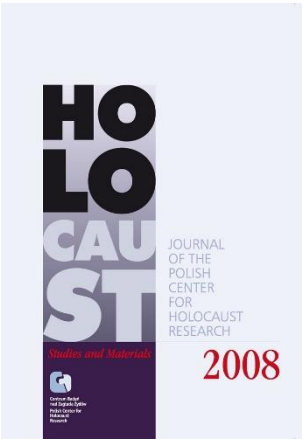


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Warsaw Jews Expelled from Switzerland to the General Government

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Warsaw Jews Expelled from Switzerland to the General Government
Case study

After the defeat in the Polish-German war of 1939, many people made plans to escape from the territories occupied by the Germans. As a rule, people escaped to the East, and among "castaways", travelling the "Eastern route", the percentage of Jews was exceptionally high, for quite obvious reasons. Some managed to leave the Soviet Union for Sweden, Palestine or even Japan. This, however, is another story.

There were also, at least at the beginning of the occupation, possibilities to leave Poland in different directions, predominantly southward, and many people seized this opportunity. Helena Szereszewska recalls that in the autumn of 1939, she started taking Spanish lessons, because her family thought that they would be able to emigrate to Brazil.[1] After a few months, somebody made them realise that they should be learning Portuguese instead, but the journey was already quite impossible at that time. However, some managed to leave occupied Poland. The Judenrat, on German orders, set up the Emigration Commission, headed by a Jewish artist and writer collaborating with the Germans, Alfred Nossig. Ringelblum notes that this Commission was to have 6,000 certificates for distribution enabling departure to Palestine.[2]

In the early days of the occupation, a number of people attempted to emigrate. In Warsaw it was possible to buy documents that enabled one to emigrate. In his diary Chaim Kapłan describes the entire procedure: "First of all, the passports. Obtaining a passport is more complicated than crossing the Red Sea. But there are some former Polish officials who know the District Governor's (*starosta*) habits and all his secrets. In the days of the stir, they were left some blank passport forms and the seal of the department. The blank form has the particular advantage that one can write in it whatever one wishes. Thus, they hit on the following: a clerk writes the details and stamps them with the pre-war seal . . . . The second seal is the one of a country a given Jew wants to emigrate to. The visa is very expensive. Consuls are spoilt and prefer 'hard' money, like dollars or pounds, which can be immediately exchanged.

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[1] Helena Szereszewska, *Krzyż i mezuza* (Warsaw, 1993), 28–29.

[2] Emanuel Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego. Wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943*, ed., A. Eisenbach, trans. from Yiddish by A. Rutkowski (Warsaw, 1983), 36.

Having successfully negotiated the first two obstacles, by means of money, one faces the third one: the Gestapo, where one needs to apply for the permission to leave the country. Such a permit can be obtained when a given emigrant brings a valid passport with a visa, issued by a country from which the Nazi government does not need to fear your return. Then, 'in accordance with the letter of the law,' you have to empty your moneybox, pockets, wallet and every nook and cranny in which you kept your money, as you can have 20 zloty per person for travel expenses. When you have fulfilled these demands, you can leave the Nazi paradise."[3]

One of the most famous escapes from occupied Poland was that of the rabbi from Góra Kalwaria, Meir Alter. He was a descendant of a well-known Hasid family, chairman of the Agudas Izrael party and the spiritual leader of the 100,000 Polish Hasidim. He managed to leave in spring 1940, with his three sons and a number of associates. The details of the story are shrouded in mystery. The bribe paid to the Germans by Rabbi Alter's disciples from the USA for allowing the rabbi to leave Poland allegedly amounted to one million dollars. A different version of this story was given by Moshe Prager, an Orthodox Jewish writer, who was, allegedly, one of the organisers of this escape.[4] He claims that the trip was possible for the rabbi and a group of Hasidim thanks to Stefan Porajski, the head of the Warsaw branch of the Italian company Lloyd Triestino, who produced false documents.

