení světu,
že byla a bude
Varšava bližinka Prahy.

To ty ses vrátil ruku v ruce se mnou
a měl jsi vidění stejná.
Za ty, kteří se nevrátili,
krvavým prstenem vtiskli jsme pečet
na příští listy.

Dnes otevru okna,
jež od nás vedou k tobě
a nechám je dokořán otevřená.

Aby bylo slyšet
stébla roztančená,
ruce zdvihající tíhu,
aby provětrala stará spaleniště
přívánem lídu.

Aby bylo vidět
na dno ohvězděné,
tam kde zvoní vlny Visly stříbropěnné.

Aby bylo možno
podívat se zrána
na oblaka Polsky pluhy rozoraná.

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WYDZIAŁ KRAJOWY ZASTRZEŻONE

Pozdrowienie Polski

Jan Pilař

Na palce się wspinam i widzę
ziemię szeroką,
gdzie jeszcze dymy
gasnących pożarów,
gdzie tlą się w ruinach
skrzydła burz wczorajszych
i ludzie od dymu oślepli
dna swoich oczu nie widzą.

Tylko dzieci uczą ich wymawiać:
Pokój
tak łatwo
jakby on był od początku świata.

Słyszę jak skowronek napełnił śpiewem
powietrze nad człowiekiem, który ~~erze~~ ^(mówca) ziemię
ognistym ostrzem.
Widzę, jak cegły czerwonym płomieniem
dają znać światu:
była i będzie
Warszawa siostrą Pragi.

Tys wrócił ze mną ramię przy ramieniu
i śniliśmy jeden sen.
Za tych, którzy nie wrócili
krwawyśmy znak wyciśnęli
na kartach przyszłości.

Dziś okna otworzę
co od nas do ciebie prowadzą
i zostawię je rozwarne na oścież.

Żeby było słyhać
łany roztańczone,
żeby było widać ręce dźwigające,
żeby przewietrzała stara spalenizna,
żeby oddech ludu napełnił tę ziemię.

^{spójnie}
Aby można dojrzeć
na dno wygwieżdżone,
tam, gdzie fale Wisły srebrnopiennej dzwonią.

Aby można było
popatrzeć się zrana
na polskie obłoki pługiem rozorane.

Several years later, lawyer Juliusz Bardach (Warsaw University) wrote a memo dated 5 March 1952. The memo was written at the request of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and concerned the Institute. It read: "The Czechoslovak section does not exhibit any scientific activity and the Czechoslovak chronicle in "Przegląd Zachodni" does not follow any defined conception but mechanically records facts in various spheres of life and it does not play any important role in learning about life in fraternal Czechoslovakia by Polish scientific community".²⁶ In 1955, "Głos Wielkopolski", a Poznań daily, published a short communiqué reading that "The Czechoslovak Studies section of the Institute for Western Affairs was closed after having completed its initial tasks".²⁷

