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TADEUSZ ROMER
1894 - 1978

100th Anniversary
of Poland's Independence

1918–2018

FROM THE CRASH OF EMPIRES AND POLAND'S REBIRTH TO THE DAWN OF SOLIDARNOŚĆ

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Tadeusz Romer, 1894–1978: from the Crash of Empires and Poland's Rebirth to the Dawn of Solidarność

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Tadeusz Romer, 1894–1978: from the Crash of Empires and Poland's Rebirth to the Dawn of Solidarność

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Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada
Montréal

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Tadeusz Romer: A Transnational Life

Piotr H. Kosicki
Associate Professor of History, University of Maryland

The idea of "transnationalism" has come to define historical research in the early twenty-first century.[1] Yet rare are the published volumes that cast into relief the transnational agency of historical figures who worked mostly outside the public eye. Crossing borders and crossing national divides, the life and work of the Polish diplomat, humanitarian, and scholar Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978) is one such case.

Conferences devoted to a single historical actor are generally hard-pressed to avoid hagiography. The alternative involves weaving a deeply contextual narrative in which the idiosyncrasies of one woman's or man's life are reconstructed, all while making clear that the protagonist was both creator and creation of transnational processes, drawing upon networks of actors crossing frontiers of all kinds, while also contributing to their transformation and to the genesis of new networks. Understood thus, *histoire croisée* (the forensic approach to transnational studies typically rendered in English as "entangled history") has become a powerful tool for documenting how individual and collective actors have shaped, and continue to shape, contemporary reality.[2]

Tadeusz Romer did precisely this, as both a Pole and a transnational figure. Romer defied the violent polarization of the interwar Second Polish Republic. He made the complicated transition from serving as private secretary to National Democracy leader Roman Dmowski in the years of the Paris Peace Conference to serving for over a decade in the diplomatic corps of a Polish

1 See, e.g., Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

2 The classic definition of *histoire croisée* is at Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History & Theory* 45 (2006): 30–50. For key interventions in how to practice histoire croisée and entangled history, see, e.g., Hartmut Kaelble, "Between Comparison and Transfers-and What Now? A French-German Debate," in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, ed. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jurgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 33–38; Emily S. Rosenberg, ed. *A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).

state led by Dmowski's arch-enemy Józef Piłsudski.[3] Instead of partisan politics, Romer prioritized civic engagement as a cosmopolitan Pole-in-the-world; this role carried him across Europe and across Asia, landing him the ambassadorship in 1937 in the strategic location of Tokyo (from which he moved to Shanghai in 1941 following Japan's expulsion of the Polish Embassy).[4]

Romer's diplomatic postings in East Asia, followed by his meteoric rise to Polish foreign minister-in-exile, made him a seminal gatekeeper for the global migration of Polish citizens.[5]

With the coming of the Second World War and the Third Reich's occupation of Polish soil, Polish diplomats abroad found themselves in a unique position. If they chose to do so, they could facilitate the transfer of masses of Polish citizens across the globe. From October 1939 onward, these diplomats represented a government-in-exile and an underground state devoted to the struggle against Adolf Hitler's Germany. These circumstances froze in time, as it were, the overseas diplomatic corps of interwar Poland, with the factionalism of the Second Republic falling away as these men took on unprecedented geopolitical challenges.[6]

In human terms, this meant facing the daunting task of offering legal cover abroad to Polish Jews fleeing the Holocaust–and to Poles (both Jews and Gentiles) deported into the Soviet Union following Stalin's invasion of Poland on September 17, 1939.[7] The reconfiguration of Europe's east into what

3 See, e.g., Piotr J. Wróbel, "The Rise and Fall of Parliamentary Democracy in Interwar Poland," in *The Origins of Modern Polish Democracy,* ed. M. B. B. Biskupski, James S. Pula, and Piotr J. Wróbel (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 110–164.

4 See especially Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska's and Beata Szubtarska's chapters in this volume.

5 See, e.g., Hubert Orłowski and Andrzej Sakson, *Utracona ojczyzna: Przymusowe wysiedlenia, deportacje i przesiedlenia jako wspólne doświadczenie* (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1996). On the larger context, see Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017).

6 See, e.g., Eugeniusz Duraczyński, *Rząd polski na uchodźstwie 1939–1945: Organizacja, personalia, polityka* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1993); Henryk Batowski, Polska dyplomacja na obczyźnie, 1939–1941 (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1991).
On the postwar continuation of the diplomacy of the Second Polish Republic, see, e.g., Krzysztof Tarka, *Emigracyjna dyplomacja: Polityka zagraniczna rządu RP na uchodźstwie 1945–1990* (Warsaw: RYTM, 2003).

7 See, e.g., David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939–1942* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002); Mark Edele, Atina Grossmann, and Sheila Fitzpatrick eds., *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017).

historian Timothy Snyder has called "Molotov-Ribbentrop Europe" presented Romer with a dilemma: how to continue to do his job in the service of a sovereign Polish state that had physically ceased to exist.[8] This was no mere bureaucratic or logistical problem, but rather an opening to a new role that Romer took on with diligence and discipline: that of a Holocaust rescuer. He procured transit documents for Polish Jews both because it was his job, and because it was the right thing to do.[9]

It is difficult to sum up a man's life in one such sentence, however accurate. Thus, even though the easiest way to make a case for the larger historical relevance of Romer's life is to reconstruct his role as rescuer, this would do a disservice to the man himself. Romer left Shanghai in 1942 to serve as Polish ambassador to the Soviet Union, then moved to London the following year to become minister of foreign affairs in the exile government.

In the wake of the Second World War, Tadeusz Romer made his way to Canada and, drawing on his French-language education and his deep reading in Francophone culture, Romer secured a position at McGill University as a professor of romance languages. At the same time, he assiduously promoted Polish language and culture in Montreal, in Quebec, and in Canada, negotiating for a Polish Studies chair at the Université de Montréal and serving as president of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada from 1963 until 1978 (the year of his death).[10] Among other roles, Romer became mentor to celebrated Quebec attorney (and Polish émigré) Julius Grey, and father-in-law to one of the most globally influential thinkers that Canada has ever produced, the philosopher Charles Taylor.[11] Yet Romer embraced Canadian citizenship only in the final years of his life, having long held on to hope for the restoration of a sovereign Polish state, free of interference by the Soviet Union.

The scholarly contributions assembled in this volume reconstruct this larger biographical arc of Tadeusz Romer's life. The author of these words was fortunate not only to attend the splendid conference of October 22, 2018, organized by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences (and its partners in

8 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 119–154.

9 See Olga Barbasiewicz's and Aya Takahashi's chapters in this volume.

10 See Agnès Domanski's chapter in this volume.

11 See, e.g., *Julius Grey: Entretiens avec Geneviève Nootens* (Montréal: Boréal, 2014); Joshua Rothman, "How to Restore Your Faith in Democracy," *The New Yorker,* November 11, 2016.

PIOTR H. KOSICKI | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Poland) and hosted by McGill University, but also to serve as discussant for one of its sessions. The conference brought to bear a mix of voices: personal reminiscences by those who knew Romer intimately (including Grey, Taylor, Romer's daughter Therese, and several of Romer's grandchildren), deeply considered academic papers by Polish scholars with years of archival research documenting Romer's career, and more prosopographic contributions by archivists from Montreal and Ottawa who serve as keepers of Tadeusz Romer's documentary legacy.

Readers of this volume owe an enormous debt to two individuals: Teresa (Therese) Romer, the daughter whose years of thoughtful, painstaking care for her father's records have made most of this research possible, and whose real-time responses to the papers made the conference not just interesting, but revelatory; and Stanisław Latek, the long-time Polish Institute president who designed and convened the conference, and who has shepherded the publication of this book.

The scholarship and testimony collected here rightly moves Tadeusz Romer's diplomatic career toward the center of historical explorations of wartime migration routes, Holocaust rescue, and Polish émigré activities in Canada. As Charles Taylor quipped at the conference, Tadeusz Romer was one of the few Polish "adversaries" who not only survived heated face-to-face exchanges with Joseph Stalin, but in fact walked away with tangible achievements. This is certainly true.

To appreciate fully the power of Romer's transnational activism, however, it is necessary also to go beyond family, diplomacy, and humanitarianism. In the course of the October 2018 conference, it became clear to me that Tadeusz Romer's deep Roman Catholic faith, and the role it played in his blossoming into a transnational actor, remain to be explored. Surely, his understanding of human personhood, and the rights and dignity of the person, repeatedly furnished Romer with the intellectual and moral ammunition to cross borders and to reach out to those in need. Tadeusz Romer's convictions on this score derived at least in part from the encounters with, and evolving interpretation of, Catholic social teaching that Romer nourished over the course of his entire adult life.[12]

12 Thérèse Romer, interview, November 29, 2018. On personhood and Catholic social teaching, see, e.g., Piotr H. Kosicki, *Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891–1956* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

Clearly, fruitful avenues remain for future research into the life and contributions of Tadeusz Romer. This volume is, however, a major step toward bringing to a wider global audience this deeply engaged, important figure working at the intersection of Polish history, international and global history, Canadian and Quebec affairs, and the history of the global Polish diaspora and migrations.

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Opening Statement

Therese Romer
Daughter of Tadeusz Romer
22 October 2018, at the Faculty Club of McGill University in Montreal

It is deeply moving to my father's many friends present here, as it is to me and my family, that this conference is being held at McGill University, and that it is hosted by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada–two institutions pivotal to my father through the second half of his professional life (namely the three decades he spent in Canada, from 1948 to his death in 1978).

I had the huge privilege of being a first-hand observer of Tadeusz Romer for just over fifty years. As I reflect on the experience now, forty years after he died, I am struck by how consistent the portrait remains, how little dissonance there is between the private figure I closely knew and the public figure we are celebrating today. That is reinforced by all I have since learned about the historical context of his work and his influence, and about the complex and troubled century that marked his life.

But why this subject today? I've been pondering what has prompted historians and scholars from several countries to gather here to discuss this man's life and times. Why spend time on the past in this age of political and social uncertainty, spiked with unrest on a global scale, presaging immense upheavals in the world order?

Perhaps because Romer happened to be a direct witness to and a lucid actor in previous huge upheavals in international relations. He jokingly referred to his experience of the "Age of Empires," in which he had grown up as a subject of Russian tsars and Austro-Hungarian emperors, and of the "Age of Dictatorships," in which his diplomatic career brought him to speak directly with Mussolini, Salazar and Stalin, and also indirectly with Hitler. After World War II, as a newly-forged academic-underpinned with elder statesman-he observed the "Age of International Organizations," where world leaders interacted directly with each other, letting their diplomats argue the clauses of, well, trade deals.

Romer's diplomatic experience and career spanned three decades, from 1915 to 1945. After the First World War's atrocious loss of life, its pain and destruction, he set out on his vocation brilliantly and with hope around the Versailles Peace Treaty and the reconstruction of his fatherland, Poland, newly independent after years of foreign oppression. His initial diplomatic postings to Rome, Lisbon and Tokyo were challenging and instructive. Then, World War II thrust a number of diplomats into humanitarian roles. Romer played his to the hilt in Tokyo and Shanghai.

He then accepted a mission impossible in the USSR, regardless of personal risk; and soon considered it his duty to carry on the legacy of General Sikorski, prime minister of Poland's government-in-exile, tragically killed in an airplane crash in Gibraltar. As minister of foreign affairs, Romer saw in heartbreak how, by then, nothing could dissuade Churchill and Roosevelt from placing their trust in Stalin's promises–whatever the cost to Poland, their wartime ally. Unable to go home at war's end, Romer and his family became stateless refugees.

In hindsight now, I understand the heavy burden (perhaps even the trauma?) of having to close down each of his three successive missions–in Tokyo, in Shanghai and in Moscow–each so dramatically served, each ending in the need to procure safe exits for his staffs and their families, as well as for many refugees. I now understand my parents' wisdom in never letting their wartime anguish distress their children. By war's end–now a student of Polish law at Oxford, hoping to go home after the war to help replace some of the thousands of professionals exterminated by the Nazis and Soviets–I was old enough to know and to share my parents' searing pain at defeat in victory.

Twice in their lives, in 1918 and again in 1945, Tadeusz and his wife Zofia saw their world shattered. But together, they had the courage, the fortitude and the good fortune to rebuild serenity, and to continue serving peaceful and humane causes in their welcoming new environment in Montreal.

I am sad that they never had the happiness of returning to a free Poland. But, in close touch with friends and relatives in Soviet-controlled Poland, they were aware of the survival of the nation's spirit, which burst forth in the flowering of the Solidarność movement just a decade later, soon followed by the crumbling of the Soviet behemoth. And so the second half of my parents' adult lives, less researched and recorded than the first but just as multifaceted,

brought my two sisters and me a powerful heritage–one we are passing on to our children and their families.

Our gathering here, in these halls of learning, prompts a question. Did the world-shaking events in which Tadeusz Romer long played an active part make him a "great man"? I think not, for he did not seek that role, he was never hungry for power, and always worked for the common good by gaining the support and confidence of his fellow human beings. Above all, I remember him as a good man–steadfastly, generously giving his best. And that, in my eyes (as probably in his), is virtue enough.

My warmest thanks go to Stanisław Latek, President of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, his staff and the many volunteers who supported him, for their vision and their tireless work which made this Conference possible.

My Father-in-Law, Tadeusz Romer

Charles Taylor
Emeritus Professor, McGill university

From the beginning, I knew about the career of my father-in-law, and the important role he had played in Polish history before and during the war. Some people with great careers project themselves as such, and so, without knowing the details, you are made to sense their importance. Tadeusz Romer was altogether different. He was soft-spoken, humble, interested in learning about others and about the new country he had arrived in, whose welcome of him and his family he appreciated. Later on, certain details of his life came out in anecdotes he told, often fascinating ones, like those connected with his negotiations with Stalin, but these stories never centered on himself.

Initially, I was even unaware of his extraordinary achievements when, as Polish ambassador to Japan, he was able to get visas for Polish-Jewish refugees to escape to safety in third countries. I first heard about this from some of my Jewish students, whose parents had been helped in this way. But until recently, like most of us, I did not have a real idea of the scale of this help, and of his courage and dedication to this work.

What he projected was a great humility and openness, and an inclusive vision of Polish citizenship, beyond differences of ancestry and religion. In this he incarnated the spirit of the former Rzeczpospolita, which he was ready to hand on to a liberated Poland; this, alas, he did not live to see. This vision of inclusion resonated with me, and I confess that somewhere in my soul I feel a deep affinity with this kind of Polish patriotism. I am confident this will triumph over more recent lapses into the kind of narrow exclusions and hatreds that all democracies today have to come to grips with.

From the Next Generation

Mariella Nitoslawska
Granddaughter of Tadeusz Romer

I am speaking to you today on behalf of the thirteen Romer grandchildren, my cousins, brothers and sisters; though, truth be told, we didn't conduct a collective consultation on the memory of our historic grandparents. However, in the days leading up to the Romer conference, a flurry of touching emails circulated among us. Our cousin Irenka Straszak recounted helping with Dziadunio's extensive archives, Bisia Taylor recalled the jokes Dziadunio loved to tell, Jola Nitosławska remembered the imposing sound of the *Daitoku-ji* gong standing at the foot of the stairs in our grandparents' home on Milton street, two steps away from McGill University. Each and everyone one of us carries rich and intense childhood memories of Babunia Ziuta and Dziadunio Tadzik. For each of us, the view of our family history has moved and shifted throughout various times in our lives, as it always does.

From our earliest childhood, our personal lives have been intricately entangled with wider public histories. The fabric of these histories was thick, palpable and dramatic. Our grandfather, Tadeusz Romer, and our grandmother, Zofia née Wańkowicz, survived tragic times that changed the course of their lives and thus, our mothers' and our own. As children we could *feel* this history long before we understood it. Yet, strangely (though perhaps typically for the "second-generation immigrants" that we are), we had no direct reference, no personal experience of the places where these histories unfolded, no physical evidence of them in our daily Canadian environment. Stepping into Dziadunio and Babunia's magical home, filled with exotic objects and pictures, meant stepping into another world, one suspended in another time and opening onto mysterious geographies. For many of us grandchildren, unravelling the stories embedded there became a lifelong pursuit.

All of us, now adults with our own children, owe a great deal to the Romer conference. It has offered us an invaluable opportunity to reflect upon our interwoven family heritage and on our roots. For this we express our deepest gratitude to the organizers, particularly to Stanisław Latek, whose vision and work have made this conference possible. We are also profoundly indebted

to Beata Szubtarska for her sustained historical research on Tadeusz Romer's life and legacy. Her published writings have helped us identify and make meaningful connections between the belief systems and values that shaped our upbringing and the lived Polish history of our grandparents. Also precious to us is Szubtarska's insight on Zofia's significant role in Tadeusz's public career, which many a historian might have ignored.

The understanding of how history lives on in the present and the meaning it holds in one's life has been passed down to us by our mothers, the three Romer daughters, Alba, Ita and Renia.