The same Stefan Porajski facilitated the emigration of Apolinary Hartglas, who was one of the leading politicians in Poland during the inter-war period, a Zionist activist, and a member of the Polish Parliament. Hartglas recalls that on 14 December 1939, Kasztan's (secretary of the Palestinian Office before the war) wife came to his office to tell him that "the director of the Shipping Agency 'Adriatica', Mr Porajski[5] got an order from Palestine to enable departure of 18 people, me, my wife and Kasztan's family included, and asked her to take the passports from us immediately. She immediately asked for them, because she had to collect engineer Koerner's passport as well[6] . . . . So I handed our passports to Mrs Kasztan and went with Koerner to see Porajski the next day. He informed us that all the formalities were being arranged for him by some Volksdeutsch, who received a lot of money from Porajski, and he can be trusted as he is a decent man . . . . On 18 December, I received a note from director Porajski to come to his place about 4 o'clock. I went there with Koerner and we got our passports from him with the Italian visas, and a German Ausweis

[3] Aron Chaim Kapłan, *Scroll of Agony. The Warsaw Diary*, translated from Hebrew and edited by A. I. Katsh (London, 1999), 126–127.

[4] See: Moshe Prager, *Sparks of Glory. Inspiring Episodes of Jewish Spiritual Resistance by Israel's Leading Chronicler of Holocaust Courage* (New York, 1969).

[5] It has not been established which company was headed by Stefan Porajski (1882–4 September 1944). Probably Lloyd Triestino and the Shipping Agency "Adriatica" had a joint director in autumn/winter 1939.

[6] Engineer, senator, Zionist activist, he obtained permission to leave for Palestine together with Hartglas (December 1939). Being a Zionist activist, he obtained permission to leave thanks to efforts of the Palestinian Bureau in Geneva. The Bureau kept in touch with Warsaw Zionist activists via the Italian company Riunione Adriatica di Sicurta, which already had a branch in Warsaw before the war. The Bureaus in Geneva sent them an entry visa to Trieste at the same time.

to cross the border on our way to Italy . . . and second class tickets from Warsaw to Katowice. For all this, including the Volksdeutsch's share, director Porajski collected from us 200 zloty per person and counted the money."[7]

The possibilities to leave Poland, legally or semi-legally, quickly came to an end. In June 1940, when many borders had been closed in Europe, including that of Italy, emigration became impossible. Ostensibly, there still were some ways to leave, but this might have concerned extraction of money from the naïve. In the already closed ghetto, which sounds like a bitter irony, two travel agencies had their branches: the "Hamburg–Ameryka-Line" (No. 4 Solna Street, flat 3, open from 1 January to April 1941) and the "Norddeutscher Lloyd" (No. 15 Leszno Street, also until April 1941). Probably, the agencies sold tickets for small trips, not big journeys. According to *Gazeta Żydowska*: "the tram cards were only sold in the office of Norddeutscher Lloyd."[8] In early 1941, "Norddeutscher Lloyd" announced in "Gazeta Żydowska" that "all the rumours about the alleged cessation of tram transport in the Jewish district are unfounded. The tram transport will operate normally."[9] Both agencies also took care of finding the families. However, their activity did not last long. In early April 1941, "Norddeutscher Lloyd Office of the Jewish district in Warsaw was closed. All the formalities and documents left in the above mentioned office, at No. 15 Leszno Street, can be collected in Norddeutscher Lloyd Central Office at No. 13 Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. It is possible to contact the office by mail. The information is also available by means of the telephone, in the aforementioned central Office, number: 240–03, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 to 5 p.m., every day except holidays."[10] On the other hand, "Hapag Office (the Hamburg–America-Line) in the Jewish district was closed in late April. It was the second, apart from the Norddeutscher Lloyd, office for emigration matters in our district."[11]