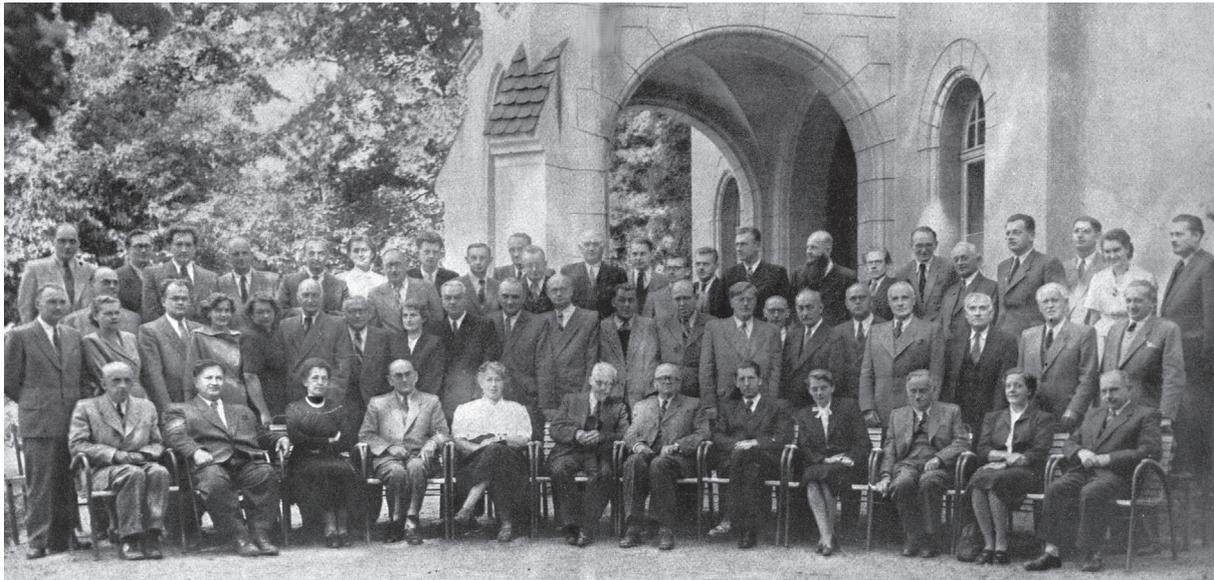
It is worth recollecting that on 20 September 1951, at the Osieczna Castle, a special event to honour professor Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński was held. It was a celebration of his double jubilee – his 60th birthday and the 40th anniversary of his scientific work. Lehr-Spławiński was a linguist and Slavist and professor of universities in Lviv, Cracow and Poznań, and a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences [Polska Akademia Umiejętności]. The Institute dedicated to him its second 1951 issue of "Przegląd Zachodni" and it was Stanisław Kulczyński, then the first deputy-chairman of the Wrocław University Supervisory Board who handed the new issue to Lehr-Spławiński. The event was attended by many distinguished scholars. A photograph was taken showing distinguished philologists, linguists and literary historians: Ryszard Gansiniec, Zenon Klemensiewicz, Władysław Kuraszkiwicz, Jerzy Kuryłowicz, Tadeusz Milewski, Kazimierz Nitsch, Michał Pollak, Mikołaj Rudnicki, Franciszek Sławski, Zdzisław Stieber, Stanisław Urbańczyk, Stefan Wierczyński; historians: Stanisław Bodniak, Aleksander Gieysztor, Andrzej Grodek, Władysław Kowalenko, Tadeusz Lewicki, Tadeusz Manteuffel, Kazimierz Piwarski, Tadeusz Silnicki, Kazimierz Tymieniecki, Zygmunt Wojciechowski; archaeologists: Witold Hensel, Rudolf Jamka, Konrad Jażdżewski, Józef Kostrzewski; lawyers: Stanisław Bodniak, Marian Jedlicki, Alfons Klafkowski, Józef Matuszewski, Michał Sczaniecki; anthropologist and ethnologist Jan Czekanowski, ethnologist Józef Gajek, botanist Stanisław Kulczyński, sociologist Paweł Rybicki, art historian, poet and literary critic Wojśław Molé, and essayist and journalist Aleksander Rogalski.

Many speeches were given and toasts raised at the dinner. Zygmunt Wojciechowski spoke on behalf of the Institute and recollected his pre-WWII, war time and most recent scientific cooperation with Lehr-Spławiński. Other interesting speeches were given by Jan Dąbrowski, deputy-Rector of the Jagiellonian University, who was a friend of Lehr-Spławiński since their gymnasium times [middle school], and by Kazimierz Nitsch, who was his university teacher. Nitsch's toast was cordial and funny. He said that his "contribution to Lehr-Spławiński's career as a scientist was that he had recommended to publish Lehr-Spławiński's first work written as a student of the Jagiellonian University. If he had not done it, the 60th birthday of Lehr-Spławiński would be celebrated on the day but the 40th anniversary of his research work would not."²⁸

²⁶ *Instytut Zachodni w dokumentach*, A. Choniawko and Z. Mazur (eds), Poznań 2006, p. 115.