Their brilliant decision to create the Romer Foundation with the funds from the sale of their parents' home on Milton marks the beginning of yet another chapter of the Romer story, one that concurs with the beginning of Poland's post-communist independence, which our grandparents regretfully did not live to see.

The importance of family history for the Romer daughters can be seen in the mindful care with which they handled their parents' inheritance. Theirs is an example that invites historiographic reflection on the crucial role of archival preservation within Poland's immigrant communities and, more widely still, in all the diasporas that constitute Canada's multicultural identity. In the mid–1980s, after Babunia's death, Alba completed the complex process of establishing the non-profit Romer Foundation. After Alba's deeply regretted passing, the Foundation actively supported scholars and artists from Poland through grants, well into the 1990s. Beata Szubtarska became one of the Foundation's recipients. In 2000, the massive crates of the Romer archives were moved from Renia's large Saint-Eustache home to her new flat in Verdun, followed by months, even years, of her sorting and sending materials to the National Library in Warsaw. In the years 2004–2007, Renia and Ita participated in conferences and exhibitions in Rapperswil, Krakow, Warsaw and Lublin, where they activated important connections that continue to enable the growth of knowledge about Tadeusz Romer's contribution to Poland's history. Ciocia-Babcia-Mama-Renia, we thank you most deeply for your crucial work.

The daunting task of preserving the past in our ever-spinning world begs the question that our generation faces: if we wish to pass on to our children the extraordinary family inheritance we were born into, how may we best face this challenge?

Reminiscences of Tadeusz Romer

Julius H. Grey
Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada

My interaction with Tadeusz Romer was purely personal. I did not know Tadeusz Romer, the negotiator at Versailles when Poland regained her independence, nor the ambassador who protected Polish citizens in axis Japan and who personally bargained for them with Joseph Stalin, nor the academic in French studies. I eventually learned about these things, of course, and regarded him with awe because of them, but I was too young to have witnessed his accomplishments and he was far too modest and unassuming to boast about them or even to recount them. I met him as a teenager when I was participating in the 1963 campaign of Charles Taylor, his son-in-law who was running for the NDP in the federal riding of Mount-Royal. When, after a busy day of knocking on doors and distributing pamphlets, we all retired to Chuck's home on Metcalfe Avenue, I had the surprise of hearing his wife Alba and her parents, the Romers, along with some children, speaking Polish.

I had left Poland in 1957, but had kept a romantic attachment to the country and its culture that I still retain. I immediately moved towards the Polish group in the room and became close to it not only during the campaign but also during the two campaigns that followed it. Tadeusz Romer almost immediately came to represent the Poland of my dreams: elegant, intellectual, worldly. We discussed politics, literature and somewhat later music, and I have rarely met people as well-informed and as thoughtful as he was. Although this was an NDP campaign, I understood at once that Professor Romer had not been a socialist in his pre-war activities and that he differed in that way from my parents' friends and from the milieu in which I had grown up in Poland. I also quickly realized that this made little difference and that his open-minded attitudes were perfectly compatible with my dreams of Poland.

The years of political and diplomatic activity had made him sober and realistic and his conversations constituted an excellent lesson in history and politics. Charles Taylor's discussions of philosophy and political theory rounded out these campaign evenings which turned out to be as instructive

as any course I took afterwards. I am particularly fond of the memory of these evenings, not only because of their intellectual content, but because they marked the beginning of my friendship with Charles Taylor and Alba Taylor, of my involvement with the NDP and of my participation in public life. It was wonderful that these changes took place in an atmosphere which incorporated my previous Polish life.

My conversations with Tadeusz Romer resumed the next year in a different context. We were both subscribers to the Pro Musica chamber concerts on Sunday afternoon and were both assiduous in our attendance. During intermission and after the performance we would discuss both the music and the performance. Professor Romer was a formidable critic and the subtlety of his taste remained with me for the rest of my life. He liked Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, predilections which some might consider a touch traditional, but which coincided exactly with my preferences.

Several years later, Professor Romer called me to invite me to his home, which I had never visited before. He wanted to show me "something." This turned out to be a hand-written letter addressed by the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski, to one of Romer's ancestors. It was a scroll which had to be rolled out horizontally in eighteenth-century style. The King used the pluralis majestatis: We, Stanisław August King of Poland, etc. In a florid, formal Polish, he conferred an honour on the Romers. I was dazzled. It must be noted that Stanisław August was the most progressive of the Polish kings and that he signed the democratic constitution of 1791. The pride taken in that king was another proof of the political openness of Tadeusz Romer. Many years have passed. The Romers are gone, as is Alba. I have maintained relations with Charles Taylor and with many members of the Romer family. My feeling of gratitude to Professor Romer for sharing his erudition, for reinforcing my love of Poland at a time when Poland seemed very far away and for providing me with a model of the Polish gentleman, remains strong

Tadeusz Romer's Swiss Period and his Observations from the Year 1918

Marcin Kruszyński
Institute of National Remembrance
Translated by Agnès Domanski

Among the individuals responsible for running the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the interwar period, Tadeusz Romer can be said to have belonged to the ranks of the younger generation of diplomats. Obviously, considering his age, he was not one of the Ministry's founders. He did not possess experience gained, for instance, in the diplomacy or the consular service of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Many civil servants transferred the skills and the habits they had gained there to the MFA of the Second Polish Republic.[1] While his older colleagues were working for the Austrian administration,[2] young Romer spent his formative years elsewhere, with a different group of peers. It seems that, as highlighted by Romer's biographer Beata Szubtarska, Romer's years in Switzerland during the First World War were spent not only studying, but also meeting people who would have an influence on his entire life.[3] That is the part of his life story that I would like to focus on today.

During the second half of 1913, after having passed his final exams with top marks, Romer left for Switzerland to pursue studies at the University of Lausanne.[4] This country had long been an educational haven for young Poles.[5] Among the student body of the nearby University of Geneva, over two thousand were from the territory of the former Polish Republic.[6] The

1 See Waldemar Michowicz, "Organizacja polskiego aparatu dyplomatycznego w latach 1918–1939," in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 4: *1918–1939*, ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1995), 23ff.

2 On the subject of the functioning of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy and the mentality of the milieu making up its ruling circles, see Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 145 passim.

3 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje. Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014).

4 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 29.

5 Halina Florkowska-Frančić, "Polacy w Szwajcarii po powstaniu styczniowym wobec kraju azylu," *Przeglad Polonijny*, no. 3 (1992): 34.

6 Karl Heinz Burmeister, "Academie Polonaise, Historia Uniwersytetu Sankt Gallen," *Alma Mater*, no. 21 (2000): 17.

presence of so many students from Poland played a role in shaping the makeup of everyday student life, as evidenced most notably in the creation of an entire system of social assistance for the benefit of the newcomers. The Genevan Mutual Assistance Society for Polish Students (Genewskie Towarzystwo Wzajemnej Pomocy dla Studentów Polskich) was founded as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, and registered as a university association in 1907. The Assistance for Polish Youth Studying in Switzerland fund (Fundusz Pomocy dla Polskiej Młodzieży Studiującej w Szwajcarii) was started in 1864 at the initiative of Władysław Plater.[7] There was also (starting in the 1870s) a scholarship fund supported by the Polish Museum in Rapperswil. Jan Hulewicz, who analyzed the Museum's scholarship files for the period of 1889–1924, wrote: "The applications allow for the incontrovertible conclusion that the most significant factors driving people to study abroad were two trends: hunger for knowledge, and the desire to acquire an appropriate material situation, to carve out a path to a better-paying career."[8] In Romer's case, there is no doubt that the quality education that he gained in Switzerland increased his chances of professional success.[9]

The University of Lausanne was reputed for its social science programs.[10] Beata Szubtarska quotes a telling passage from Romer's recollections of his first year of studies: "I didn't get much [from the first year] in terms of academic learning, because my program was so all over the place. I was like a hungry puppy, throwing myself at any and all nourishment that was offered, and choosing whatever happened to taste best. It was not a very useful experience in an academic and pedagogical sense, but it really broadened my horizons."[11]

The start of the First World War did not change Romer's immediate circumstances in a significant way: he stayed in Switzerland, but moved in with an aunt living in Fribourg, thereby reducing his living expenses. In the autumn of 1914, he enrolled in philosophy at the university there.[12]

8 Jan Hulewicz, *Sprawa wyższego wykształcenia kobiet w Polsce w wieku XIX* (Krakow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1939), 34.

9 See Jerzy Borejsza, *W kręgu wielkich wygnańców: 1848–1895* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1963), 67.

10 Jan Lewandowski, *Polacy w Szwajcarii* (Lublin: Polonijne Centrum Kulturalno-Oświatowe Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie, 1981), 36.

11 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 33.

12 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 34.

Romer's Swiss period can be divided into at least three thematic segments. First, we have Romer's editorial and publishing work as secretary on an editorial project whose aim was the publication of an encyclopedia on Poland. The book, whose relatively large first printing (two thousand copies) appeared in 1916, was a compendium of knowledge on Romer's native country, and covered the functioning of all the most important spheres: politics, society, economics, history and culture. As loftily reported by Erazm Plitz, the work was sent out to the most important personages on both sides of the European conflict.[13]

Besides this, Romer also found himself on the General Committee for Aid to Victims of War in Poland (Komitet Generalny Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Polsce), founded in 1915 in Vevey under the aegis of two notable figures, one of whom at least became a model for the young student's later doings. I am referring first and foremost to Ignacy Paderewski,[14] followed by Henryk Sienkiewicz.[15] The organization, apolitical in its intent, was one of many initiatives of a similar nature launched by Poles in this period.[16] For example, the Polish War Victims Aid Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny) was active in Russia at this time.[17] The activities of the Swiss committee, like those of the Russian one, were essentially charitable. Its members collected funds towards helping other Poles touched by the trials of war. In the years 1915–1919, the committee directed to Poland aid in the amount of twenty million Swiss francs.[18] Other notable people who collaborated with the organization were Szymon Askenazy, Gabriel Narutowicz, Władysław Mickiewicz and Urszula Ledóchowska, but in Romer's view, Paderewski[19] was the most important.

13 Erazm Plitz, *Fakty i dokumenty, dotyczące mej działalności politycznej za czas od 1882 do 1924 r.*, 45, Erazm Plitz files, file 1605, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records), Warsaw.

14 Halina Florkowska-Frančić, *Między Lozanną, Fryburgiem i Vevey. Z dziejów polskich organizacji w Szwajcarii w latach 1914–1917* (Krakow: Prace Instytutu Polonijnego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1997), 57 passim.

15 Danuta Pługawko, "Henryk Sienkiewicz jako prezes Generalnego Komitetu Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Polsce," in *Henryk Sienkiewicz. Twórczość i recepcja*, ed. Lech Ludorowski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1991), 213.

16 Halina Florkowska-Frančić, *Między Lozanną, Fryburgiem i Vevey*, 59.

17 See Marek Mądzik, *Polskie Towarzystwo Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Rosji w latach I wojny światowej* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2011).18 Halina Florkowska-Frančić, *Między Lozanną, Fryburgiem i Vevey*, 87.

19 Janusz Pajewski, *Wokół sprawy polskiej. Paryż-Lozanna-Londyn* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1970), 145.

The pianist and composer, already world famous at the time, made an enormous impression on young Romer. Years later, he wrote about it in the following way: "In terms of his external relations, his mastery of foreign languages, his ability to interact with people and to influence by expounding his ideas, he was completely first-class."[20] Clearly, Romer was under the great artist's charm, uncritical towards his political aims, as well as towards his character. Paderewski was indeed reputed for his oratorical skills; but accounts vary when it comes to his "political persona" and its force of influence on others. Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that a person of his stature could have impressed a young man like Romer.

As reported by Beata Szubtarska, Romer remembered the work he did for the committee as "an enormous correspondence with the governments of individual countries, especially with finance and treasury ministers, because of all kinds of wartime prohibitions, difficulties that had to be overcome, money transfers being forbidden to neutral countries, special permissions for everything that had to be obtained with the representatives collecting donations."[21] But the function of secretary that was Romer's also allowed him to gain social refinement, taught him skills in the realm of building interpersonal relationships, and introduced him to a number of new connections that would turn out to be very valuable. Among these, the acquaintance with Henryk Sienkiewicz, for whom Romer had great respect and whom he called "the uncrowned king of Poland,"[22] should not be overlooked.

However, the most important piece of Romer's biography in this period is without a doubt his involvement with the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski, or KNP).[23] He worked there starting in November 1917. While he was only twenty-two when he got hired, he already had considerable and varied experience. His resume included the work I have already mentioned. His career path within the KNP was truly impressive. He occupied, successively, the roles of personal secretary to the KNP

20 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje,* 39.
21 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje,* 38.
22 Tadeusz Romer, *Wspomnienia,* 6, Romer Family archives, file 17650, National Library of Poland, Warsaw.
23 On the greater context of the Polish National Committee's work, see Janusz Sibora, *Dyplomacja polska w I wojnie światowej* (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2013).

president, secretary of the presidential bureau, head of the legal and political department office, head of the office of the secretary-general, and head of the political department office. Among his regular duties was also taking minutes during KNP meetings.[24]

It seems that, yet again, Romer put his best foot forward. Writing about the KNP and the people it was made up of, Konstanty Skirmunt put it thus: "The Committee took up an entire, not too shabby, furnished building at 11B, Kleber Avenue, in an excellent neighbourhood near the Triumphal Arch. Dmowski and Zamoyski lived there, had their households and cooks; the Committee's offices were run under the sharp eye of Wielowieyski, and employed among others promising young people who had just finished their studies in Freiburg: Tadeusz Romer and Tadeusz Skowroński."[25] Skowroński would later become an important figure in the MFA during the interwar period, eventually ending up as special envoy and plenipotentiary minister of the Polish Republic in Rio de Janeiro.

Romer was thus intimately involved with the KNP. He had, before starting, seriously questioned whether he should take an active part in its work. The main reason for his hesitation was the fact that he had not yet finished his studies and feared that he would be prevented from finishing them by the expected workload. It would seem that Paderewski himself encouraged him to join the KNP.[26] It is difficult to say, today, how much of a role his voice played in the final decision; nevertheless, we know the end result of Romer's deliberations.

Romer took upon himself the burden of the KNP's technocratic workings, becoming responsible for bureaucratic pragmatics-essential, because no institution can function without an administrative office. Though it sounds uninteresting, it in fact ensured the fluidity of all the activities of the KNP, which as we know came to play the role of a semi-official Polish representation abroad. Without memoranda or the ability to send documents, its members would have spun their tires or remained in an institutional void. Romer was also responsible, after all, for minute taking.[27]

24 Tadeusz Romer, *Wspomnienia*, 45.
25 Konstanty Skirmunt, *Moje wspomnienia 1866–1945*, ed. Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoly Pedagogicznej, 1998), 89.
26 Tadeusz Romer, *Wspomnienia*, 49.
27 Janusz Sibora, *Dyplomacja polska w I wojnie światowej*, 189.

Some of Romer's views on the events of November 1918 and on the general context of that time–crucial from a historical perspective–are known to us. Romer did not fear what he referred to as "Piłsudski's dictatorship." This is significant, in my view, since we are referring to a representative of the opposing political camp. Perhaps we can chalk this up to the Freiburg student's personality: open, kind, far from doctrinaire–all traits germane to the diplomat's work. Romer was not worried about "competition" from the Temporary Chief of State. On the contrary, he found his strong presence in the Polish political sphere natural, as he was the only personality capable of uniting various political factions. At the same time, he believed, like his superiors, that only the KNP could represent Polish interests abroad. In this area he was–for a change–a sectarian. Piłsudski himself actually accepted such a power-sharing arrangement.[28]

Romer was pleased, perhaps considering it as only fair–historically speaking and towards Dmowski–that the victorious Allies requested the participation of the members of the KNP in the peace talks. It was right, in his view, that the KNP should represent the sovereign Polish state.

Obviously, the question of borders was crucial to the functioning and the survival of the fledgling Polish state. Romer felt that the French were sympathetic, but he worried about and even demonized the position of the British elites, who were prepared to sacrifice Poland's cause for the sake of their own global interests. He never mentioned Prime Minister David Lloyd George by name in his writing, referring only to the many "unfriendly elements in England." He complained about the ignorance of the British who, in his opinion, had no understanding of the situation in Central Europe. The British imperialistic outlook, which saw the world from a bird's-eye view, erased local territorial distinctions, whereas it was precisely on these territorial distinctions that Poland's political existence depended. An example of this, in Romer's view, could be seen in London's attitude towards Eastern Galicia and to the issue of the shape of Poland's eastern border more generally. British politicians were unreceptive to the Polish position on this

28 Sławomir Dębski, ed., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień* (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2008), 97.

question, not understanding that giving up on territorial demands in this part of the continent would have the effect of downgrading Poland to a seasonal state, destined to be invaded and partitioned again in a short time.[29]

This was likely also the chief reason for Romer's enduring enthusiasm for France. He saw France not only as the guarantor of Poland's sovereignty, but also as the rational guardian of a rationally constructed postwar world order. Sensing Great Britain's obvious hostility, he highlighted the importance of nurturing close links with France, seeing such a tactic as beneficial to the Polish national interest. He wrote, perhaps overly enthusiastically, that "Clemenceau [...] is prepared to back Poland's demands in the strongest way."[30] Romer's love for Paris was, apparently, very real, an unsurprising circumstance given the circles in which Romer moved.