In the autumn of 1940, emigration from Poland was virtually impossible. However, *Gazeta Żydowska* published an extensive article, "Association to Further Emigration 'JEAS' in Poland. Subheading: Advice and help for those willing to emigrate – agency between the General Government and neutral foreign countries – food parcels, financial help."[12] We read in the article that before the war the Association (closely cooperating with the organisation HIAS (Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society) in the USA) took care of Jewish emigrants, helped them find a job, ensured legal protection, offered loans, and acted as a go-between in sending money to families remaining in Poland. Currently, after establishing contacts with aid organisations from neutral foreign countries in the world, "immediately, after the mail services were re-established, [the Association] started their activity to make it possible for different people applying to contact their families abroad, in neutral

[7] Apolinary Hartglas, *Na pograniczu dwóch światów*, preface and edited by J. Żyndul (Warsaw, 1996), 323–324.

[8] *Gazeta żydowska* 43, 1940.

[9] *Gazeta żydowska* 13, 1941.

[10] *Gazeta żydowska* 29,1941.

[11] *Gazeta żydowska* 35, 1941.

[12] *Gazeta żydowska* 21, 1940.

countries, of course. A number of families, which before the war did not keep in touch with their relatives residing abroad, applied because now they decided to ask them for financial help. . . . From mid-December [1939], when the JEAS Association could restore their activity, until now [1 October 1940], more than 15,000 Jewish families from Warsaw and the General Government have established contact with their relatives abroad." The Association also published long lists of names of people sought for by their relatives in *Gazeta Żydowska*. "Moreover, numerous clients were given information about different emigration issues. The information comes only from primary sources (from the Authorities, consular offices, etc.), and the Association attempts to explain [it] absolutely precisely to the clients, and most of all: we do not try to provide the clients with illusions concerning the 'immediate' possibility of emigration, obtaining emigration passports and so on. It has saved many people from disappointment and expenses, as there is currently no emigration from the General Government." The activity of the JEAS terminated in early September 1941. Its head, Dr Morgensztern, was arrested and sent to a camp. The duties of JEAS were taken over by the Jewish Help Committee at the Judenrat.

The Tzadik Mordechaj Alter and the MP Apolinary Hartglas landed safely in Palestine. However, not everyone was so lucky. The files of the German courts, preserved in Polish archives, allow a closer look at the means used by Polish Jews who tried to escape from the country. One of them, although unsuccessful, was used by four Warsaw Jews.[13] The group of engineers was led by Marian Sztejnberg, a well-known figure in the pre-war artistic and literary circles. The history of their expedition, with a surprising ending, was circulated among the Warsaw ghetto dwellers.

The members of the group were: Marian Sztejnberg, his brother Dawid, Szlama and Chawa Hochglobe. Hochglobe was a rich merchant, jeweller and watchmaker. In 1938, when the Jews were forbidden to trade in Catholic devotional items, the police searched Hochglobe's shop in Praga, confiscating part of the goods.[14]

We know more about Marian Sztejnberg (Sztejnsberg, Sztajnberg, Sztajnsberg). During the 1920s and 1930s he was a famous publisher, editor, friend of artists and the husband of the popular actress Mieczysława Ćwiklińska. Marian and his two brothers Dawid (Tadeusz) and Szymon came from a poor family. They achieved such wealth and high social status thanks to their hard and persistent work. This is how Antoni Słonimski recalls Sztajnberg: "Owner of the 'Hoesick' book shop. For a number of years he published the works of the 'Skamander' poets and numerous debut poetic volumes. . . . We were all friends with Marian. We knew that he made no money from poetry, but what he earned on legal publications, which the 'Hoesick' book shop specialised in, he blew together with us during restaurant booze-ups. . . . as a young book shop assistant he fell in love with a famous actress, who was older than him. . . . when he became rich and took over the book

[13] According to files No. 1200 (2282) Deutsches Gericht Warschau (German Court in Warsaw, later referred to as DGW) in Archiwum Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy (AMSW) – Capital City of Warsaw Archives.