²⁷ "Głos Wielkopolski" Supplement No. 24, 19 June 1955.

²⁸ *Z życia Instytutu Zachodniego*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 9/10 1951, p. 311. In the course of preparing the event, the director of the Institute wrote a letter to the Manager of the Osieczna Castle which read: "Participants will pay 15 PLN for the first day of their stay and 15 PLN for the second too. On that day, President of the Institute Board Professor Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński will be honoured with a commemorative publication [...]. On the second day, the Institute will hold high tea and for that purpose it dedicates 15 PLN per person. Should the participants wish to be served alcoholic beverages, they would buy them themselves. Such a purchase is not of interest to the House Management." (WIZ, File 85/5, Osieczna.)



Professor Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński's jubilee at Osieczna. 20 September 1951.

Sitting (from the left):

Standing, first row (from the left):

Standing, top row (from the left):

In 1945-1954, the Institute managed to publish over 90 books and nearly 500,000 copies of them. Publications included series like *Studium niemcoznawcze Instytutu Zachodniego* [German Studies], *Badania nad okupacją niemiecką w Polsce* [Studies on German Occupation of Poland], *Documenta Occupationis*, *Biblioteka Ziemi Lubuskiej* [Lubusz Land Library] and the already mentioned *Monografia Odry* and *Ziemie Staropolski*. In that time also about 1200 pages of the "Przegląd Zachodni" periodical were published. Most editorial work was done at the Osieczna Castle. The reason was that the Institute premises at Chełmońskiego Street in Poznań were very modest. In Osieczna, on the other hand, accommodation was good, catering provided and it was quiet and relaxing. In other words, at the Castle one could really focus on research and tedious editorial work.

The Osieczna Castle was a place of conventions, conferences, meetings, research and editorial work. It was also a place to rest and relax in. Each summer, about 50 people enjoyed their holidays there. They were employees of the Institute, the Poznań University and the Św. Wojciech Publishing House, and their families.²⁹

The Castle administrators were Izabela Drobniakowa (from June 1945 to January 1947 and from August 1949 to December 1953), Aleksandra Szajkowska (from August 1947 to May 1949), and Halina Całkowa (from August 1949 to December 1953). Halina Całkowa's bonds with Osieczna were particularly strong. She worked for the Institute from 1 December 1945 to 31 May 1992 when she retired. From December 1945 till February 1952, she was the administrative officer responsible for Osieczna affairs. In fact, her role was much greater. She was an excellent organiser of scientific conferences and meetings held at the Castle and its good spirit.³⁰ In her short published recollections of her work for the Institute, she wrote about the Osieczna Castle as follows:

²⁹ It is worth mentioning that in 1947 and later, in official letters written by the Institute, there were no references to the Osieczna Castle or Palace. Instead the facilities are called the Conference House, Conference-Leisure House (1951), Scientific Work House (1953), the Centre or simply Osieczna. The probable reason was not to annoy local party authorities and high communist officers by calling the lease a castle or palace.

³⁰ Personal files kept at the Institute.

Throughout the entire period when it was operated by the Institute, it served as a conference and research facility. There scientific conferences, symposia, and working meetings were held. I remember their participants being fully committed, discussing evaluations and future plans. Discussions were animated, free of fear, slogans and apathy. Events were organised by various academic centres. At the Castle many researchers prepared their works for publication and they were mainly employees of the Institute. [...] Professor [Wojciechowski] also liked the Castle. He felt good there. He rested there to have the strength to carry on his work. There he designed work plans of the Institute and chaired conferences and working meetings. There he met with his friends and employees of the Institute. Also there he offered ideas of leisure activities such as wild mushroom picking, walks in the wood, to the lake, evening events with music, singing, dancing and fun. Regular residents participated in them. I remember a fancy dress ball organised by female holidaymakers who were encouraged by Professor [Wojciechowski] to do so. I can still recall the admiration on the part of male participants in various age at the sight of ladies dressed in colourful cloths. They looked charming.³¹

A similar short description of her summer stay at the Castle can be found in published recollections of Halina Kiryłowa Sosnowska who was married to one of the Institute founders and the first editor-in-chief of the "Przegląd Zachodni".