We can wonder whether Romer's view of France as Poland's advocate in its disagreements with the Czechs and the Lithuanians was not excessively naïve. He believed that the French "will help us come to an understanding [...] in such a way that those nations will come together with the Poles without any major disagreements in their respective wishes." Romer was forgetting that Paris too was playing its own geopolitical game, and that it would not give anyone anything for free. But then again, the question remains whether Romer could have thought differently–likely not. Not to mention the fact that Poland had no choice but to trust in the French.

Another factor in Romer's positive opinion of France was gratitude for its allowing the formation of Polish military units on its territory. Romer praised the skills of General Haller's troops several times,[31] though he could not have possessed any real knowledge on the subject. Here too then, he was yielding to an idealistic enthusiasm rather than holding a professional opinion. On the other hand, such an attitude is hardly surprising. For Poles, who yearned for independence, the presence of Polish soldiers on the Seine in such a historical moment could only be the source of feelings of pride.

It is interesting to note that Romer also concerned himself with the political sentiments on the Vistula. As I mentioned earlier, Piłsudski did not trouble

29 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 109.
30 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 145.
31 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 167, 174, 187.

him. He did, however, try to gauge how much support there was among Poles for socialist policies. He wondered how much of the Temporary Chief of State's popularity was due to his charisma and his heroic past, and what part of it could actually be attributed to the ideological foundations of his party. Romer saw Piłsudski first and foremost as a leader and a personality, rather than as a strategist realizing a specific, cohesive political program. He suspected that the power of this type of presence on the political scene might burn out once the initial "messianic" stage of state-building had ended and Poland entered the natural next phase of solidifying its gains and searching for internal and external stability. To Romer, it was Dmowski, a statesman bent on methodically realizing his own program, who was the right politician for this "peace phase"; or rather, the only politician who even had such a program, thus offering a measure of safety and especially of predictability to the Polish people. In Romer's eyes, Piłsudski–a revolutionary and a romantic hero–did not possess these qualities.[32]

Furthermore, though it is hard to find an actual justification for this view, Romer believed Dmowski to be a leader who was ready to unite the nation around a positive idea, one that went beyond just the physical defense of borders. In terms of the internal organization of the country, Romer saw Dmowski as an intellectual with a serious plan, in effect the only person who both had the necessary stature and had constructed a road map for Poland's functioning once it actually appeared on the map of Europe.[33] Unfortunately, Romer did not leave precise indications as to what exactly he thought this plan might entail, beyond the familiar slogans of the National Democracy movement.

It is perhaps worth adding that, during this period, Romer made efforts to explicate the nature of Polish-Jewish relations to the West. When it came to the question of the Jewish population in Poland, the National Democracy leader held unambiguous views. He considered this population to be a threat to Poles, and accused the Jews of welcoming Russification.[34] Starting in the

32 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 139.
33 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 141.
34 See Krzysztof Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski, 1864–1939* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 2002) and Olaf Bergmann, *Narodowa Demokracja a Żydzi, 1918–1929* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2015).

spring of 1918, the English-language press reported on real and rumoured cases of pogroms in Russian Poland. Indeed, local Poles tended to view the Jews negatively, believing (like Dmowski) that they were sympathetic to the Russian authorities. In the fall of 1918, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in various cities began to grow. The first pogrom took place on November 11, in Kielce; four people were killed. The KNP frequently refuted news of anti-Semitic incidents, claiming that they were exaggerated by German propaganda. Romer wrote about these matters in the following way: "Here these supposed Jewish pogroms are being spoken of in a shocking way, and rather unpleasantly for us [...]. I am clearing up biased, false information, and I believe that this will undoubtedly end in an unmasking of this Jewish scheme that will be favourable to us."[35] These words must be taken in their particular context. Romer could not have had proper knowledge of the events taking place in Poland. Thus, he fell prey to a certain narrative and climate reigning in all of Europe. He largely approached the matter in terms of the necessity of defending the good name of a country that was politically fragile and needed the backing of larger players. From this point of view, any issues of animosity (real or not) between Poles and Jews needed to remain a domestic affair. This might not be insignificant, considering later developments in Romer's life and worldview.

Without a doubt, Dmowski had an even greater influence on young Romer than Paderewski. Beata Szubtarska quotes the following remark, formulated by Romer years later: "Considering Dmowski's powerful intellect after so much time has passed [...], I see especially clearly that everything that he said and wrote was the result of deep and highly original thinking. There was never even a trace of banality or provocation there."[36]

After the end of the Paris peace talks, in which he took part, Romer naturally ended up in the diplomatic service of the Second Polish Republic. The Swiss period of his biography was a time of observation and learning: not only learning in the academic sense, but also in the sense of an apprenticeship

35 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918: listopad-grudzień*, 121.
36 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 47.

of the political trade. A time spent watching exceptional people–their ways of working, of formulating thoughts, and of influencing the people around them. It was very lucky for Romer that he met these outsized personalities. It seems that he made good use of his luck.

From the Paris Peace Conference to the Mission on the Tagus River–Tadeusz Romer's Early Diplomatic Career

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When the First World War ended, Tadeusz Romer was in Paris, serving as the secretary of the Polish National Committee. It is difficult to imagine a better place to be for a young man at the beginning of his professional career. Several weeks later, France witnessed the beginning of the Peace Conference that would shape the postwar reality. Thus, for a few months, Paris became the capital of the world, visited not only by most prominent politicians and diplomats, but also by eminent representatives of the world of academia.[1] The arrival of such a great number of experts (the British delegation, for instance, was composed of four hundred members) made the conference truly unique from a historical perspective. Romer found himself in the middle of this multi-ethnic pot, which provided him an opportunity to gain unique experience.

The momentousness of the awareness of being part of the process of shaping history and creating a new world order cannot be overestimated.[2] Participating in or even just witnessing the decision-making process that affected the future of millions of Europeans was a truly unique experience. Not to be forgotten is also the symbolic weight of all the actions performed by the members or collaborators of the Polish National Committee in Paris. After more than a century, Poland was returning to the map of Europe, and acts as trivial as issuing a Polish passport or a statement confirming Polish citizenship were symbols of the revival of Polish statehood. Indeed, because of the peculiarities of the moment, the Polish clerical apparatus in Paris became not only the witness, but in a way also the author of historical events.

1 For more on the Paris Peace Conference, see Włodzimierz Borodziej, Maciej Górny, *Nasza wojna. Tom II. Narody 1917–1923* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2018), 480ff.

2 On the Polish affairs at the Paris Peace Conference, see Kay Lundgreen-Nielsen, *The Polish Problem at the Peace Conference. A study of the Great Powers and the Poles, 1918–1919* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1979).

The functioning of the Polish National Committee and that of the Polish delegation to the Peace Conference, which was based on the Committee's structures, presented many challenges. Their work was characterized by unavoidable chaos, time constraints, and communication difficulties that meant that their knowledge of actual developments in remote areas was often incomplete. Yet another complication was a consequence of the fact that it was necessary to respond quickly to the changing circumstances, while also at the same time competing with rival initiatives proposed by the delegations of other countries.[3]

The Paris Conference is sometimes referred to as "the six months that changed the world."[4] It seems no exaggeration to state that the period in question also changed Tadeusz Romer's future, as it became a formative experience for his personality and affected the fate of that entire generation of Polish diplomats. Romer himself, when looking back at the conference times, recollected: "Immersed excessively in this hectic but fascinating work, I went probably through the best practical introduction to our regular external service."[5] It is worth emphasizing that there was more than enough to do: the Polish National Committee alone had almost two hundred meetings in 1917–1919, and the minutes for the majority of them were drafted by Romer.[6] Apart from formal meetings of the Committee, numerous other meetings were organized. One of them (beginning at 9:30 p.m. and aimed at drafting a Polish note on territorial issues) was recounted by Professor Eugeniusz Romer, a cartographer from Galicia (in Eastern Europe), who made the following observation on the evening meeting: "Minutes were taken by Tadeusz Romer (of Lithuania), a brave lad. [...] The editing process was as follows: Dmowski drafted a paragraph of the note, then a discussion was held,

3 More on this subject can be found in Sławomir Dębski and Piotr Długołęcki, eds., *Polish Documents on Foreign Policy, November 11, 1918–June 28, 1919* (Warsaw: PISM, 2017).

4 Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919. Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002).

5 Quoted by Beata Szubtarska in *Niezwykłe misje. Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014), 46–47.

6 Marek Jabłonowski and Dorota Cisowska-Hydzik, eds., *O niepodległą i granice, vol. 6, Komitet Narodowy Polski. Protokoły posiedzeń 1917–1919* (Warsaw–Pułtusk: WSH i WDiNP UW, 2007).

details and the form were agreed on, and then the final version of the note was dictated to young Romer who wrote it down."[7]

Apparently, Romer himself was well aware of the necessity of making good use of the experience gained in the process of rebuilding the Polish diplomatic and consular services. When, in February 1919, he drafted a special memorandum "on the foreign representation of the Polish state," he indicated that it was necessary to use administrative staff who "have the serious advantage of acquired routine, know local conditions and speak foreign languages, no matter how random and non-professional the staff may be. As such, the staff may be used successfully either at posts abroad or in specific departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw."[8]

After the signing of the peace treaty, Romer did not immediately leave Paris. He was employed at the newly established legation of the Republic of Poland in France, headed by Maurycy Zamoyski, the former vice-president, treasurer and one of the founders of the Polish National Committee. The signing of the treaty did not mean that all Polish matters were definitively resolved, and the voice of France, a powerful state of the winning coalition, was occasionally decisive in many areas important for Poland. It seems that the beginnings of the post's operation were not easy. In October 1919, the vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Władysław Skrzyński, complained: "I have almost no political news from the Legation in Paris."[9]

As staff at the legation was limited and there were a great number of matters to be handled relating not only to relations between Poland and France, but also to the entirety of Polish foreign policy, Romer could not complain about a lack of challenges or an excess of free time. He was a frequent visitor at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[10] and the

7 Eugeniusz Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski (1918–1919)*, ed. Andrzej Garlicki and Ryszard Świętek (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989), 212.

8 Sławomir Dębski, ed., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne: 1919 styczeń-maj* (Warsaw: PISM, 2017), document no. 122.

9 Sławomir Dębski, ed., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1919 czerwiec-grudzień* (Warsaw: PISM, 2019), document no. 288.

10 For one of many examples of such visits, see Witold Stankiewicz and Andrzej Piber, eds., *Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego* (Wrocław; Warsaw: Ossolineum, 1974), vol. II: document no. 429.

culminating point of his stay in Paris was February 1921, when Józef Piłsudski visited France and negotiations took place between Poland and France on their political deal and military convention.[11] Romer's involvement in the process of preparing the visit and his contribution to the wording of the agreement[12] were, once again, occasions for him to participate in writing history. The alliance between Poland and France, irrespective of the assessment of its actual value, was the foundation of the foreign policy pursued by the Second Polish Republic and a recurring element of all interwar considerations on security policy in Europe.

Several months after the alliance with France was finalized, Tadeusz Romer finished his work in Paris and was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' headquarters in Warsaw. Relatively soon, as early as 1923, he became the deputy head–and subsequently the head–of the Western Unit, responsible for, among other things, relations with Germany, which were essential from the Polish perspective. While working at the headquarters, it was not to his disadvantage that the post of minister of foreign affairs was held successively by former members or collaborators of the Polish National Committee: Konstanty Skirmunt, Marian Seyda, Roman Dmowski and Maurycy Zamoyski. In Paris, as the personal secretary of Dmowski and the secretary of the Polish National Committee, Romer had worked with the future leaders of Polish diplomacy. On the one hand, the contacts he established at that time presumably facilitated his functioning in the ministry; on the other hand, as pointed out by experienced diplomat Tadeusz Schimitzek, they might have resulted in rumours about his affiliation with the ideology followed by the National Democracy and his role of grey eminence in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[13] It should be emphasized, whatever the case, that in those conditions, with the number of ministry staff being relatively low, the position of the head of the Western Section was one of the most important positions in the ministry.

11 Henryk Bułhak, *Polska-Francja, z dziejów sojuszu 1922–1939*, vol. 1, *1922–1932* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Fundacji "Historia pro Futuro," 1993).

12 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 58.

13 Stanisław Schimitzek, *Drogi i bezdroża minionej epoki. Wspomnienia z lat pracy w MSZ, 1920–1939* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1976), 87ff.

The period of Romer's work for the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was extremely important in terms of events relating directly to Poland, but also to a broader sphere of international relations. In 1923, the process of shaping the Republic of Poland territorially was completed, and the Eastern border was confirmed. In October 1925, the provisions of the Locarno Treaties, criticized by Warsaw, were agreed on. Still, one of the most important political events that happened during the Warsaw period of Romer's life was the coup d'état carried out in May 1926 by Józef Piłsudski and his supporters.[14] During the critical days of fighting in Warsaw, Romer served as a liaison for the purpose of organizing talks between Piłsudski and the head of the National Democracy, Roman Dmowski, who stayed in Poznań and whose personal secretary Romer had been in the past. It seems that the taking up of this mission by Romer was doomed to fail, and could not bring any results.[15]

The takeover of power by Józef Piłsudski's group and the appointment of the new minister of foreign affairs, August Zaleski, must also have affected Romer's position in the ministry. Nonetheless, it was believed that the new minister was "protecting" Romer from potential dismissal.[16] However–as pointed out by Habielski–"even though [Romer] was perceived as a diplomat affiliated with the National Democracy and representing the school of Dmowski and Paderewski, the developments of 1926 did not affect his career. According to those best acquainted with the rules governing personal relations in the ministry, high-ranking officials from families belonging to the landowning class were immune against political changes, as confirmed by the further course of Romer's career."[17]

14 On international reactions to the coup, see Piotr Kołakowski and Andrzej Pepłoński, eds., *Majowy zamach stanu w świetle dokumentów wywiadu, dyplomacji i organów bezpieczeństwa II Rzeczypospolitej* (Słupsk: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pomorskiej, 2008).

15 Beata Szubtarska, "Niedoszłe spotkanie Józefa Piłsudskiego z Romanem Dmowskim w maju 1926 r. w relacji Tadeusza Romera," *Niepodległość*, no. 58 (2008): 215–219.

16 Piotr Wandycz, *Z Piłsudskim i Sikorskim. August Zaleski minister spraw zagranicznych w latach 1926–1932 i 1939–1941* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1999), 36.

17 Rafał Habielski, "Tadeusz Romer," in *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja, polityka, ministrowie*, ed. Piotr Długołęcki and Krzysztof Szczepanik (Szczecin-Warsaw: Polski Instytut Dyplomacji, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego "Minerwa," 2014), 343.

Despite this "immunity," Romer stopped working as the head of the Western Section one year later, and a new stage of his foreign service began at the legation in Rome. When assessing this staffing decision, it should be noted, on the one hand, that the position of head of the Western Section was incomparably higher in the internal hierarchy than the position of legation advisor in Rome; on the other hand, the post in Rome was so prestigious that it could not have been treated in any aspect whatsoever as a form of exile or demotion. It is a matter of speculation whether or not Romer's departure for the Eternal City was a case of regular rotation typical of the ministry and whether or not there were other reasons for the change in the position of section head and the appointment of Józef Lipski, who would become a key player in Polish diplomacy in the years to come.

During the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini in Italy, working for the legation in Rome presented numerous challenges and difficulties. To illustrate one kind of obstacle, we may quote one of the reports drafted by Romer (in August 1931), which starts as follows: "For some time now I have noticed irritation with Poland among fascists, caused undoubtedly by the anti-Italian speech given by Adam Zamoyjski at the Meeting of Yugoslavian Falconry in Split, the news of which was spread by the press here." Further in the same report, Romer mentions the "unpleasant surprise manifested by leading fascist groups at the anti-Italian attitude of the Polish press."[18] Despite recurring frictions, the Polish side wanted to perceive Rome as an important political and economic partner, a relationship that was to be symbolically proven by raising the rank of the Polish diplomatic posts there to that of embassies. Steps were taken in this regard by the newly appointed envoy in Rome, Roman Knoll, while opportunities for talks also appeared during the visit of Minister August Zaleski to Italy in 1928.[19]

The mission in Rome gave Romer the opportunity to gain experience in cooperating with the most important diplomats of the Second Polish Republic: the already mentioned Roman Knoll,[20] Stefan Przezdziecki (Knoll's

18 Mariusz Wołos, ed., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1931* (Warsaw: PISM, 2008), document no. 216.

19 Piotr Wandycz, *Z Piłsudskim i Sikorskim,* 85–86.

20 Henryk Bartoszewicz, *Roman Knoll. Polityk i dyplomata* (Warsaw: MSZ, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2018), 155ff.

successor in the role of head of the Polish post in Rome) and Alfred Wysocki (former envoy in Berlin).