[14] P. Rakowski, "*Jak ścigano w II Rzeczpospolitej Żydów handlujących dewocjonaliami*", *Słowo żydowskie* [*Dos Jidisze Wort*], 30 July, 1999.

shop, he took to drinking with popular poets, and finally married the goddess of his youth."[15] This his how the lady of his heart, Mieczysława Ćwiklińska, describes her faithful admirer: "Most people considered Marian a very intelligent and witty man, extremely talented at social skills. . . . He was able to show kindness, and anticipate all my wishes. Sometimes, when I was travelling in a sleeping car, I found the entire compartment literally strewn with roses. He came with me wherever I toured. Such proofs of [a man's] feelings appeal to every woman."[16]

In 1932 Sztejnberg converted and married Ćwiklińska. Their marriage, however, was not a very happy one, and in 1938 the actress asked for a divorce. Despite that they lived together until the war broke out. As many inhabitants of Warsaw, they fled to the East, but after a few weeks decided to return to their elegant apartment in 3 Maja Avenue. The actress wanted her husband to move out, because his constant presence was both a nuisance and a hazard to her: "Marian Sztajnsberg is not only an intrusive admirer, an unloved man and a case of misplaced feelings. His presence here is becoming a matter of life and death. . . . Reckless, full of imagination and bravado, Sztajnsberg comes and leaves in the morning, at noon and in the evening, ignoring the Nazi decree to wear the armband with the Star of Zion, with a flippant attitude toward the Nazi orders as if nobody knew him in the tenement house, but everyone in the house knew that Ćwiklińska's husband was Jewish!"[17]

The Sztejnberg family financial situation was becoming increasingly difficult. Marina's book shop was taken over by a German trustee (*Treuhänder*), Paul Kostrzewa. Sztejnberg lost his only source of income and had to ask his wife for help. Ćwiklińska declined his repeated request for help and, finally, agreed to finance his escape. Irena Szczepankowska-Sztajnbergowa, Marian's brother, Tadeusz's (Dawid) widow, recalls: "In 1940, my husband Tadeusz and Marian were desperate to leave to Nice, where the third brother lived. With the help of attorney Święcicki (who was hanged later, precisely for his involvement in this type of operations), my husband and I obtained passes to the Reich. I took care of most of the things myself, so I remember them very well. As the costs were enormous, Ćwiklińska brought two valuable Chinese vases to sell. . . . Marian and Tadeusz left for the Reich, but a tragic mistake occurred on their way. It is difficult to establish if they took a wrong route or dealt with a wrong person. Because even my husband, when I talked to him after he returned, did not know exactly, but, suffice it to say that they crossed the border in the wrong place and did not reach Switzerland. They were arrested in Germany and sentenced to four months imprisonment. . . . They were later transported to Poland and released after some time. My husband returned to our house. Marian – as far as I know – died in 1941."[18]

The circumstances of Marian Sztejnberg's death are unknown. What is known, however, is only the fact that he died in the ghetto. Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa,

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[15] A. Słonimski, *Alfabet wspomnień* (Warsaw, 1975), 226–227.
[16] Quoted in: A. Okońska, A. Grzybowski, *Rozmowy z panią Miecią* (Warsaw, 1976), 234–235.
[17] Quoted in: M. Bojarska, *Mieczysława Ćwiklińska* (Warsaw, 1988), 317–318.
[18] Quoted in: A. Okońska, A. Grzybowski, *Rozmowy z panią Miecią*, *op. cit.*, 281–282.

who knew him before the war, noted: Sztejnberg was starving in the ghetto, sold books in the street and finally died."[19]

Other members of this ill-fated expedition – Marian's brother, David, Chawa and Szlama Hochglob – were most likely, like many other Jews, annihilated by the Germans. Documents that would prove their death were not found, but we have descriptions of their escape attempt. We reconstructed its details on the basis of Polish and German sources.