It is difficult to describe how happy and relaxed I felt in the spring and warm summer of 1945. We spent them at the beautiful castle on a lake, surrounded with old trees in a huge park. In a meadow by the lake, a group of storks taught their off-springs preparing them to their long autumn flight. Behind the meadow there was a pine forest. I did not have to worry about food because the Institute provided it in appreciation of Kirył's work. Kirył visited us often and we would walk the road to Lipno to meet him. When the work on typescripts and *Dolny Śląsk* [Lower Silesia] began, he stayed with us in Osieczna and commuted to Poznań. In the summer, there were many more people at the Castle. First guests, academics often with their families, arrived from Warsaw, Cracow.³²

In the Institute archive there are menus of the Castle canteen. Thus we know what was served to guests and employees of the Institute. For breakfast they usually had rolls and bread, butter and lard, white and hard cheeses, fried cheese, marmalade and plum jam, coffee substitute, tea and milk. For dinner, served at lunch time, they had a soup, usually vegetable, tomato or clear beetroot soups or home-made broth. For the main, there were all kinds of dumplings, eggs, vegetable dishes, boiled or fired meet (pork, veal or beef), cooked vegetables or salads. Fruit compote or some pudding was for dessert. For supper, usually bread, butter, cheese, various kinds of pâté, rarely cured meat or sausages, sometimes cooked groats, cold meatballs or a tripe soup were served. Depending on the season also fresh tomatoes, fresh or pickled cucumbers, radishes, and other fruit and vegetables were offered. Almost all vegetables and fruit were home-grown that is they were produce of a vegetable "garden" and an orchard belonging to the Castle. Until 1949, many products like cheeses, fresh and cured meats were delivered to the canteens in Osieczna and Poznań from the Jeziorki estate.³³

In its early years, the Institute flourished. Its scientific and publishing achievements were impressive. This situation, however, did not last long. To the end of the 1940s, accusations of nationalism and clericalism multiplied. Increasingly, leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party were annoyed with independent decisions shaping the profile of the Institute taken by its director Zygmunt Wojciechowski. His close colleagues were accused of pursuing clandestine activities, arrested, and sentenced to many years in prison. They were attorney Jan Jacek Nikisch, lawyer Edward Serwański, and Kirył Sosnowski - the first editor-in-chief of the

³¹ H. Całka, *Zamek – Osieczna -Dom Pracy Twórczej IZ*, "Przegląd Zachodni" No. 3/1994, p. 142.

³² H. Kiryłowa Sosnowska, *Gościńce ...*, p. 192.

³³ WIZ, File 85/9 Jeziorki.

“Przegląd Zachodni”. Subsidies shrank and, consequently, the number of employees had to be reduced. The quoted above memo by Bardach read:

Politically, the Institute has been taken by a group of Catholics attracted by Zygmunt Wojciechowski. The administrative-technical staff has also been selected using political Catholicism criteria. The party has no actual influence on the work of the Institute, in particular on the topics selected and methodology used.³⁴

It was increasingly clear that the Institute did not fit the new model of scientific institutions proposed in 1951 by the Polish Academy of Sciences officially founded in 1952. In January 1954, the scientific secretariat of the Academy decided to take over the Osieczna Castle and establish its Creative Work House there. On 1 February 1954 documents were signed. The acceptance report was signed by the head of the administrative office of the Academy - Ludwik Hilgier, and by Zygmunt Wojciechowski. It was acknowledged that there were no liabilities related to the running of the Castle by the Institute. The inspection protocol confirmed that earlier inventories reflected the current situation. The Institute archive keeps a 23 page inventory of the Castle as taken over by the Academy. The inventory covers furniture, paintings, lamps, clocks, silverware, porcelain, musical instruments and other items.³⁵ Till 1959 the Osieczna Castle was administered by the Polish Academy of Sciences and then was handed on to the Voivodship Health Department in Poznań.