After the rank of the diplomatic posts was changed, Stefan Przezdziecki became the first Polish ambassador to Italy. His mission was terminated by his premature death on December 3, 1932, in Rome. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, it was Tadeusz Romer who took over as head of the Polish post in Rome, ranked as chargé d'affaires of the embassy of the Republic of Poland.[21]

The period during which Romer was chief of mission in Rome coincided with the greatest crises of relations between Poland and Italy. On March 19, 1933, Benito Mussolini announced his vision of creating a directorate made up of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, known as the Four-Power Pact. The pact never came into force, even though it was signed on July 15, 1933. Romer, as early as March 20, wrote in his extensive report about the talks being carried out and the initiative put forward, and referred to "the great concert of powers" to describe the new situation.[22] Mussolini's idea was assessed in unequivocally negative terms by Polish authorities and as early as March 23, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joseph Beck, stated in his ciphergram to the ambassador in London: "The agreement between Italy and the United Kingdom intended to create the concert of four great powers is not in line with Poland's interests."[23] Beck instructed Romer to avoid making any comments on the pact and to keep a distance in his contacts with Italian authorities.[24]

The most significant sign of the Polish authorities' discontent was not sending Jerzy Potocki to Rome as the new ambassador, even though he was designated to take up the post on March 3, 1933. On March 24, Potocki officially resigned in protest against the Four-Power Pact. Thus, the duration of Romer's service as chargé d'affaires at the embassy in Rome was extended. Holding this function at a time of tense bilateral relations was not an easy task, and Romer himself wrote, in his report dated April 10, 1933:

21 Krzysztof Kania, ed., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1932* (Warsaw: PISM, Warsaw 2011), xx.

22 Wojciech Skóra, ed., in collaboration with Piotr Długołęcki, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1933* (Warsaw: PISM, 2015), document no. 65.

23 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1933*, document no. 68.

24 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1933*, documents no. 102 and 104.

"After executing the instructions sent via telegraph relating to Ambassador Potocki's resignation, I thought it would be most appropriate to avoid, for some time, any visits to the Italian Ministry of the Foreign Office, as I understood that any statements on my part could prove divergent from the tactics observed by our Ministry in relations with the Italian Embassy in Warsaw."[25]

Romer could see, however, that it was necessary to enhance mutual relations, and as early as the beginning of May he remarked on "the heritage of years of work to ground positive attitudes in Italy being destroyed" and noted that "an attempt to ease relations between Poland and Italy would be justified."26 In fact, the task of potentially improving relations was to be completed by the new ambassador in Rome, the already mentioned Alfred Wysocki. The assignment proved far from easy and Tadeusz Romer, in a letter addressed in August 1934 to a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wrote: "Upon arrival in Rome, I found Mr. Wysocki so fatigued from his illness and high temperatures in the city that I no longer deplored being prematurely called from holidays."[27] Wysocki himself assessed Romer's work at the Italian post positively.[28]

In spring 1935, Romer's seven-year stay in the Eternal City came to an end. He left Rome richer in experience, and also aware of the increasing conflict over the developments in Abyssinia. It is worth noting that, in November 1934, the Polish legation in Cairo reported that the emperor of Abyssinia took into account "the possibility of war at any minute."[29] The conflict ultimately broke out in October 1935, when Romer was in Portugal, heading the Polish legation in Lisbon.

His departure for the Iberian Peninsula causes similar interpretation issues to his departure for Italy. Formally speaking, this was undoubtedly a promotion. The legation in Lisbon was the first independent post that Romer headed in the capacity of envoy. On the other hand, it goes without saying

25 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1933, document* no. 101.
26 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1933,* document no. 137.
27 Stanisław Żerko, ed., in collaboration with Piotr Długołęcki, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1934* (Warsaw: PISM, 2014), document no. 217. 28 Alfred Wysocki, *Tajemnice dyplomatycznego sejfu,* ed. Wojciech Jankowerny (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1979), 181.
29 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1934,* document no. 308.

that in terms of political and economic interests of the Republic of Poland, this was a peripheral post. Poland had no important political relations with Portugal, and trade between the two countries was insignificant. Additionally, Portugal was a peculiar country, under the dictatorial rule of António Salazar, who was mainly focused on internal affairs and not really interested in developing bilateral relations. Thus, the appointment meant limited opportunities for Romer, and the legation in Lisbon was very small in terms of staff. In fact, the only full-time position was that of the envoy, who was supported by two contract officials.[30]

As a result, Romer, who so far had been in the midst of events, now for the first time had to act at the periphery of politics and diplomacy. Despite all of this, attention should be drawn to several aspects of his activity in the new role. Firstly, his nomination coincided with the death of Józef Piłsudski, the informal head of the Polish state. On May 12, 1935, the day of Piłsudski's death, Minister Beck sent a special circular letter to all of Poland's representations abroad, in which he wrote: "At the top of the Marshal's accomplishments there is the establishment of our position in international life, the position our nation deserves. I am convinced that all people who are honoured to work for the external services of our country will consider it to be their duty not to waste the greatness of that accomplishment."[31] As a result, all representations of Poland faced the obligation to commemorate the Polish leader and organize commemoration services. For the post in Portugal, it was relatively easier, as Piłsudski had visited Madeira. By coincidence, one of the first tasks for Romer in his new position was to notify the public of the death of the Polish leader and to organize a commemoration service.[32]

Romer paid much attention to the development of bilateral trade relations. Due to the weakness of Polish exports and to the difficulties in negotiating a new trade deal, it was impossible to develop economic cooperation between Poland and Portugal significantly.[33]

30 *Rocznik Służby Zagranicznej według stanu na 1 kwietnia 1935* (Warsaw: Koło Rodziny Urzędniczej przy MSZ, 1935), 104.

31 Stanisław Żerko, ed., in collaboration with Piotr Długołęcki, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1935* (Warsaw: PISM, 2017), document no. 169.

32 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 91.

33 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje*, 92–106.

The event that had the greatest impact on Romer's mission in Portugal was the civil war that broke out in July 1936 in neighbouring Spain. As much as Salazar was not really involved in European affairs, as already mentioned, he could not ignore the war raging in the closest neighbourhood, and in one of his reports, Romer emphasized: "Salazar is seriously concerned by the developments."[34] Concern was also voiced expressly by the Portuguese legation in Warsaw, "despite the emphasis on belief in the ultimate victory of the White."[35]

In the Spanish Civil War, Lisbon supported general Franco, who also had Poland as his political friend. It should be emphasized that Warsaw was one of the most important weapon providers during the conflict, selling arms to both sides.[36] The post in Lisbon became a natural intermediary in trade with Spain, both in relation to the sale of arms, as well as in the export of "civilian" goods. In one of his reports from December 1936, Tadeusz Romer critically assessed the capacity of his own post and emphasized that he reported "several times that the Legation cannot take any responsibility for commercial orders sent independently and without its knowledge or control by various Polish people and foreigners from insurgent Spain with quotation requests addressed to the Legation." This did not mean, however, that he could not see the new market opportunities created by the war, as further on in the same report he states: "there is an opportunity to enter into numerous beneficial commercial transactions, following in the steps of Portuguese, German, Italian, as well as French, Belgian, Dutch and other companies, who have been developing a flourishing activity in this direction, mainly from Portugal. Apart from the area of supplies for the army, there are, especially in this season of the year, pressing needs to fill for the civilian population in Spain in such areas as fuelling materials and food (beans, eggs, preserved products), ready-to-wear, cheap and warm clothes, construction materials, window glass, railway equipment, etc., which means great selling opportunities also for Polish suppliers."[37]

34 Stanisław Żerko, ed., in collaboration with Piotr Długołęcki, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1936* (Warsaw: PISM, 2011), document no. 381.

35 Polskie Dokumenty *Dyplomatyczne 1936*, document no. 377.

36 More on the subject in Marek Deszczyński and Wojciech Mazur, *Na krawędzi ryzyka. Eksport polskiego sprzętu wojskowego w okresie międzywojennym* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2004).

37 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1936*, document no. 383.

The post in Lisbon was also visited by Polish military envoys, who were officially introduced as press correspondents. At the end of December 1936, Romer reported that in line with the announcement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was approached by the "qualified Lieutenant Colonel Aleksander Kędzior from the General Staff, with an ID card issued by the Polish Telegraphic Agency for Spain." Romer also reported on the arrival of another military intelligence officer. "To assist him in gaining adequate access to insurgent Spain, I presented him as a special correspondent of 'Bellona' and in this press/military capacity made his departure to Salamanca easier." Romer suggested refraining from sending "journalists," as they were naturally suspected of spying activities. He was convinced that it would be much better to send a military observer, who–as the Spanish diplomats assured–"would be most welcome."[38]

Romer's stay in Lisbon was almost over. When he wrote the words quoted above, his transfer to Japan had already been decided. On January 12, 1937, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Jan Szembek, in his semi-private letter to the envoy in Belgrade, Roman Dębicki, wrote: "Finally, I would like to inform you, with utmost confidence, that the minister has decided to send Tadeusz Romer to Tokyo. The demande d'agréation has already been sent. Initially, he will go there as an envoy, but in a few months he will become ambassador. I find this nomination brilliant, and I feel truly glad. We will finally learn what is actually going on in the Far East."[39] The departure for Tokyo and the nomination for ambassador open an entirely new and, as the future would show, extremely important chapter of Romer's life.

The twenty years of diplomatic service of Tadeusz Romer described above were a period abundant in political events. His stay in Paris, his work for the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as his service in Rome and Portugal gave Romer the opportunity to gain unique experience that he could use at further stages of his professional life. What also played a role was his chance to work with remarkable individuals (such as Henryk Sienkiewicz

38 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1936*, document no. 406.

39 Jan Stanisław Ciechanowski, ed., in collaboration with Piotr Długołęcki, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1937* (Warsaw: PISM, 2012), document no. 12.

or Ignacy Paderewski), something that was not insignificant for the process of shaping the young man's personality. As a result, Romer, who started his professional life as secretary, in his twenties grew to be a recognizable diplomat and a candidate for the highest positions in the Polish diplomatic service.

On a final note, it is worthwhile to mention a private trip that Romer took to Lithuania in 1936. It should be remembered that with the final shape of the newly established Polish borders, the Romer family estate in Antonosz became a part of Lithuania. Romer's stay in Lithuania was one of the topics raised in the conversation between the then minister of foreign affairs of Lithuania, Stasys Lozoraitis, and Tadeusz Katelbach, who was a correspondent of "Gazeta Polska" in Kaunas and an informal representative of Józef Beck in Lithuania. Katelbach mentioned that Lozaraitis waited for "Romer, who was supposed to visit him to thank him for a visa granted," and he also had a suspicion that the Lithuanian minister "expected to hear from Mr. Romer suggestions on the relations between Poland and Lithuania."[40] Romer's trip was a private one, but the very fact that Lithuanian authorities perceived him as a person who might carry out a mission to overcome a deadlock in the complicated relations between Poland and Lithuania illustrates the long way Romer had come since he had acted as a secretary in Paris.

40 *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1936*, document no. 286.

Ambassador Tadeusz Romer– Diplomat and Humanitarian in Japan,

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Tadeusz Romer is one of the most important figures in the history of Polish diplomacy before and during World War II, as well as in the history of Polish-Japanese relations. He was the first and only ambassador of Poland in Tokyo before and at the beginning of the Second World War, a position he held during a very difficult time, from 1937 to 1941. By 1937, Japan was conducting a full-scale war against China and preparing to go to war against the United States and Great Britain, which would necessitate a change of allies. Poland had many complex problems with its neighbors, and soon after the outbreak of the war found itself in a tragic situation, under the occupation of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, with its government forced into exile. In this period, Romer played a very important role in building and maintaining friendly relations between Poland and Japan.

I have already written about Tadeusz Romer several times while discussing various topics from the history of Polish-Japanese relations, which I have been researching for years.[1] In this paper, I would like to present comprehensively only some of his most important activities in Japan, activities that he carried out not only as a professional diplomat, but also as a humanitarian. The most important sources of information about Romer's activities in Japan were, for me: the collections of documents *Diplomatic Activities 1913–1975,* vol. 1: *Japan (1937–1940),* vol. 2: *Japan (1940–1941),* housed at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa (hereinafter referred to as TRDAJ)[2]; and some collections concerning among others Tadeusz Romer at the Polish Institute and General

1 See, among others: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, "Ambassador Tadeusz Romer. His Role in Polish-Japanese Relations (1937–1941)," *Silva Iaponicarum,* fasc. 18 (winter 2008): 82–104; Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich* (The History of Polish-Japanese relations), vol. 1, 1904–1945, 3rd ed. (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, Katedra Japonistyki, 2019), 192–196, 212–231, 252–288, 308–337.

2 Library and Archives Canada, Tadeusz Romer fonds, R4804-0-2-E, "Diplomatic Activities 1913–1975" series, vol. 1–5, reproduction copy number C-10449 to C-10455.

Sikorski Museum in London (abbreviated as TRPI).[3] The quantity of these documents is exceptional, as are their reliability, thoroughness and detail. Despite his numerous duties at the mission in Tokyo, the ambassador regularly submitted detailed reports to his superiors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs–which was located in Warsaw until September 1939, then in Paris, and finally in London, where the Polish government-in-exile settled. I also used many documents from the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan). Finally, I also obtained important information from Tadeusz Romer's cousin, Andrzej T. Romer, and held very interesting conversations with the ambassador's daughter, Therese Romer, who shared private memories of her family's stay in Tokyo with me.

Tadeusz Romer started his work in Tokyo as a plenipotentiary minister of the Republic of Poland on April 26, 1937, but he knew he would soon be promoted to the role of ambassador. On the one hand, the talks concerning elevation of the legations in Tokyo and Warsaw to embassy status were initiated by the Japanese, for whom Poland was attractive mainly due to its geographical location between Germany and the USSR, but also because of its eventual support at the League of Nations, particularly in the matter of the Sino-Japanese conflict. On the other hand, Poland could be more certain of receiving help from Japan in negotiations with Germany in the event of a conflict. But in the context of the increasingly tense international situation in Europe, the Polish minister of foreign affairs, Józef Beck (1894–1944), sought to maintain the country's neutrality, particularly in relation to its neighbors, Germany and the USSR. Poland saw Japan (a country that had traditionally been friendly toward Poland) and formulated its foreign policy toward Tokyo through the prism of its policy toward these two powerful neighbors. But Romer also knew that, as he wrote,

> it is understandable, according to the old Polish saying, that the neighbor of our neighbor is our natural [...] friend, because we can have many interests in common. And in fact, Poland and Japan, despite the enormous distance,

3 The Polish Institute and General Sikorski Museum in London, A.12.53/37, "Depesze szyfrowe Tokio, 1940–1941" (Coded cables, Tokyo, 1940–1941), A 11.49/Sow/36, "Korespondencja ambasadora Romera" (Correspondence of Ambassador Romer).

> despite the enormous difference in civilization and culture, have common interests [...], mainly visible in general staff operations and military preparation.[4]

Romer was promoted to the rank of ambassador on October 1. He now had to devote his attention to many important issues that were becoming increasingly difficult due to the development of the events in the world at the time.

The issue of Poland's inclusion in the Anti-Comintern Pact

One of these issues was that of Poland's inclusion in the Anti-Comintern Pact. Japan and Germany gradually grew closer from the mid-1930s on as a result of Japan's deepening pariah status on the international arena. This was due to Japan's expansionist foreign policy, upon which it embarked at the start of the decade, first attacking Manchuria in 1931. After Japan left the League of Nations in 1933 because the organization refused to recognize the puppet state of Manchukuo, Tokyo began to seek new allies. Another motive was the fear of the USSR's increasingly stronger position in the world and the possibility of conflict with the Soviet State. In November 1936, Japan signed the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany. Italy also became a signatory in November 1937. Officially, the Pact was directed against communism and the Communist International, but a secret clause clearly stated that it was aimed at the Soviet Union.[5]

The Japanese government, which was eager to find allies and was aware of the fact that Poland had a friendly disposition toward Japan and was opposed to communism, began efforts to include it in the Anti-Comintern Pact. These efforts intensified toward the end of 1937, after the outbreak of Japan's war with China and the signing of the non-aggression treaty between the USSR and China. The Polish government adopted a pro-Japanese stance at the forum of the League of Nations, as Poland wanted Japan to assume the role of mediator in the event of a conflict between Poland and Germany.

4 Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich*, 195.

5 Ludwik Gelberg, ed., *Prawo międzynarodowe i historia dyplomatyczna. Wybór dokumentów* (International Law and Diplomatic History. Selected Documents) (Warsaw: PWN, 1958), 2: 437–438.