The collaboration of the Swiss with the Gestapo

The fact that refugees from the General Government chose Switzerland for their destination was not surprising. The closure of the Italian border, the fall of France and the German occupation of other countries made Switzerland one of the last possible places of refuge.

The above cited testimonies state that the members of Sztejnberg's group left Poland and were captured by German authorities somewhere on their way to the West. In fact, it was otherwise. The group departed on a train via Katowice and Vienna to Feldkirch. The train left Warsaw early in the morning of 25 April 1940. The Jewish refugees were able to pass the first passport inspection at Lundenburg on the General Government border and enter the Reich. Their journey across the Reich also went smoothly.

Transit through Germany during the war was not easy. Every bearer of a Polish passport needed to obtain German entry and exit visas before they left the country. The bearer could apply for them if he had the visa of the country he was planning to go to. The members of Sztejnberg's group were issued visas by the Swiss consulate in Berlin that entitled them to stay in Zurich for 6 months. The train from Vienna to Zurich crossed the German-Swiss border on 26 April, a few minutes after nine p.m. The German exit visas, as it seems, aroused trust and did not alarm the police. Having passed the German border inspection the train stopped at the first Swiss station at Buchs (St. Gallen canton). But the refugees, who thought that freedom was within their reach, were to be enormously disappointed, because the Swiss visas stamped in their passports aroused the suspicions of the Swiss police. The following day (27 April) Sztejnberg and his companions were arrested. On 28 April all four of them were expelled from Switzerland and handed over to the Gestapo at Feldkirch, the first station on the German side.

On the basis of Gestapo files and Swiss police reports, we are able to reconstruct the course of those fateful hours and days. The decisions that were made at that time led to the death of the four Polish Jews. In the morning of 27 April, the police sergeant Gabathuler from the Buchs border police detachment interrogated Szalma and Chawa Hochglob. During the interrogation, they admitted to paying 6,000 zloty to a middleman, who took their passports and stamped them with the requisite German and Swiss visas. Both assured the Swiss policeman that in their opinion those were original stamps. Finally, they begged the Swiss authorities: "We do not

[19] H. Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, *Pod znakiem kłoska* (Warsaw, 1962), 146.

have means, but we have rich cousins in Zurich, the Kempinski-Neudors, who had offered to take us in. We are frightened that if we are sent back to Germany, we will be arrested as Jews."[20] The following day the Germans interrogated both Sztejnberg brothers and found out that they had also paid for the German and Swiss visas stamped in their passports, but the middleman and the amount paid (6,400 zloty) were different from those given by the Hochglobs. However, the manner in which they obtained the stamps in their passports was the same. The Sztejnbergs assured the Swiss authorities that they were certain that the visas were authentic. They added that they had a brother in Switzerland, who wanted to take them in and pay for their upkeep.[21]

The information that the four had relatives in Switzerland did not matter much to the Swiss police. In a testimony given to the Gestapo in Feldkirch, Szlama Hochglobe said: "When the Swiss police telephoned and confirmed that we actually had relatives in Zurich, we were sent back to Feldkirch."[22] Before the merchant and his wife were forced to return to Germany, they were given a few last pieces of advice and "assured that our case will be considered in Bern, and our relatives will help to ensure our imminent return to Switzerland." Unfortunately for the refugees, Swiss officials went a step further. Within the framework of trans-border co-operation, they not only handed over expelled Jews to the Gestapo, but attached copies of their interrogation files.

Precisely these Swiss interrogation files open the Gestapo files accompanying the Jews on their way back to the Warsaw ghetto.