Tłumaczenie: Hanna Mausch

Annex

In the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, there are several secret reports from the early 1950s focusing on Zygmunt Wojciechowski – Director of the Institute for Western Affairs, and other people working for the Institute and collaborating with it. The informative value in the reports varies and the reports are not fully legible due to the quality of print (microform images of manifold paper). The report below is almost fully legible and interesting enough to be enclosed here. It was written in November 1951 at the Osieczna Castle. The apparent flows of its English translation reflect some features of the imperfect language of the original and its stylistics.

Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance
File BU 01208/158.

Source [informer]: "Edward" Poznań, 24 November 1951
Officer [literarily "received by"]: Konieczny Top secret!
Date: 17.11.1951

SECRET REPORT

Osieczna between 22.10. - 13.11.1951.

On 22.10., professor Wojciechowski and a team of employees of the Institute for Western Affairs arrived at Osieczna: Zofia Hilczer (her father is an employee of the Institute) Halina Całkosz* (her husband, an officer of the Home Army was killed in the Warsaw Uprising), Ha-

³⁴ *Instytut Zachodni w dokumentach...*, p.115; H. Olszewski, *Instytut Zachodni 1944-1994*, in: *Instytut Zachodni 50 lat*, Poznań 1994, p.24.

³⁵ AWZ, File 85/8, Osieczna. After the Institute had to give up the lease of the Osieczna Castle, its furnishing got scattered. Part of the Helldorff family and the Heydebrand family's archive is kept at the State Archives and Raczyński Library in Poznań and part at the Kórnik Library where the Osieczna Castle collection of books and periodicals is also kept.

lina Tłokowa, typist, and Janina Buzanowska (typist). They came to do the following work: to type down, dictate and critically edit the Polish translation of the well-known work of Soviet scientist professor B.D. Grekov titled "Istoria Rusi"; over 5.000 pages. In addition, from the Institute, also Zofia (Alina) Łastowska came (employed at the Institute Library, to support that work – as she knows Russian well (originally she comes from Vilnius); her father was a professor of the Agriculture Faculty, currently professor of the Poznań University). All that team really did the said work as I saw the number of pages growing. The translation of the "Istoria Rusi" was done by Zofia Hilczerówna, a third year prehistory student at the Poznań University. They were very much in a hurry to complete the work because the translation is to be sent to Moscow as soon as possible, where professor Grekov would like to check it. He knows Polish well as he stayed in the so-called Congress Poland in times of the Russian Empire.

Three days after his arrival to Osieczna, professor Wojciechowski fell very seriously ill (physicians were unable to diagnose the illness exactly; it could have been pneumonia as high doses of penicillin were administered). He had fever of 37.5 to 40°C. In this situation his wife Maria Wojciechowska arrived to assist him. He recovered on 13.11. after the treatment and Wojciechowska stayed in Osieczna phoning Poznań several times a day. Her calls concerned household matters, the illness and talks with physicians. Professor Horsten** M.D. apparently lives at their place in Poznań [?] or concerned scientific or organisation matters. On 26 and 27 (Saturday-Sunday), at a phone invitation, the rector of the Wrocław University professor Wysłouch came with his wife, a physician. In informal conversations, professor Wysłouch expressed his huge dissatisfaction with current political relations in Poland. He told strongly biased jokes on the political situation and he also said that he would prefer to withdraw from the university life and all that mess. His comments on methods used in economy statistics were most malicious. According to him they do not reflect the reality at all. All persons mentioned above, except professor Wojciechowski and his wife who did not join them at the table, listened to the conversation nodding approvingly. The message was that the present situation could not last for long, that all that had to end and change. Wysłouch and his wife left for Wrocław on Monday morning (29.10).