However, Polish foreign minister Beck was opposed to joining any block, in line with his policy of maintaining a balance between the West and the East. Ambassador Romer proceeded in accordance with Beck's instructions, as the following passage from his correspondence indicates:

> I distanced myself fairly categorically and completely unambiguously from all speculation about Poland's participation in any ideological block [...]. In order to counter tendencies to attribute to us the role of object or docile tool of other countries' interests in international relations, I strongly emphasized that the Polish government has and retains in this matter [...] complete freedom of judgment and maneuver. [...] Poland is combating this plotting [by the Comintern] domestically on its own in a determined and effective way. Nevertheless, its external position dictates that the Polish government in reference to its own role in this area adopt an understandable restraint, and this among other reasons explains [the Polish government's] firm decision to refrain from participating in any blocks. Min. Hirota [Kōki] assured me in his reply that the Japanese government well understands and completely appreciates the motives of Polish policy in this area. (November 26, 1937, TRDAJ, vol. 1)

An agreement in the aforementioned matter was never reached, though the two countries continued to maintain friendly relations. Japan was interested in Poland's support in the League of Nations, which Poland–looking after its own sovereignty–sometimes provided. Proof of this was another top-secret document that Romer sent to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> The warming of our relations with Japan under the influence of recent events has exceeded my expectations. Their reaction has been unexpectedly broad and deep, which can be explained by the widespread and not unjustified feeling here that Japan is threatened by political and economic isolation. Friendship shown in difficult moments is always all

> the more valuable. [...] My relations with Hirota have become close, downright friendly. [...] Especially in connection with our maneuvers at the League in Far East affairs, which in my opinion were conducted superbly in Geneva. I have remained in nearly daily personal contact with Hirota, who will not forget us for them. (October 19, 1937, TRDAJ, vol. 1)[6]

The issue of recognizing Manchukuo

Another very delicate and important matter was the issue of recognizing the state of Manchukuo, created by Japan. Poland, together with forty-one other states in the League of Nations, adopted a resolution in 1933 stating that Manchuria should remain under the authority of China. However, several thousand Poles were living in Manchuria, and the Polish government was obliged to ensure their safety.[7] In 1937, Japan informed Poland that it intended to withdraw extraterritorial rights and that Manchukuo would consent to the further existence of consulates only of those states that gave it the right to open consulates on their territory. Romer, to whom the Polish consulate in Harbin was subordinated, established that representatives of Manchukuo had not broached the question of normalizing the legal status of consulates with other countries. He suspected that they were probably counting on setting a precedent with Poland, a country friendly toward them. It was in these circumstances that Romer met with the director of the Department of Europe and Asia in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tōgō Shigenori (1882–1950), and asked for the "bons offices of the Japanese government for the sake of finding [...] a form of settling this matter that could gain the consent of the government of the RP."[8]

6 Poland was represented at the forum of the League at that time by Tytus Komarnicki who, in accordance with instructions, abstained from voting or at times even opposed resolutions concerning Japan.

7 See, among others: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, "Manchuria in Polish-Japanese Relations in the 1930s," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 56, no. 2 (2003): 129–140; Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, "Polska–Japonia–Mandżukuo. Sprawa uznania Mandżukuo przez Polskę" (Poland–Japan–Manchukuo. The matter of Poland's recognition of Manchukuo), *Przegląd Orientalistyczny,* no. 1–2 (2006): 3–18.

8 Tadeusz Romer's cable, no. 5/P III, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, July 6, 1937, in: "Mandżukuo. Uznanie przez Polskę..., 1937, 1938" (Manchukuo. Recognition by Poland), file 6238, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) files, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records), Warsaw. Hereinafter: MSZ 6238, AAN.

In early November 1937, Romer began secret talks with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on normalizing the consular status of Poles in Manchuria. He obtained assurances that Poland did not face the prospect of any changes stemming from Japan's resignation from extraterritoriality. At the beginning of December, Romer ascertained that the Japanese government would consent to the recognition of the Polish consulate in Harbin by the government of Manchukuo only if Manchukuo was granted the right to open an honorary consulate in Poland.

The negotiations in Tokyo lasted over half a year. In the end, on October 19, 1938, diplomatic notes were exchanged in the embassy of Manchukuo in Tokyo between Ambassador Romer and the Ambassador of Manchukuo, Yuan Zhenduo. Each party gave his counterpart three notes and signed a confidential protocol of the talks.[9] The first note concerned the agreement of the two parties to open consulates. The second note concerned the appointment of Jerzy Litewski as consul. The third note broached the subject of most-favored-nation status and economic cooperation. They were announced on December 7, 1938, in Warsaw and Hsinking. Afterwards, the Polish government calmed international opinion, concerned by the apparent rapprochement between Poland and Manchukuo, by claiming that it had not recognized Manchukuo de iure and had taken this diplomatic step out of the necessity to ensure the safety of Poles in Manchuria.

The Manchukuo question ceased to be a pressing issue for the Japanese and Polish governments the following year, due to the worsening situation in Europe and the outbreak of war. The final act in this diplomatic play was Ambassador Romer's audience with the emperor of Manchukuo, Pu Yi (1906–1968), in Tokyo on June 27, 1940. Worth citing are several passages from the document entitled "Audience with the Emperor of Manchukuo in Tokyo on Thursday, June 27, 1940," in which Romer describes not only the audience itself, but also the decision-making process concerning the acceptance of the invitation, which indicated how difficult the diplomatic problem of Manchukuo was for Poland at the time:

9 Text of the notes and confidential protocol: MSZ 6238, AAN, 270–280, 281–290. The Japanese press published an article stating that Poland and Mandżukuo would sign "a friendship treaty concerning the establishment of formal diplomatic relations," in Tokyo. See "Poland, Manchukuo to Establish Relations," *The Japan Times and Mail*, October 20, 1938, 1.

The director of Japanese protocol, Mr. T. Suzuki, [...] informed me confidentially that on the occasion of the several-day stay in Tokyo in late June of the emperor of Manchukuo, who was coming on an official visit to celebrate the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese dynasty,[10] I would be invited to hold an audience with him, like the representatives of other countries which had recognized Manchukuo. [...] In my June 14 letter to consul Litewski in Harbin I noted that I had decided to accept the invitation with the understanding that doing so could ease our work in that sector, although the thought of standing out in this regard amongst our allies is essentially unpleasant to me.

June 18. I visited my English colleague [Robert L. Craigie, ambassador in Tokyo 1937–1941] and [...] informed him about the invitation [...]. I mentioned it was impossible for me to ask my government for instructions in this matter, and that I intended to take advantage of the invitation on my own in the interest of Polish citizens in Manchukuo, who are threatened by poor consular care as a result of German efforts [...]. We agreed that I would first ask the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an explanation whether the audience with the emperor of Manchukuo will be held individually or as a group, because in the latter case I could not attend in the company of Germans.

June 19. I visited director of protocol Suzuki, who [...] explained that the emperor of Manchukuo was expected to receive foreign diplomats in order and the previously planned group reception after the audience was to be foregone. The audiences would proceed by order of seniority on the diplomatic list, thus the ambassador of RP would be first, then the German, Spanish and Hungarian envoys, the

10 According to traditional historiography, the imperial Japanese dynasty traces its unbroken lineage back to 660 BC, when Jinmu–great-great grandson of the sun god Amaterasu–became the first emperor.

Italian chargé d'affaires, next the Vatican delegate and the consul general of El Salvador. [...]

June 20. I visited the English ambassador again [...]. It was decided that Craigie would not telegraph [his government], limiting himself to giving English correspondents specific hints on the subject, while I would ask the American ambassador [Joseph Clark Grew, posted to Tokyo 1932–1941] to do the same.

I thus visited the latter on the morning of June 26. [...] We reached the conclusion that in the current conditions it was unlikely the Japanese or foreign press would attribute excessive political importance to my audience with the emperor of Manchukuo, and that commenting on this fact ahead of time in the presence of foreign journalists in Tokyo would only sharpen their interest unnecessarily. Ambassador Grew will thus limit himself in relation to his countrymen to correcting false versions [...].

On June 27, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, dressed in a frock coat, I arrived as invited at the Akasaka Detached Palace, the Tokyo residence of the Manchurian guest. Upon reaching the second floor by a grand staircase I was greeted by Japanese chamberlains, who ushered me into the waiting salon, where I found the Vatican delegate [...] and the consul general of El Salvador [...]. Other diplomats together with the Germans and Italians were waiting in a separate salon. [...]

I was invited first [...]. At the entrance to the reception salon stood the director of Japanese protocol; to the left of the entrance, along the wall, was the ambassador of Manchukuo in Tokyo together with his staff [...]. The emperor [...] stood in the middle of the salon with his retinue of uniformed military and court dignitaries lined up behind him. He himself was dressed in a military uniform with two ribbonless star decorations. Average height, good posture, athletic appearance [...]. When I approached him, after the customary bows, announced in a stentorian voice by

> one of his chamberlains, he slowly took off a white glove and shook my hand, and loudly said several words in Chinese. The translator [...] rendered this declaration into English in a way I could barely understand as greetings by the emperor [...]. I replied slowly and forcefully in English, counting on the emperor understanding that language a little. [...] The emperor listened to my words attentively [...], thanked me and formulated several courteous words addressed to my country and my person. I bowed. The emperor gave me his hand in parting, after which I backed up while bowing three times as instructed. [...] I noticed the figure of German ambassador gen. E[ugen] Ott [in Tokyo 1938–1943] in party uniform following me. (TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Reaction to the non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR

When Germany signed the non-aggression pact with the USSR (Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) on August 23, 1939, Japan lost trust in her ally, believing that the Germans thereby violated an obligation stipulated in the Anti-Comintern Pact–no signatory shall enter into a formal agreement with the Soviets against the Pact. The Polish government immediately issued a declaration to the Japanese Embassy that the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact did not affect Warsaw's stance toward Tokyo.[11] Ambassador Romer also reacted to Germany's change in policy toward Japan. He paid an official visit to the cemetery at Sengakuji temple in Tokyo and laid a wreath on the tomb of the faithful samurai who committed suicide after killing their lord's murderer.[12] Romer explained to journalists:

> This is not an appropriate moment to comment upon recent international events. However, my heart bids that I express the feelings of my nation for the Japanese nation by laying this

11 Józef Zarański ed., *Diariusz i teki Jana Szembeka (1935–1945)* (Diary and Documents of Jan Szembek) (London: The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, 1972), 4:694.

12 They were the so-called forty-seven samurai of the Akō feudal domain, who in 1702 avenged the death of their lord, Asano Naganori, by killing Kira Yoshinaka. After being condemned to death, they chose to commit suicide with honor.

> wreath on the tomb of the 47 ronin [samurai without a lord] as homage to the purest symbol of fidelity and trust.[13]

When recalling those days, ambassador Romer told his cousin, Andrzej T. Romer:

> The Soviet-German rapprochement [...] was read as a change in German policy and the Germans were felt to have abandoned or betrayed Japan [...]. I took advantage of this [...] and made a public demonstration, that is [...]
> I set off in ceremonial garb, wearing a jacket and top hat, for the cemetery of the so-called ronin, who of course not only defended their lord and his property, but also–as members of the knightly caste–distinguished themselves by their fidelity to their lord. [...] They hid for a long time [...] and prepared to take revenge, which is one of the characteristics of Japanese allegiance. [...] In the end they put their adversary to death. As a result, they themselves were condemned to death and committed hara-kiri. In a word, they were considered to be a symbol of fidelity to one's lord and master, also a symbol of fidelity to one's promises, pledges [...], and conscientious performance of one's honor-bound duties.
> I went to the cemetery as an ambassador in the presence of a great many journalists and lay on their tomb a wreath with the inscription that I lay it on behalf of Poland to express recognition for the symbol of fidelity that those ronin stood for. Naturally, this act contained the sting that other allies had recently failed to remain faithful.[14]

Relations with Japan after the outbreak of war in Europe

When Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939 and World War II began, the Japanese government stated that Japan did not intend to get

13 *The Japan Times,* August 26, 1939, 2.

14 Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich, 258.

involved in the war, concentrating its efforts upon resolving the Chinese problem. On September 17, Soviet troops invaded eastern parts of Poland. A few days later the minister of foreign affairs, Nomura Kichisaburō (1877–1964), assured Ambassador Romer that regardless of the Japanese government's principle of non-involvement in the European conflict, the sincere sympathy of the Japanese nation for Poland would remain unchanged (September 28, 1939, TRDAJ, vol. 1). On October 3, Romer wrote to Minister August Zaleski (1883–1972):

> The Japanese government, pressured against us by Germany, has not yet taken a position despite its sympathetic assurances. I expect that they will delay, observing other neutral countries and waiting for the international situation to become clearer. We are mainly using the argument here that maintaining the status quo with Poland does not require any decision, whereas a change on the part of Japan would be active proof of solidarity with the occupiers' claim. For the time being I see the necessity of maintaining great caution on our part and not causing the impression that we ourselves are cutting back our operations here, which remain possible especially on Soviet topics. (TRDAJ, vol. 1)

After the Polish government moved to France and Władysław Raczkiewicz (1885–1947) assumed the presidency of Poland, Ambassador Romer met with the Japanese deputy minister of foreign affairs, Tani Masayuki (1889–1962), who said that "there are no grounds for changing their relations with the Polish government" and that Romer would be recognized as the ambassador. Romer sent the following message to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> The Japanese government stands on the position that in the current state of affairs [...] there are no grounds for changing their relations with the Polish government and that I will continue to be recognized as the ambassador. [...] Mr. Tani asked me whether I would be content with this oral

declaration, to which I replied that the Polish government did not expect a written reply on notification. (October 6, 1939, TRDAJ, vol. I)

In December Romer submitted a more detailed report on relations with Japan, in which he provided his superior at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with an accurate assessment of those relations as well as ideas for maintaining them. The report is worth citing almost in its entirety:

> [...] The Germans [...] have spared no effort to persuade Japan to cut off diplomatic relations with us, and their victories in the war have added luster to their arguments, despite the disappointment felt on account of the German-Soviet rapprochement. As a result, the Japanese government has taken the path of least resistance, which I was counting on, and discreetly stated that "rebus sic stantibus" it does not see grounds for changing its relations with Poland and will continue to recognize me as the ambassador of the RP. [...]
>
> [...] Like the public here, the Japanese government has displayed its sympathy for us whenever and wherever such behavior on its parts does not engage it politically in relation to third parties. [...] It should after all be kept in mind that the tradition of Polish-Japanese friendship, though sentimentally fairly lively, especially perhaps on our side, is neither long-standing nor based on deep, direct economic or cultural ties between the two countries. It is based essentially on a commonality of interests stemming from our relations with third countries, namely Russia. The moment Poland ceased temporarily to be an autonomous element of power, Polish-Japanese friendship thus conceived was deprived of its raison d'être for the Japanese, and has become a subject of political speculation tied to the future of the war in Europe. This state of affairs requires great caution on our part, since– on account of the USSR–the Japanese factor has not only not declined but rather increased in importance for Poland. [...]

> Our tactics toward Japan should consist in demonstrating to it, at every possible occasion, the significant and consequential anti-Soviet assets that Poland has not ceased to offer due to the stance of our people [...], also thanks to our expert knowledge on Russia. In any case, we must, I believe, beware of putting the Japanese government in a sensitive position in relation to others due to any demands we might make or our behavior here. [...]
>
> For my part I am urgently warning our embassy personnel here, in their ceremonial and social appearances as well as propaganda actions affirming the continued existence and presence of the Polish state, not to impose themselves in ways that could cause any incidents thereby leading to problems for our Japanese hosts. I have found out for myself several times already that such reserve and discretion produce the desired results, as they not only ease maintenance of friendly contacts between our embassy and credible Japanese government and military factors, but also enable us to provide many a favor to those Japanese factors as well as our allies, who have not always found themselves in as favorable a position here as us. (N.3/J/23/39, TRDAJ, vol. 1)

Relations between the two countries did not change even after Japan signed a neutrality treaty with the Soviet Union in April 1941 or after Poland signed a pact with the Soviet government in London against Germany in July 1941. Romer wrote the following to the Polish authorities in London in September of that year:

> Japanese political circles, even those with a decidedly hostile stance toward Russia, as well as ruling factors seem to have understood fairly well the intentions guiding the Polish government in concluding its pact with Russia and are not upset with us about it [...]. The Japanese agree that we could not fight against two enemies and that the Russo-German war is an exceptional situation that we should exploit.

> They are inclined to regard our agreement with Russia as temporary and completely justified, since Germany is the main enemy of Poland. (N.317/J/17, TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Thus, the Japanese government, despite pressure applied by Germany, continued to allow not only the Polish embassy, but also the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East to operate.

The Polish Press Bureau in the Far East

The Bureau was established on the initiative of Ambassador Romer on September 2, 1939 and functioned until the final closing of the Polish embassy in Tokyo on October 23, 1941.[15] Its purpose was to disseminate information and propaganda in connection with the increased interest in Poland due to the outbreak of war in Europe and the intense anti-Polish propaganda spread by Germany in the region. Moreover, in view of the supremacy of Japan in the Far East, it was decided that Tokyo should be home to a propaganda "headquarters" that would also send information to Manchukuo and China, where Poles also lived. Thus, a weekly Polish-language B*iuletyn Informacyjny* (Information Bulletin) meant for Polish diplomatic posts and larger concentrations of Poles in the Far East was launched in January 1940, and was accompanied by monthly bulletins in English and Japanese starting in November 1940.