Swiss policy toward the Jewish refugees

From the point of view of the Jews, their decision to choose Switzerland was a desperate one. Since the *Machtübernahme* (seizure of power), the Swiss authorities demonstrated readiness not only to fulfil German wishes, but also to conduct their own policy, aimed at stopping the inflow of Jewish refugees. The process of "sealing" the border was launched soon after the *Anschluss* (annexation) of Austria. Restrictions on refugees were introduces by the Swiss themselves, without any German pressure. Dr Heinrich Rothmund, chief of the Federal Police and Justice Department, gained notoriety for his combat against "Jewification". In the late 1930s, he became one of the chief architects of the new Swiss "closed doors" policy. In 1938 Rothmund warned the German authorities that a further inflow of German Jews would force Switzerland to reintroduce visas (abolished in 1926) for all German citizens.[23] The danger of closure of free border traffic was quite serious. This was

[20] AMSW, DGW, file No. 1200, Kantonspolizei St.Gallen report, 27 April 1940, file 4.

[21] Ibid., folder. 5.

[22] AMSW, DGW, file No. 1200, Geheime Staatspolizei Feldkirch Vernehmungsniederschrift, 28 April 1940, files 9–10.

[23] S. Ferrero, "Switzerland and the Refugees Fleeing Nazism: Documents on the German Jews Turned Back at the Basel Border in 1938–1939", *Yad Vashem Studies* 1999, No. 27, 204.

confirmed on 28 March 1938 by the introduction of visas for all Austrian citizens, which was caused by the inflow of thousands of refugees from that country.[24]

According to Rothmund, the problem could be solved by precise identification of the "Aryan character" of German citizens. After lengthy discussions agreement was reached. On 4 October 1938, Germany agreed to stamp Jewish passports with the letter "J" (*Jude*). In the Helvetian confederation the infamous "J stamp" (*J-Stempel* or *tampon "J"*, depending on the canton) had a long history. Some cantons used this symbol to mark foreign Jews already before World War I. On the basis of an agreement concluded with the Nazis in 1938, the Swiss authorities instructed their consulates to demand further "proofs of Aryan character" from "suspicious-looking applicants". In November 1938, shortly after *Kristallnacht*, the Swiss authorities went even further and *a priori* refused to recognise Jews as political refugees.[25]

The border guard was instructed to pay particular attention to all "Eastern" passports (including Polish), whose bearers were covered by strict visa obligations. Due to the specific character of the Swiss federal system and the related extensive competences of the local administration, the refugee policy differed among the individual cantons.

In some of them it was easier to be admitted than in others. For example, in Geneva a Jewish refugee had a greater chance of admission than in the neighbouring jurisdictions. Even in the heat of the war, Swiss border guards in the Geneva canton sent away less than 9 per cent of Jewish asylum seekers. We know much less about the refugee policy in the St. Gallen canton, from which Sztejnberg's group was expelled. We have proof that Paul Grüninger, a St. Gallen police commissioner, was demoted and dismissed in the spring of 1939 for backdating hundreds of Jewish asylum applications.

Unfortunately for Sztejnberg, Commissioner Grüninger's colleagues from Buchs strictly followed instructions, and their zeal was so great that in their collaboration with the German authorities they were ready to go further than instructed, and gave the Gestapo all the information obtained from detained Jews.

There are several proofs to confirm the collaboration of the Swiss police from St. Gallen (at least from the pre-war period) with the Gestapo.[26] Following Grüninger's dismissal, the refugee policy of the St. Gallen canton became extremely restrictive. Sztejnberg's case does not appear to be exceptional. Stenographic notes of the of-

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[24] Ibid., 214. See H. Spira, "L'attitude de la Suisse envers les refugies juifs 1939–1945", *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 1999, No. 49(2), 273–279; G. Kreis, "Abschied von 'Holocaust'", *Schweizer Monatshefte* 1979, No. 59(7), 511–519.