Ziembowski, a former landowner (at present a state horse breeding farm in a village near Osieczna) was a frequent guest of Wojciechowski. I have not met him but I have learned he is an old, elegant man very critical about the actual present reality. Besides, in Osieczna, professor Wojciechowski before his illness frequently visited physician Stanisław Kamiński from Lvov. Kamiński as a physician would visit professor W. However he always stayed long talking with him. Kamiński has some close contacts with monks (Franciscans in the monastery there). When I once told him that a new guardian, who was told to be a priest-patriot, arrived at the monastery, he was seriously worried. Straightforwardly he said: it interests and worries me a lot; I know that the following day he investigated the matter and concluded that nothing changed. Kamiński visits the monastery almost every day and so does his wife. In the period from 22.10. to 17.11., Mieczysław Suchocki visited Osieczna twice to – as he told me – consult editorial matters related to "Przegląd Zachodni" and "Życie i Myśl" monthly. He talked with professor Wojciechowski long into the night. While leaving his room, he would habitually lock it though nobody else would do that in the Castle. Suchocki was in Osieczna twice for 24h and returned to Poznań immediately. M. Wojciechowska spoke about her good relations with Ochab and also with [blacked out] in [blacked out] when she was a student. [Blacked out] at her place in Poznań who would invite the Wojciechowskis to her private flat in Warsaw. She also talked about her contacts with citizen Okręt who has been assigned to the Polish Academy of Sciences by the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and who promised a long lasting assistance to the Poznań Society of Friends of Sciences in its organisation of sciences. Okręt also promised M. Wojciechowska to help her in case of local troubles in the Wojciechowskis' private flat at Górska Street in Sołacz [District]. Apparently, their flat is too

big and that is why professor W.'s private library has been declared to be the scientific Library of the Institute for Western Affairs. After 1.11. Magdalena Staszewska, an employee of the Institute, arrived at Osieczna. She is the widow of a professor*** of the Poznań University. With huge relief, she told me that writer Zbyszko Bednarz from Katowice had been released from prison though his sentence had been 8 years. When I asked her what he was accused for, she said he had been accused of espionage. When I asked her whether the Institute had close contacts with him as a writer, she avoided the answer saying "you know he contributed to the *Dolny Śląsk* monograph". Her son is an activist of the Union of Polish Youth. In Poznań [Wojciech Staszewski] works for the „Głos Wielkopolski” daily. When I mentioned his political involvement, she was very upset and she changed the topic saying that he suffers from a lung disease and must stay in the Lower Silesia Mountains (Jelenia Góra). Around 9.11. a Karbowski came to rest in Osieczna. He has no relations with the Institute and claims that he does not know professor Wojciechowski in person. He works as a planner at some Catering Institution in Poznań (the Belweder restaurant is its seat). He used to have a cake factory in Poznań. The man of strange strategic interest in books on Napoleon's tactics. He was a British army officer during the first world war, then he came to Poland via France with Haller's army, but he wore an English military officer's uniform, receiving *Dalil Maill* (an English daily)****, which is forbidden to read here, from some friend in Warsaw. In one of its issues there was a detailed map of strategic operations in a next war against the Bolsheviks. Karbowski is well acquainted with victualling, apparently he knows what has been stored. He has also said that he knows from some high profile person in Warsaw what the result of Spychalski-Gomółka [Gomułka] trail will be and that then a trail against Żymirski, who has been already arrested, will take place. Karbowski speaks English all the time. Apparently his Daughter works at the Institute for Western Affairs. On 12.11. profesor Lehr Splawiński from Cracow arrived on a phone invitation.