The Bureau was officially called the Press Department of the Embassy, and it was headed by Aleksander Piskor (1910–1972), officially in Japan as a correspondent of the Polish Telegraph Agency and a member of the Polish PEN Club. The Bureau's work consisted mainly of providing appropriate materials for propaganda purposes to the Japanese press, which used them to formulate its own information and articles, sometimes printing texts thus supplied in their entirety. The Bureau also devised other forms of propaganda and monitored and took note of voices raised in the Japanese press in matters of direct interest to Poland. Moreover, thanks to the efforts of the Bureau,

15 See Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich*, 263–278.

over a dozen Polish books were translated into Japanese and numerous brochures about Poland were translated into various languages. Ambassador Romer personally directed the propaganda operations of the Bureau and submitted detailed reports on them to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs every month. In those reports he wrote about the situation in Japan and its relations with other countries, about articles on Poland in the Japanese press and about other publications, also about events devoted to or connected with Poland. A photo exhibit entitled "Poland before the War"–organized under the patronage of one of the largest Japanese dailies, *Yomiuri Shinbun*–turned out to be a great success. Initially planned to be shown in Japan's fifty-seven largest cities from December 1939 to the end of February 1940,[16] it ultimately reached eighty cities and lasted seven months, with over two million people viewing it.[17] The exhibit lasted six days in Tokyo in July 1940, where it was visited by about twenty thousand people. *Yomiuri Shinbun* printed programs of the exhibit in Japanese, which in addition to information about the photographs included a word of introduction by Ambassador Romer and brief sketch of Poland. The exhibit was held in large department stores, which no doubt helped to increase public interest in it.

In his reports, Romer repeatedly emphasized that the Polish Press Bureau was working very hard and that its results were considerably better than those of English or French propaganda. On March 4, 1940, in report N. 317/J/24 for February, Romer wrote:

> Our campaign to inform the Japanese press has been proceeding according to previous experiences. We have mainly tried to push positive news [...]. Thanks to this the [Japanese] press has run extensive accounts, e.g. about the Polish army, its composition, training and patriotism, about the Polish navy and air force, about Polish operations in France, the hopes of refugees, solidary cooperation with

16 Tadeusz Romer, Report for November and December 1939, N. 31/J/2, TRDAJ, vol. 1: 9, 10; Report for January 1940, No. 317/J/15, TRDAJ, vol. 2: 9, and for February 1940, N. 317/J/24, TRDAJ, vol. 2: 7.

17 Tadeusz Romer, Report for June 1940, N. 317/J/70, TRDAJ, vol. 2: 8.

> allies etc. [...] In the February issues of monthlies [...], European affairs were almost entirely ignored, though several larger mentions were devoted to Poland in a few articles concerning the situation or policy of Soviet Russia. (TRDJ, vol. 2)

The operations of the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East were suspended only in October 1941, due to the closure of the Polish embassy in Tokyo.

Polish deportees, refugees and the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims

Tadeusz Romer also deserves much credit for his relief efforts on behalf of Poles deported to the far reaches of the Soviet Union from Polish territory occupied by the USSR starting in October 1939. He initiated those efforts in Japan, where the booklet *Zesłańcy polscy* w ZSSR (Polish Deportees in the USSR), containing a list of Poles deported deep inside the USSR, was compiled and published by the Polish embassy in Tokyo in September 1941. Romer continued this work when he became ambassador in Moscow and Kuybyshev. In his introduction to the booklet, he wrote:

> The fifth or sixth generation of the nation [...] is paying tribute in blood and suffering on the road East. [...] This time deportations are being conducted in nightmarish conditions, en masse, including a great number of the most vulnerable individuals [...] of all classes and faiths, stripped literally of everything, in climatic, housing, food and clothing conditions often worse than in Siberia. Yet the hundreds of letters received in Tokyo, which cannot be read without tears of emotion and awe, attest to the deportees' unbreakable spirit [...].
>
> Deportations of the Polish populace deep inside the USSR reached their apogee in June 1940, that is, at the same time as France collapsed in the war [...]. Japan [...] was closer geographically to Siberia, thus it was here that the first calls for help began to arrive in the summer of last year, first from the homeland, then from the places to which people had

been deported. Efforts devoted to this matter undertaken by the Polish Embassy in Tokyo date back to this time.

They consisted of compiling a registry of reported deportees as well as constantly repeated attempts to come to their aid, either individually or collectively. [...] During the Christmas period in 1940 the Embassy finally succeeded in developing direct correspondence links with deportees. [...] The Embassy immediately began [...] to take advantage of this opportunity. Toward this end, special social care departments were established under the Polish Embassy in Tokyo and the Polish Legation in Shanghai, and in this manner the neediest [...] (745 persons, to be precise) were sent aid over the course of the last five months, either in cash or in packages containing food, clothing and medicine, at the cost of about 12,300 US dollars. The money for this came almost solely from Polish government sources and from military people whose families were deported, because revealing this campaign to a greater extent was, for various reasons, impossible at that time.

The most important and most reliable source of information that this report is based on is direct correspondence with the deportees themselves, also contact with their families. Among the latter, a particularly large amount of valuable material was provided personally by Polish refugees passing through Japan in transit. Another valuable source was correspondence directly from Polish POWs in Germany, also from Polish civilians interned in Switzerland, Hungary and Romania.[18]

Romer continued this work as ambassador to the USSR in the years 1942–1943 and, as far as I know, he managed to obtain permission to evacuate six hundred Polish children and the families of Polish soldiers.

18 Tadeusz Romer, *Zesłańcy polscy w ZSRR*, Ambasada Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej w Japonii, Tokyo 1941 (manuscript), vi-viii.

Closure of the embassy

Ambassador Romer operated in Tokyo officially until October 4, 1941. As I mentioned earlier, despite pressure applied by Germany, Japan consented to the further existence of the Polish embassy in Tokyo, mainly for the sake of information on the USSR. Japan's stance toward Poland began to change only in the latter half of 1941. Firstly, because Germany attacked the USSR in 1941 and, as it drove the Red Army east, soon came to occupy all of Poland. Germany, which in 1940 became allied to Japan under a Tripartite Pact obliging signatories to provide mutual support in their efforts to create a "new order" in Europe and the Far East, now strove to wipe Poland off the map of the world. Secondly, because Japan was preparing to launch a war against the United States–that is, to create a "new order" in the East–and could no longer ignore the demands of its German ally, as it was counting on its support.

Because rumors began to circulate as early as June that the Japanese government was considering the necessity of shutting down the Polish embassy in Tokyo, Romer strove to persuade the authorities to postpone the date. This state of affairs lasted three months. But on October 4, before Romer was officially notified, the Japanese press received a government announcement about the Polish embassy's liquidation. At 6:15 p.m., Ambassador Romer met with the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Amō Eiji (1887–1968), who, unable to justify this violation of decorum, handed him a note verbale that read as follows:

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with due respect, informs the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo that in connection with the situation that has arisen, the imperial government is liquidating the Imperial Embassy in Poland and simultaneously withdrawing, as of today, recognition of the ambassador and other employees of the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo as well as Polish honorary consuls in Osaka

and Yokohama, deeming the mission of the Embassy to be finished.[19]

The deputy minister also informed Romer that

> although the Ambassador and Embassy employees today lose their status and privileges as head of mission and its members, and the Embassy is ending its mission, considering the friendly Polish-Japanese relations which existed in the past and the time necessary to liquidate the mission, the Japanese government has decided to recognize de facto nearly the same privileges as before for the Ambassador and the employees of your Embassy, until the end of October (excluding those pertaining to official ceremonies).[20]

It is noteworthy that Amō conveyed the decision of the Japanese government with great pain and said the war was to blame for this unpleasant situation. He assured Romer that in the future, when the international situation changed, the Japanese government would no doubt consider changing its position because the government, like the entire Japanese nation, sympathized greatly with the Polish nation, and intended to help them, at least through the Red Cross. Moreover, referring to cooperation during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), he emphasized the traditionally friendly ties between Japan and Poland several times, spoke about the two nations' mutual sympathy, and about his own pleasant private contacts with Poles: for instance, with Stanisław Patek (1866–1945, envoy to Japan in 1921–1926) and Michał Mościcki (1894–1961, envoy to Japan in 1933–1936) and the Romer family. Since this was an official meeting, the deputy minister's comments on the government decision should not be regarded as private, which could attest to the fact the decision was made as a result of external pressure, in spite

19 Note in Japanese: *Amō jikan Pōrando taishi kaidan no ken* (The matter of deputy minister Amō's conversation with the ambassador of Poland), October 6, 1941, files M.1.5.0.3-30 "Zaihonpō kakkoku kōkan kankei zakken. Pōrandokoku no bu" (Miscellaneous matters regarding diplomatic establishments in Japan. Poland), Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan, Tokyo; see also "Note verbale" in French no. 2/E1, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, October 4, 1941, TRDAJ, vol. 2.

20 *Amō jikan Pōrando taishi kaidan no ken.*

of the prevalent attitude in Japan toward Poland. Although these comments could have been a diplomatic ploy used to avoid explaining other reasons for the decision, this hypothesis seems unlikely considering the countries' friendly bi-lateral relations.

Several days later, Romer wrote the following to London:

> We decided our position on the suspension of Polish-Japanese diplomatic relations–in conversations with the Japanese–would be as follows: "We express surprise at Japan's step and the violation of 'traditional Polish-Japanese friendship,' we regret that Japan must bow so much to German pressure without gaining any benefit from it." (R.317/J/16, TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Aleksander Piskor, as head of the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East, also wrote about the suspension of Polish-Japanese relations in the final issue of the Biuletyn Informacyjny for Poles in the Far East, dated October 19, 1941:

> On Saturday, October 4 at 6:15 p.m., Mr. Amo Eiji, the Japanese deputy minister of foreign affairs, handed Tadeusz Romer, ambassador of the RP in Japan, a note in which the Japanese government stated that it would terminate the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw and, in view of this fact, considers the mission of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo to be finished. The deputy minister added that, considering the friendship that has existed between the Japanese and Polish nations, the Japanese government would grant the Polish ambassador diplomatic privileges until the end of October [...]. He emphasized that all Polish citizens may remain in Japan, where they will enjoy the protection of the Japanese government. [...] Ambassador Romer and his wife cordially bid farewell to all Polish citizens in Japan, turning to them with words of encouragement and faith in the great and happy future of Poland. (TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Ambassador Romer together with his family and the majority of Polish embassy staff left Tokyo on October 26, 1941, sailing to Shanghai via Nagasaki. After reaching his destination, he wrote to the minister as follows about the Poles remaining in Japan (November 28, 1941):

> [Judging] from the way [...] the Ministry responded to our many and varied liquidation postulates, I felt reassured that the attitude of the Japanese authorities to Polish affairs in Japan would be as favorable as possible, which put me at peace upon departure. [...] On October 25 of this year I signed a secret agreement with Mr. Bolesław Szcześniak [contract employee; later a Japanologist and professor at Notre Dame University], [...]. The first reports received from Mr. Szcześniak in Tokyo [...] have convinced me that the situation of our citizens remaining in Japan appears to be, so far, favorable (R.482/41, TRDAJ, vol. 2).

Just before the Polish embassy was closed, the Mutual Aid Society of Poles in Japan was established in Tokyo on October 10.[21] The organization was charged with the task of watching over the one hundred or so Polish citizens remaining in Japan.

I have to add that on October 4, the Japanese government decided only to "close" the Polish embassy in Tokyo and to "complete" its mission in Japan. It did not, as many sources state, decide to "sever" bilateral relations. Official Polish-Japanese relations were severed on December 11, 1941, only by the Polish side, when Poland declared war on Japan, following its allies Great Britain and the United States, after Japan officially entered World War II on December 8 in the camp opposite to Poland.

21 Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich*, 284–286.

Romer and the Polish refugees in Japan. The Polish Committee to Aid War Victims

Before leaving Tokyo, Ambassador Romer was highly involved in very important rescue efforts aimed at saving Polish Jews and Poles from Nazi Germans and Soviet Russians.[22] Many of the refugees managed to escape Nazi oppression (and finally the Holocaust) and Soviet camps and reach Japan thanks to the humanitarian actions taken by the Japanese vice-consul in Kaunas, Sugihara Chiune (1900–1986), as well as the Dutch consul in that city, Jan Zwartendijk (1896–1976). Both risked their lives. The first issued officially 2,139 transit visas to Japan in August 1940 without the consent of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the second wrote, in probably more than two thousand passports and other documents,[23] an annotation stating that a Dutch entry visa was not required for entrance to Surinam, Curaçao or other Dutch colonies. This was not true, because the governors of these territories were in fact required to grant permission for entry and did so very rarely. Because both risked their lives to rescue hundreds of Jews from Nazi Germans, both Sugihara and Zwartendijk were honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations, in 1985 and 1997 respectively.

I have to add that very important for Sugihara's humanitarian action was his cooperation in Kaunas with Polish intelligence officers, especially Lieutenant Leszek Daszkiewicz and Captain Alfons Jakubianiec.[24] In exchange for information on Germany and the USSR, Sugihara aided intelligence in sending mail from Lithuania to the West, to the Polish government-in-exile, and from the West to Lithuania, or even further, to Warsaw, via Japanese diplomatic mail. Daszkiewicz claimed that it was the

22 For more details, see: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, "A rescuer of refugees in Tokyo. Polish Ambassador Tadeusz Romer," *Darbai in Dienos* 67 (2017): 239-254; Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich,* 288-337; Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, "Polish-Japanese Co-operation during World War II," *Japan Forum* 7, no. 2 (1995): 285-317.

23 See: J.2.3.0 J/X2-6, "Gaikokujin ni taisuru zaigai kōkan hakkyū ryoken sashō hōkoku ikken. Ōshū no bu" (A report concerning issuing visas to foreigners by overseas missions. Europe), Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan, Tokyo; The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, ed., *Flight and Rescue* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 2001), 63.

24 For more details see: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich,* 288-323, 337-351; Manuscript of Consul Sugihara's report (in Russian), trans. into Polish Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Japonica,* no. 7 (1997): 131-140; Leszek Daszkiewicz, Placówka wywiadowcza *"G". Sprawozdania i dokumenta* (Intelligence Agency G. Reports and documents), England, 1948, unpublished.

Polish side who had suggested issuing such visas for Poles, mostly Polish officers, who, with the help of such documents, would leave occupied Poland and Lithuania and form the Polish army in exile.[25] The exact number of those saved by Sugihara remains unknown. It was certainly much higher than 2,139, as children often exited the country on their parents' visas. Furthermore, with the end of August approaching, Sugihara was pressed for time and he issued some documents without assigning them successive numbers. There were also forged visas, issued after he had left Kaunas. This was possible because in order to facilitate his work, Sugihara, as was suggested to him by Daszkiewicz, ordered a seal and a second, identical one, was created and later used by the Polish Underground in Vilnius.[26]

Holding transit visas (from Sugihara) and destination visas (from Zwartendijk) that no one could use in practice, refugees traveled by the Trans-Siberian Railway across the USSR, to Vladivostok, and then took ships to Tsuruga, from where they went to Tokyo, Yokohama or Kobe. The first groups of refugees reached Japan in August 1940. In October, ambassador Romer established the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims under the aegis of the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo. The Committee was chaired by his wife, Zofia Romer; its secretary general was the merchant Klemens Zyngol; the treasurer was Mrs. Zikmannowa, wife of a Polish industrialist in Manchukuo; and the executive board members were Karol Staniszewski–secretary of the embassy, Aleksander Piskor–head of the Polish Press Bureau, the wife of Bolesław Szcześniak and Stefan Romanek, an intern. The Committee provided health aid, clothes, cultural support, and assistance in contacting families and in passport and visa issues. It cooperated with Jewish organizations, mainly in Yokohama and Kobe, where the Committee also opened an office. Its representative always went to the port of Tsuruga, where successive refugees arrived. Jews were directed mainly to Kobe, where the local Jewish community took care of them. They were supported financially by the East-European Jewish community through the Committees for Assistance to Jewish Immigrants from Eastern Europe ("East-Jewcom"), and by the Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee ("Joint"). The costs of further travel

25 Leszek Daszkiewicz, *Placówka wywiadowcza "G". Sprawozdania i dokumenta*, 21-24.

26 Leszek Daszkiewicz, *Placówka wywiadowcza "G". Sprawozdania i dokumenta*, 23.

by refugees for whom Ambassador Romer obtained destination visas but who lacked their own funds were covered by the Jewish organization "HICEM." The few non-Jewish Polish refugees made their way to Tokyo. The first mention of this matter can be found in a cable from August 9, 1940:

> Refugees are starting to arrive here through Siberia, mostly from Lviv and Vilnius, majority of them–Jews. They have transit visas on various makeshift documents, and they are encountering great problems obtaining the right of entry into other countries. [...] Answer by telegram what are, if any, the possibilities of directing them to either British Dominions or to South America. (A.12.53/37, TRPI)

Minister August Zaleski answered that due to transfer reasons, it would be difficult to relocate the refugees to British Dominions, that Canada would only accept children who were alone, that South Africa wished for no refugees, and that Brazil would provide five hundred visas only for Jews, on condition that the government of Poland would support the refugees financially. On February 2, 1941, Romer sent the following cable:

> Up until the end of January, 566 of our refugees arrived here, 95 per cent of whom are Jews. Of that number 300 have been sent to the following territories: United States (142), Palestine (43), Canada (35), Central America (29), Argentina (23), Brazil (16), Shanghai (5), South Africa (4), Australia (3). In February, we await approximately 250 people. In fear of Soviet deportations, I am tirelessly seeking to relocate a number of families of our civilian and military patronages from Vilnius. (TRDAJ, vol. 2).