[25] E. Burgauer, "Die Schweiz: die Verfolgende Unschuld", *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 1996 No. 11 (2), 113. See R. Fivaz-Silbermann, "Refoulement, accueil, filières: les fugitifs juifs á la frontière franco-genevoise entre 1942 et 1944. Pour un nouveau modèle du refuge", *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 2001 No. 51 (3), 296–317. Among the 2,000 refugees sent back (to France) the author found 884 Jews. The Geneva canton was an important place for Jews seeking refuge. 42 percent of Jewish refugees out of 21,304 Jews admitted by Switzerland crossed the border of the Geneva canton.

[26] We are grateful to Jörg Krummenacher-Schöll for this information. J. Krummenacher is working on a book about Swiss emigration policy during World War II.

ficers of Warsaw Gestapo show that operational information was more frequently exchanged between the Swiss and the Nazi authorities. This was certainly the case with detained Jews. Several weeks after Sztejnberg's expulsion, another Warsaw Jew was sent back to his death. Henryk Winawer-Feinkind (born 28 May 1887), who managed to cross the Swiss border on false papers, was interrogated by Swiss officials on 14 June 1940. The next note concerning Winawer-Feinkind comes from German archives. It states that the refugee died in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1941.[27]

From Switzerland to jail and return to the ghetto

The Feldkirch Gestapo arrested four Warsaw Jews on 28 April around noon. Thanks to the interrogation notes the Swiss handed over to the Germans, it was already known that they had purchased false visas in Warsaw. The purpose of subsequent interrogations, this time on the German side of the border, was to identify the middlemen and forgers. The interrogations took place in Feldkirch between 28 April and 4 May 1940.[28] Afterwards the members of this ill-fated expedition were transferred to the prison in Bregenz, from which they were retransferred three months later to the Gestapo office in Innsbruck. Most likely in early September they returned to the General Government and were detained in the notorious Warsaw Gestapo headquarters in Szucha Avenue (already renamed *Alee der SS und Polizei*), where they were subjected to further interrogation: the Hochglobs on 12 September, and the Sztejnbergs on the following day.

Both men were past their prime, the conditions in Rakowiecka were horrific, and the months already spent in jail had affected their health. In October 1940 the brothers requested to be transferred to lighter duties. Apparently their requests were not honoured, because in January 1940 Daniel Sztejnberg submitted the following request to the prison warden: "I am requesting you, Mister Warden, to permit a doctor's visit . . . I am very ill and my health is declining rapidly." At the same time, Marian also requested that his sweater, which was kept in the prison's store room, be given to him.[29] Just as before, the prison authorities ignored their requests. After a lengthy delay, on 25 February 1941, the German court in Warsaw dealt with the case of the Sztejnbergs and two other refugees. All of them were sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Given that the convicts had already spent over nine months in various detention centres, the court decided to "set them free". This meant that from the Rakowiecka prison they landed in the starving Warsaw ghetto. Marian Sztejnberg soon died, probably of hunger. The fate of his brother, Dawid, like the fate of Szlama and Chawa Hochglob, remains unknown. Most probably, they died shortly, as did most Polish Jews.

Marian Sztejnberg's case, as such, is not a revelation. The fact that the Swiss authorities often refused to admit Jewish refugees was known before. What is new and important, however, is the scale of the co-operation between Swiss border police

[27] AMSW, Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Sondergericht Warschau, file No. 1209.

[28] AMSW, DGW, file No. 1200, files 8–16.

[29] AMSW, Zespół aresztu śledczego Warszawa-Mokotów, files No. 22824, 25045 and 25046.

and the Gestapo. The systematic "cleansing" of Swiss archives after the war renders the research of this issue difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, Polish archives contain useful information on this subject. After all, Sztejnberg was one of many "returned" refugees, whose implorations met a wall of Swiss indifference and fear. The files of German courts in Poland contain other examples of failed attempts by Jews to cross the Swiss border. Further research should make it possible to determine the scale of this phenomenon.

Translated by *Jerzy Giebułtowski* and *Patrycja Rojek*