Marek Kwiek, professor of the Poznań University (acoustics), was the authorising officer at the University in 1945-1946. He was responsible for putting things in order after war damage. He was removed from office for some financial fiddles. Then he was an assistant in the musicology – play department. When professor Chybiński [?, name illegible] came to Poznań, he was removed. Afterwards he – as a qualified adjunct professor – worked for the Institute of Physics at the University as an acoustician (his specialism). Before the war he delivered scientifically described data on airplane factories in Poland. His father-in-law is Głowacki, Ph.D., known from before the war, former director of monopolies department at the Ministry of Purchase. He [Kwiek] is Włodzimierz Głowacki's brother-in-law who, since the war occupation, has a close relationship with professor Wojciechowski. Dr. Głowacki former director of Dept. of Monopolies supervised trading and industrial contracts with foreign entities, even with *Hari-zann* USA the famous match monopoly contract. In addition, he was abroad many times. Near Szamotuły, he bought an estate which has been owned by his wife till today. There the Kwieks stay oftentimes. Kwiek has foreign scientific contacts in the area of physics. When I travelled with him to Warsaw (incidental meeting) in the autumn of 1950, he read newest English publications on physics.

The Wojciechowskis paid a return visit to [blacked out] in Warsaw [blacked out]. Having talked with Wojciechowska I concluded that this person is not important to her. Simply, that Wojciechowska is cleverer and more cunning. In any case, she is satisfied with having renewed that friendly contact.

In a conversation with me on 7.11. professor Wojciechowski said: “The objective of the Institute for Western Affairs is to be on the defensive against new Marxist scientific undertakings. We must safeguard true scientific principles of Polish science.” On the future fate of the Institute for Western Affairs he expressed the opinion that some things at the Institute would have to change once it becomes part of the organisational structure of the Polish Academy of

Sciences. I am aware, he said, that some Commissioner will come from the PAS and some employees will have to leave the Institute.

In conversations Wojciechowska said among other things that Skrzyszewski means nothing in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs whereas the leading role is played by Wierbłowski whom I also met in person.

Task

1. Since 13.11. is the day of Stanisława Zajchowska's name day, wish her all the best albeit belatedly at her own home and then talk with her on topics related to the Institute for Western Affairs; in the conversation, underline that relations between You and professor Wojciechowski are good and mention the 3 week long stay at Osieczna. It needs to be found what:
 - (a) the position of Mieczysław Suchocki is in the Institute
 - (b) what role Klafkowski plays, mention his positive pronouncements and so on
 - (c) ask about Pollak's health and about the accident circumstances.

The conversation on the above topics is to be preceded by creating a cordial atmosphere

Undertaking:

1. To send an official letter to the PUBP [Poviat Office of Public Security]. Leszno to establish whether Ziembowski resides in the Osieczna commune, Leszno poviat, to demand its profile and of physician Kamiński from Osieczna area.
2. To establish via Dept. A., whether Karbowski resides in Poznań and whether or not he is employed by a catering company in Poznań.
3. To get hold of the personal file of student Zofia Hilczer from the Poznań University and check who they [the Hilczers] are where her father worked and so on.
4. To send an official letter to PUBP. Szamotuły to establish whether the Głowackis' estate is within the poviat area and what activities its residents carry, who comes there and so on.

Evaluation

Informer verified

PT. [? personal file] in 3 copies

Certified by

copy [?to] [agent's] work file

copy [?to] "Zachód" [West] issues

copy [?to] M.B.P. [Ministry of Public Security]

Tłumaczenie: Hanna Mausch

* Actually that was Halina Całkowa, widow of Leon Całka who was an economist and journalist and a member of the *Ojczyzna* underground organisation shot to death in a mass execution between 10 and 12 August 1944 during the Warsaw Uprising.

** Antoni Horst, who joined the *Ojczyzna* underground organisation in the autumn of 1939, was a physician who settled in Poznań in 1946. He was a professor and head of the General Pathology Department and later a dean of the Medical Faculty and rector of the Medical Academy in Poznań.

*** Janusz Staszewski PhD was a military historian and archivist. In 1928-1939 he worked for the State Archive in Poznań. When WW2 broke out, he was a staff second lieutenant and got severely wounded in an air-raid near Brześć-on-Bug. He died in hospital in Vilnius probably on 22 September 1939.

**** Most probably *Daily Mirror*.