The next day, Minister Zaleski asked Romer to seek help from American authorities in granting visas for Poles from the Vilnius region. He also promised that the government of Poland would use funds in order to cover transit costs for the refugees. Romer then started talks with American and British representatives in Tokyo. A few days later, he wrote:

> Over 95 per cent of refugees with confirmed or presumed Polish citizenship [...] are Jewish [...]. This phenomenon can be attributed not only to their greater enterprise, but especially to the organized support they find among their own abroad. [...] The low level of ethnic Polish refugees who have arrived so far can be attributed to their generally worse material circumstances, greater attachment to local conditions and life, and [...] negative attitude, especially at first, toward undertaking a risky and costly journey east into the unknown. [...] As a result, the following ethnic Poles have arrived here among the refugees so far: clandestinely, 4 officers of the Polish army, all together about 15 persons, some of whom have settled in Japan for longer, and some of whom have already or soon will leave. (February 6, 1941, TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Romer stressed that the refugees spoke highly of the Japanese consulates' employees, including those in Kaunas, Moscow and Vladivostok:

> The signs of their friendliness and kindness exceeded strict guidelines of bureaucratic convention and often bordered on personal dedication, and even sacrifice of the Japanese staff to whom many of our compatriots owe their lives. [...] Even in Japan, despite the well-known feeling of this time, the attitude of the central authorities, as well as local ones, towards our refugees and their needs has been in most cases exemplary. (February 6, 1941, TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Sugihara's transit visas were valid for ten days, which was a very limited time for undertaking almost any action. In response to Romer's request, the documents were prolonged to three weeks, and in some cases even longer. The ambassador was keen on not overusing Japanese hospitality, and he also did not want to create a mutually harmful situation. Thus, Romer personally sought to obtain quotas for visas from British, Australian and Canadian representatives. In order to achieve that, he created an extensive confidential

memorandum in English entitled "The Problem of the Polish Refugees Coming to the Far East" (TRDAJ, vol. 2). In further correspondence that arrived in London on March 25, 1941 he wrote:

> It is urgent to enable migration of Jews out of Japan. As there are more than 1,500 of them here, the Japanese government has decided to restrict the conditions for entry. This has put those on their way to Japan, including Poles, whom we care about deeply, in a critical position. I am trying to resolve this crisis with all my might. [...] The Canadian diplomatic mission, which has already started issuing visas from assigned quotas, will probably increase its number to 140 persons. (A.12.53/37, TRPI)

The Committee and the embassy in Tokyo led and supervised the entire humanitarian effort, also passport matters, intervening with Japanese authorities in order to extend visas or obtain entrance and transit visas. The embassy also discreetly registered volunteers for the armed forces and directed them to Canada and the Middle East.

Ambassador Romer, as we know, operated in Tokyo officially until October 4, 1941, but left Japan on October 26, sailing via Nagasaki to Shanghai. As I have decided to only tackle Ambassador Romer's activities in Japan, I will omit the details of his work in Shanghai. However, it is very important to mention the question of refugees. After the liquidation of the Polish embassy in Tokyo, the Japanese authorities sent all the remaining refugees from Poland in Japan to Shanghai–about one thousand people, nearly all of whom were Jewish. Romer, as "ambassador on special mission," continued to take care of them. At this time, many Jews already lived in Shanghai, as the city had been a haven for them from the mid-nineteenth century (this included Sephardi Jews, refugees from Russia after the October Revolution, refugees from Germany and Austria, and Jews from Poland). After the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War in December 1941, Japan attacked Shanghai and all diplomatic missions, including the Polish one, had to be evacuated. Romer was still working tirelessly to provide as many Polish refugees as possible with the opportunity to leave Shanghai. For instance, on April 8,

1942, he sent to the Polish embassy in the USSR (Kuybyshev) a copy of a list containing 737 names, out of 967 Shanghai refugees from Poland that could be evacuated from Shanghai through the Soviet Union (A 11.49/Sow/36, TRPI). In the middle of August 1942, during the exchange of diplomats, Polish diplomatic staff was evacuated from China. Romer, together with his family, boarded the Japanese ship Kamakura maru headed for Lourenço Marques in Mozambique. Just before his departure, he had been seeking other sources of financing, which he found only among private individuals who were also being evacuated. On October 6, 1942, after he assumed the very important post of Polish ambassador to the Soviet Union, he wrote an interesting report, which can be perceived as a kind of summary of these events. According to Romer, from the autumn of 1940 to the summer of 1941, about 2,300 refugees from Poland came to Japan, 97 per cent of whom were Jewish, mainly from Vilnius and Kaunas. The suspension of shipping links, then the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War, thwarted further efforts to place all the remaining refugees in such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Palestine and elsewhere. Romer wrote:

> Upon liquidation of the Polish Consulate in Shanghai in August 1942 [...], the care of the Polish citizens was unofficially handed over–with the consent of the Japanese occupation authorities–to an ad hoc committee entitled the Executive Board of the Union of Poles in China, which consisted of Polish residents as well as Jewish refugees with Polish citizenship. [...] When given the opportunity, at the last moment, to evacuate 54 civilian Polish citizens together with Polish diplomatic and consular personnel from Japan, China and Manchuria, I assigned 45 places to Jewish refugees, choosing them so that all political, social and professional groups had their most active members among them, capable of effectively coming to the aid of those remaining from the outside.
> Among the refugees that escaped in this manner with me to South-West Africa and then traveled further to England were

> 3 rabbis, 3 representatives of rabbinical schools, 7 Zionists, 5 members of General Jewish Labor Bund of Lithuania, Poland and Russia (also known as the Bund or the Jewish Labour Bund), etc. While still in Africa, I managed to obtain right of entry to Australia for three of them, to Palestine for two, for five to East Africa and for seven to the Union of South Africa. (TRDAJ, vol. 2)

Conclusion

Helping Poles and Polish Jews in Japan and Shanghai who were trying to escape the German and Soviet oppression was one of the most important elements of Ambassador Romer's daily work, which he carried out with such diligence, as a diplomat and as a humanitarian. It is possible that without his devotion and help, many Polish refugees who received visas from Sugihara and annotations from Zwartendijk, would still have been imprisoned, or even died. He was not recognized by Yad Vashem as the Righteous Among Nations because, as far as I know, diplomats could be recognized only if they risked their position and status, or if they acted against their governments' policy or their superiors' instructions. But what Romer did was not part of the instructions he received from his superiors in the Polish government-in-exile. He did it on his own, also for humanitarian reasons, in order to save people. Let us not forget that Romer remained active in Shanghai until August 1942, despite the fact that the city was already occupied by the Japanese in December 1941, and that shortly after the Asia-Pacific War broke out on December 11, 1941, diplomatic relations between Japan and Poland were broken. He was also putting himself in danger.

At the end, I would like to quote a fragment of Oskar Schenker's impression of his stay in Tokyo. He was one of the refugees saved by Sugihara in Lithuania. In the *zz* (Polish Daily News) issue from December 6, 1941, we find the following passage:

> I was lucky to be one of the first who reached Japan through Siberia in October 1940. I must admit that I could not contain the emotion that accompanied me when, after a year of wandering and uncertainty about the next day,

I was finally able to stand on the threshold of the Polish Embassy. [...] The white eagle at the building's gates, the Polish language, spoken loudly and openly, the uniform of our defense attaché [...], all this made such an impression on me that for a moment during the first audience with His Excellency Tadeusz Romer the Ambassador of Poland, I could not utter a single word. The atmosphere of this meeting, and of those that followed, left a mark on my entire stay in Japan, and a very positive one. And so from the very start I decided to serve and use my experience from working in the Civil Service in Poland for the benefit of the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims in Tokyo. [...]

This was a time of hard work for the entire Embassy staff. Ambassador Romer set the example himself, as he personally oversaw even minute details of planned refugee transit and settlement. He often worked tirelessly well into the night. In all this he exhibited [...] such balance, such understanding [...], that anyone who came in contact with him was impressed by his deep and thorough approach to the problems he was faced with. [...] The refugees liked him a great deal.

All of those who have passed through the "Tokyo gates" have been scattered around the world by fate. [...] Many of them found their way to countries in North and South America, some of them went to Burma, and even more of them to Australia and New Zealand. The last group of refugees [...] left for Shanghai. All these people are now separated by vast lands and seas [...], but they are united by their warm memories of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo and profound gratitude for [...] the fatherly affection we were shown within its walls, and for the fact that whilst in its building, we felt as if we had been in our forever lasting Poland.

Tadeusz Romer–the Missing Link in the Humanity Chain. The Role of the Polish Ambassador in Providing Aid to Polish Jews in the Far East (1940–1942) in the Context of Today's Politics of Remembrance

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The story of the hundreds of Jews who escaped from Nazi-occupied Poland to the Far East remained unknown for a long time after World War II. The first to recognize Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1939–1940, was Yad Vashem, which granted him the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1985. In the 1990s, after years of silence, the government of Japan finally recognized Sugihara's efforts to save Jews during his office. Sugihara's family received an official apology, and knowledge about Sugihara's activities started to grow, slowly but surely, among Japanese society. The other diplomat who participated in the visa issuing process was Jan Zwartendijk, a Dutch honorary consul in Kaunas who provided refugees with a special annotation on their travel documents stating that a Dutch visa was not required to travel to the Dutch colony of Curaçao and Dependencies in the West Indies. Zwartendijk was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1997. Tadeusz Romer, who negotiated with the Japanese government to allow into Japan even travelers with false visas issued by the Polish Underground State and who moreover concerned himself with the travelers' future destinations, asking for visas from friendly diplomatic missions, is still not recognized by Yad Vashem today. Romer provided the refugees with Polish passports (most of the Jews came with "certificates" issued by the British consulate in Kaunas, which took over the responsibilities of the Polish diplomatic mission after it shut down), a form of assistance not afforded to German or Austrian Jews in Shanghai, who were stateless.

Furthermore, Romer cooperated with Jewish organizations such as the Joint Distribution Committee to provide everyday help with accommodations and sustenance, first in Japan and then, after the closing of the Polish embassy in Tokyo in October 1941, in Shanghai. After leaving Shanghai in 1942, he never forgot about the Polish citizens–war refugees–stuck in the Far East, and kept pushing the Polish government-in-exile to provide financial care (also as an intermediary in conveying funds from American Jewish organizations) to those who couldn't leave the city during the whole period of the war. Though Romer's efforts went far beyond what was expected of him as a diplomat, he was almost forgotten among refugees and among the researchers of the topic. He was also forgotten in Polish public space: there is no street named after Tadeusz Romer, not a single monument or commemorative plaque.

The "Sugihara visas" have been the object of several publications. Hillel Levine's book *In search of Sugihara* was published in 1996.[1] Sugihara's wife Yukiko published her memoirs in Japanese in 1990 and in English in 1995.[2] In Japan, one of the main sources of information about the story of the war refugees was the book by Watanabe Katsumasa, *Shinzō. Sugihara biza.*[3] For years, the story of the refugees and the rescuers focused only on the Japanese consul. One of the reasons for this was probably the subtitle of the first issue of Yukiko Sugihara's book, which emphasized the role of her husband as the lone Japanese diplomat who saved the Jews.[4] Akira Kitade, long-time officer of the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) showed the role of the Japanese Tourist Bureau in rescuing the Jewish refugees in his book *Visas of Life and the Epic Journey.*[5]

Among the first researchers to analyze official Polish documents relating to Tadeusz Romer's efforts was Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, in her book *Polityka*

1 Hillel Levine, *In search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked His Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews from the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

2 Yukiko Sugihara, *Rokusen-nin no inochi no biza* (Visas for 6,000 Lives) (Tokyo: Taishō Shuppan, 1993); *Visas for Life,* trans. Hiroki Sugihara and Anne Hoshiko Akabori, ed. Lani Silver and Eric Saul (San Francisco: Edu-Comm Plus, 1995).

3 Katsumasa Watanabe, *Shinsō. Sugihara biza* (The Truth–Sugihara's Visas] (Tokyo: Taishō Shuppan, 2000).

4 The original Japanese version of the subtitle was: *Hitori-no Nihonjin Gaikoukan-ga, Yudayajin-wo sukutta* (The Single Japanese Diplomat Who Saved the Jews).

5 Akira Kitade, *Visas for Life and the Epic Journey: How the Sugihara Survivors Reached Japan* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 2014).

Japonii wobec Polski, 1918–1941.[6] Beata Szubtarska presented the whole of Romer's diplomatic career in her book *Niezwykłe misje: Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen.*[7] Nonetheless, in Polish public opinion the life and activities of Tadeusz Romer are poorly known. From December 2006 to May 2007, the Muzeum Wychodźstwa Polskiego located in the Łazienki Królewskie park in Warsaw hosted the exhibition "Tadeusz Romer–Dyplomata i Emigrant" (Tadeusz Romer–diplomat and emigrant).[8] In November 2007, members of the Romer family donated Romer's archives to the National Library in Warsaw.[9] The next attempt at presenting Romer's activities to a wider audience was the exhibition "Polish Ambassador to Japan Tadeusz Romer and Jewish War Refugees in the Far East" initiated by the Polish Institute in Vilnius.[10] It was located in one of the most important places for the story of those who were granted Japanese transit visas–the Sugihara House Museum in Kaunas, Lithuania. This was the first attempt by a Polish governmental institution to promote the history of the Polish ambassador's activity and cooperation with Japanese and Jewish institutions in providing consular and financial help to Polish war refugees who looked for rescue in the Far East. The placement of the exhibition in such a significant place, frequently visited by travelers from Japan, was crucial in writing the story of Ambassador Romer into the narrative of the "visas for life." The exhibition was subsequently presented by the Polish Institute in Tokyo and the Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum, a Japanese museum that showcases the role of the Tsuruga port in helping the Jewish refugees. Cooperation between the Polish Institute in Vilnius and the Tsuruga Museum was established during a

6 Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Polityka Japonii wobec Polski, 1918–1941* (Warsaw: Nozomi, Zakład Japonistyki i Koreanistyki, Instytut Orientalistyczny, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1998).
7 Beata Szubtarska, *Niezwykłe misje: Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014).
8 Anna Madeyska, "Tadeusz Romer–Przyjaciel Uchodźców," Kanadyjska Fundacja Dziedzictwa Polsko-Żydowskiego w Montrealu, December 6, 2006, http://polish-jewish-heritage.org/pol/06-12_Tadeusz_Romer_Przyjaciel_Uchodzcow.html, accessed May 10, 2019.
9 "Archiwum rodziny Romerów," Polskie Radio Dwójka, last modified November 27, 2007, https://www.polskieradio.pl/8/196/Artykul/173663,Archiwum-rodziny-Romerow, accessed May 10, 2019.
10 The exhibition ran at Sugihara House from March to May 2019, and was subsequently presented in Klaipeda (Lithuania) and Vilnius. See Olga Barbasiewicz, *Ambasador RP w Japonii Tadeusz Romer i żydowscy uchodźcy wojenni na Dalekim Wschodzie* (Vilnius: Instytut Polski w Wilnie, 2019).

meeting held by the Japanese embassy in Vilnius in February 2018 to discuss the issue of the Polish orphans who came to Japan in 1920. During this meeting, the Polish Institute presented its position on Tadeusz Romer.

In 2016, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a documentary film, which was presented on YouTube as part of the series "Polish Diplomats of the Second Polish Republic."[11] The film was presented during the opening ceremony of the exhibition at Sugihara House in Kaunas and was shown to the visitors of the museum. Nonetheless, despite such steps in promoting Tadeusz Romer in the Polish public sphere and among the community of survivors and their descendants, a relative absence of information about his role seems to persist, and appears to be an omission of important historical facts.

The purpose of this paper is not to criticize the Japanese government's position concerning Sugihara, but rather to show that it was the entire chain of rescue that allowed for the successful flight of Polish Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe to Japan and Shanghai. The paper also aims to show the outcomes of the Japanese politics of remembrance regarding the help given to Jewish refugees from Poland. I claim that it is indirectly responsible for forgetting about the role of Tadeusz Romer (and Jan Zwartendijk), and that the only way to restore the memory of the Polish ambassador's help to the Polish citizens looking for shelter in the Far East to its rightful place is for the Polish government to recognize this story as part of its soft power, and to convince the other political actors interested in the refugees' story of the important role played by the Polish representative in Japan during the war.

Soft power and the politics of remembrance

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a new approach in the theoretical analysis of international relations emerged: liberalism, which became one of the major concepts in studying foreign policy.[12] From it developed neoliberalism, which focuses not only on international relations, but on a diverse analysis of the relationships between countries, and takes

11 PolandMFA, "Dyplomaci II RP: Tadeusz Romer," YouTube, June 27, 2016, https://youtu.be/oC3rwYUmo5g, accessed May 10, 2019.

12 The concept has its roots in the political thought of John Stuart Mill or Jeremy Bentham, but developed in the twentieth century. Liberalism assumes that international relations are based on social and economic exchange between countries, which come together with modernization. Thus, there is no need to fight wars, since benefits from military conflicts are lesser than those from international cooperation.

into consideration also economic, cultural and social ties. Politics became transnational.

The main researchers of the neoliberal approach in international relations, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, foreground the role of transnational actors, which include for example non-governmental organizations, social or religious groups, and conglomerates.[13] Keohane and Nye define the power of a state as its capacity to convince other political actors to do the things it asks them to do, and to control the results.[14] This includes the results of the politics of remembrance conducted by certain countries.

Politics of remembrance is strongly connected to memory studies. Historians in the 1970s were the first to focus on the problem of memory as a research category. They made a distinction between memory and history on the definitional level. Memory was defined as all present forms of things from the past.[15] According to the French historian Pierre Nora, who rediscovered the work of Maurice Halbwachs, history has been replaced by memory, which is universal and all-encompassing. Nora's analysis yielded the theory of "lieux de mémoire," or places of remembrance ("realms of memory").[16] The definition of realms of memory encompasses not only monuments or historic locations, but also historical figures. Chiune Sugihara became such a "lieu de mémoire" in Japan. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, after the Japanese government recognized Sugihara, his story started to gradually gain popularity in Japan. Nowadays, numerous places commemorate his person in Japan. Among them are: the Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum, the Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall in Yaotsu, and the brand new Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum in Tokyo. These places promote the history of Sugihara's actions towards the Polish Jews in Lithuania and, together with the memoirs published by Yukiko Sugihara and other researchers' books and papers,[17] put

13 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

14 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Transnational Relations and World Politics, 11.

15 Marie-Claude Lavabre, *Miejsca pamięci, praca pamięci i ramy pamięci–trzy perspektywy badawcze we Francji*, "French Memory Studies Seminar," Warsaw, October 20, 2012.

16 Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

17 David Kranzler, "Japan before and during the Holocaust," in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 554–572; Irene Eber ed., *Voices From Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community in Shanghai, 1938–1945* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976).

forward a one-sided history of the refugees' rescue. The person of Chiune Sugihara has become a Japanese "power." The narrative of the lone Japanese consul who saved thousands has inspired numerous films and books,[18] which have helped convince other states that this is the full story. The Japanese government therefore controls this version of the story, which has become one of the "powers" of the Land of the Rising Sun. It is the one that shapes Japanese relations with Israel and Lithuania. Since many of the refugees emigrated to North America after World War II, it is also one of the threads running between Japan and the United States or Canada.

Politics of memory (remembrance) is the same as *Geschichtspolitik,* defined in Germany after 1989 (and termed "polityka pamięci" in Poland). It serves as a tool that allows nations and politicians to use the past to achieve certain goals.[19] President Andrzej Duda was the initiator of defining a politics of remembrance for Poland. During a conference held at the Belvedere palace in Warsaw in 2015, Duda referred to Józef Piłsudski's claim that a nation that loses its memory stops being a nation and becomes only a group of people temporary living in the same territory.[20] Therefore, given that on the symbolic level the president is the highest representative of Poland, the politics of memory should be his or her main task.[21] Andrzej Duda also convened the National Development Council, one of whose nine sections is called "Culture, national identity, and politics of memory."[22] Nonetheless, very little has so far been done in the case of the commemoration of Tadeusz Romer. Turning the Polish ambassador into a "lieu de mémoire," highlighting his role and his friendly relationship with the Japanese authorities, which continued even after the outbreak of the war, would contribute to the story of the Jewish refugees. But only strict cooperation with the states who are already promoting the story of their rescue, namely Lithuania, Japan and China, can make achieving

18 A recent example is the film *Persona Non Grata* (2015), directed by Cellin Gluck.

19 Maciej Kopeć, "Jak uczyć historii?," *Magazyn Historyczny Mówią Wieki* 680, no. 9 (September 2016): 49–50.

20 Kancelaria Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, *Zapis spotkania inaugurującego prace nad powstaniem Strategii Polskiej Polityki Historycznej w Belwederze,* November 17, 2015, 3, http://www.prezydent.pl/kancelaria/dzialalnosc-kancelarii/art,18,zapis-spotkania-dot-strategii-polskiej-polityki-historycznej.html, accessed November 20, 2015.

21 *Zapis spotkania inaugurującego prace nad powstaniem Strategii Polskiej Polityki Historycznej w Belwederze,* 3.

22 Kancelaria Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, *O Narodowej Radzie Rozwoju,* https://www.prezydent.pl/kancelaria/nrr/o-nrr/, accessed May 20, 2020.

this aim possible. Furthermore, in order to restore this missing part of the humanity chain, the refugees who received transit visas to Japan in Kaunas must be specified as being Polish citizens.

Tadeusz Romer and Polish Jews in Japan, 1940–1941

Though Chiune Sugihara was granted the title of Righteous among the Nations while Tadeusz Romer's efforts are still not recognized by Yad Vashem, similarities in their diplomatic lives can be found. After the war, both diplomats found themselves in difficult positions. Tadeusz Romer put an end to his diplomatic career in November 1944 in London, where he resigned from the office of foreign minister. Sugihara stayed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until 1947, when during the purges implemented by the occupational forces he, together with many other diplomats and bureaucrats, lost his position. Tadeusz Romer was left without a job and after the end of war, with the Soviet Union having taken control over Polish territory, he had no safe possibility of going back to Poland and had to stay in exile. In England, Romer lived off his savings and could not find a position. Help to him and his family came from a friend from the Japan days–Joseph Grew, former United States ambassador to Japan.[23] Grew helped Romer get a teaching position in the French department of McGill University in Montreal, where the family relocated. Sugihara moved to Moscow, and his youngest son was offered a scholarship in Israel in 1968. It was not only the way in which Sugihara and Romer's diplomatic careers ended–with people who respected them lending a helping hand in a difficult moment–that was similar. Their stories also had analogous beginnings, with the unwillingness they faced from their superiors when it came to their measures towards the Jewish refugees. The Foreign Ministry of Japan telegrammed Sugihara not to give visas to the Jews.[24] When the masses of refugees started to arrive to Japan, concerns appeared among Polish politicians in London. They were concerned about the list of the people approaching Japan involving only representatives of national minorities.[25]

23 Beata Szubtarska, *Z wizytą u cesarza. Opowieść dyplomatyczna Zofii Romer* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2012), 38.

24 This information is provided by Yukiko Sugihara in *Visas for Life.*

25 Letter from the prime minister of Poland to the foreign minister, February 3, 1941, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1941,* ed. Jacek Tebinka (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2013), 52.

Nonetheless, one week later, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London was informed by Tadeusz Romer's report that almost 95 percent of all arriving refugees were Jews.[26] August Zaleski, foreign minister of Poland, was already aware that the Allied countries would not be willing to issue visas to the Polish refugees because they were Jews. Nonetheless, due to the enormous efforts of Tadeusz Romer, as well as his personal contacts, the Polish citizens received visas, most of them while staying in Japan, and 827 of them were able to leave Japan before the outbreak of the Pacific War. Tadeusz Romer helped them gain visas to, among others, the countries of the British Commonwealth and the United States. According to the report written by the ambassador in Shanghai,[27] the biggest number of refugees left for the United States, with the second and third biggest going to Canada and Palestine. The rest travelled to Australia, New Zealand, British Burma, Argentina, Cuba, Harbin, Haiti, and Mexico. That this kind of help could be provided to the refugees was partly possible because of the Japanese authorities' attitude towards Tadeusz Romer and Poland. The Polish ambassador reported that Japanese newspapers were writing about the Jews according to the guidelines of German propaganda.[28] On the other hand, he mentioned that the liberal way of issuing visas in Kaunas was continued in Japan, in the country's liberal way of accepting the transit visas for a longer stay.[29] However, Romer was aware that if he could not find a way to send the transiting Polish Jews on to Allied countries, Japan would not let in Poles who desperately needed to escape from the Soviet-occupied Vilnius region because of the great danger they would face under occupation by USSR authorities. Not only Polish nationals, but also Polish Jews were barred from entering Japanese territory in March 1941. Shoshana Kahan, a Jewish actress and Polish citizen, wrote down in her diary on March 19, 1941 that the Japanese consul in Vladivostok had stopped accepting the Curaçao visas, and that refugees travelling from Vilnius were not let onto

26 Tadeusz Romer, Letter no. 310.3.41.1 regarding Polish refugees in the Far East, February 6, 1941, Library and Archives Canada, Tadeusz Romer fonds, R4804-0-2-E, "Diplomatic Activities 1913–1975" series, vol. 1–5, reproduction copy number C-10451. Letter from the foreign minister to the Polish embassy in London, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1941,* 78–80.

27 Tadeusz Romer, *Spis polskich uchodźców wojennych którzy wyjechali z Japonii w roku 1941 do krajów brytyjskich i amerykańskich,* Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych, 41.

28 Tadeusz Romer, Letter no. 310.3.41.1.

29 Tadeusz Romer, Letter to Jan Ciechanowski, Polish ambassador in Washington, March 5, 1941, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.

Japanese territory. One week later, she noted that the unwilling attitude of the Japanese authorities was caused by the lack of the American visas that the refugees were expecting to receive.[30] The refugees who were not allowed onto the Japanese islands travelled via Manchuria to Shanghai. As Joseph Fiszman wrote in his paper, the group, called "the wild ones," travelled without the support of any political or religious organizations, and their journey was riskier because they used the local trains, for which they paid in roubles.[31] This group became the most problematic for the Polish diplomats when the evacuation lists were prepared in Shanghai.

Shoshana Kahan also wrote about the issue of the transit visas' validity in Japan in her journal. In April 1941, she wrote that the refugees were aware that if they did not receive visas to the Allied countries, they would have to move to Shanghai. They were informed that no more visas would be extended one month after their arrival. Kahan wrote in her diary: "They will not extend the transit stay. Today many of the refugees were sent to Shanghai."[32] However, Kahan's stay lasted until the moment the Polish embassy closed down, and she moved to Shanghai in the autumn of 1941.

These recollections show the importance of Tadeusz Romer's role in the whole "rescue chain." The most important task for those who were stuck in the Far East was to obtain visas for the countries in which they would stay during the war. This was necessary because of the Japanese authorities' position and for the legality of the refugees' stay in Japan. The other issue was to provide the refugees with Polish passports: this would ensure that they would not be stateless and that they would stay under the Polish government's care. It would also enable the refugees to be included in evacuation lists after the outbreak of the Pacific War.

In June 1941, Tadeusz Romer reported to the Foreign Ministry in London on working in cooperation with the Japanese authorities, which was kept secret. An example of this was the meeting, on May 14, 1941, between Polish and Jewish journalists in Tokyo and the chief of the Information Bureau.[33]

30 Shoshana Kahan, *In fajer un flamen* (In Fire and Flames) (Buenos Aires, 1949), 269. Translations provided by M. Steckiewicz.
31 Joseph R. Fiszman, "The Quest for Status: Polish Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1941–1949," *The Polish Review* 43, no. 4 (1998): 444.
32 Shoshana Kahan, *In fajer un flamen*, 277.
33 Tadeusz Romer, Press and propaganda report for May 1941, June 9, 1941, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451, 6.

During this meeting, it was emphasized that the issuing of transit visas in Kaunas was the outcome of Polish-Japanese friendship. This statement by Ito Nobufumi, who hosted the meeting, can serve as proof that the friendly treatment of Polish citizens was a result of the history of bilateral relations between these countries. The role of the Polish ambassador was also invaluable, due to his friendly relations with Japanese politicians. However, in his reports, Romer mentioned Japanese newspapers depicting the refugees arriving in Japan in an unfavourable way. He cited the case of the "Hochi newspaper" in which, in the introductory article, the Jewish refugees arriving in Japan (Romer emphasized that the word "Polish" was not used) were called the "British fifth column."[34] In another instance, the Asahi Shimbun calculated the strain on Japan's income due to the influx of refugees. This report shows the other side of Japan's attitude towards the refugees. In such an atmosphere, Tadeusz Romer's fight on behalf of each refugee should be emphasized. It was with good reason that the son of the journalist Abraham Świsłocki, Norbert, said in an interview, when asked about Ambassador Romer: "I heard his name all the time."[35]

Organizing help in Shanghai, 1941–1942

Tadeusz Romer, together with his family and the embassy staff, arrived in Shanghai on October 29, 1941. The respect and gratitude felt towards the Polish ambassador for his activities in Japan was described in the November 1, 1941 issue of *Echo Szanghajskie:* "A crowd of a thousand refugees greeted [Tadeusz Romer and Chargé d'affaires Stanisław de Rosset] with an ovation, as a sign of their gratitude for their protection, and welcomed [them] with thunderous applause."[36] Tadeusz Romer also received a telegram from the Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch Rabbinical College in Warsaw-Otwock, in which the school's representatives wrote: "We would like to greet His Excellency with the joyous Old-Polish 'Welcome': we express our strong wish that soon we will greet each other in our restored homeland, as imagined

34 Tadeusz Romer, Press and propaganda report for December 1940 and January 1941, February 4, 1941, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451, 11.

35 Norbert Świsłocki, interviewed by Barbara Abraham in May 2018, New York, interview project by Olga Barbasiewicz.

36 "Poselstwo R.P.," *Echo Szanghajskie,* October 1, 1941, 8.

by all the righteous citizens."[37] This gratitude expressed by members of the rabbinical school shows the role that the ambassador played in the life of thousands of refugees.

On November 11, 1941, before the outbreak of the Pacific War, Tadeusz Romer started to organize the refugees into structures, the aim of which was to allow them to receive help in the most effective way. The first step was to organize the meeting of the Advisory Commission for War Refugees (Polrelief). This commission was established to deal with migrant issues and consisted of fifteen delegates from different political and social circles. The financial questions were taken on by the Committee for Assistance of Jewish Refugees from Eastern Europe (Eastjewcom), which continued to work in cooperation with the Committee for Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (Speelman Committee) and the Joint Distribution Committee in the United States.[38]

Therese Romer, the ambassador's daughter, described her father's incredible devotion to the future of the Polish refugees when talking about their stay in Shanghai: "My father did not have any time [...], he kept disappearing into the office, he came only for dinners, often late, and my mother was angry that he did not care for his own health."[39]

After the beginning of the Pacific War, the Polish diplomatic mission was aware of impending evacuation. Chargé d'affaires Stanisław de Rosset informed the Polish citizens prior to his departure that: "where, in the wake of the outbreak of the Pacific War, our Allies have collapsed banners, the Polish banner could not continue to fly."[40] Tadeusz Romer focused on the preparation of the evacuation lists, which were open only to those refugees who were not stateless, i.e. who were Polish citizens. He also continued to fight for financial aid for the refugees. In Japan, Polish Jews were supported by the Jewish organizations, but after the outbreak of the war between the United

37 Radiogram sent through the Shanghai International Radio Office by the Tomchei Temimin Lubavitch Rabinical College in Warsaw-Otwock, October 29, 1941, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.

38 For more information about Tadeusz Romer's role in creating the refugee organizational structures see "Do czego dążymy," *Wiadomości. Pismo uchodźców wojennych z Polski w Szanghaju,* December 8, 1941, 1.

39 Therese Romer, interviewed by Barbara Abraham in May 2018, Montreal, interview project by Olga Barbasiewicz.

40 Stanisław de Rosset, *Echo Szanghajskie,* no. 10–13 (116–119), May 15-July 1, 1942, 3.

States and Japan, the situation started to change rapidly. Most of the funds now came from the United States, but it was almost impossible to transfer funds from America to Shanghai under Japanese occupation. In the first months of the Pacific War, local businessmen cooperated with the American Joint Distribution Committee. But after half a year, the Committee had to withdraw from Shanghai. That is when the role of the Polish government and of Tadeusz Romer became crucial.

When Joint was still active, Romer stated in his reports that he had already informed the organization about the need for help for the 939 Polish refugees; but since he did not receive it, he turned to the Polish government.[41] He calculated that the sum needed to save the people stuck in Shanghai from starving was US$9,000.[42] The same amount of money was needed to apply for work permits for the refugees. He asked the Polish embassy in Washington to talk to Joint representatives in the United States.[43] The Polish government in London also suggested that the Red Cross take care of the refugees. A few days later, the information that the Polish diplomatic mission in the United States started talks with Joint had arrived and the Polish ambassador to the United States received the information that Joint had supported about one hundred Polish citizens with the amount of US$30,000 via its representatives in Shanghai.[44] This amount was insufficient, and Tadeusz Romer once again asked for the US$30,000 for Polish citizens.[45] The only way to transfer funds was via the Polish diplomatic mission in the USSR, because of the fear that Japan would refuse to transfer the funds to Romer. Therefore, the money was wired in parts. Romer kept pressing on the Polish government (with the support of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) that helping

41 Tadeusz Romer, "Telegram Szyfrowany do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych nr 2. Polmission Kujbyszew," January 1, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

42 US$9,000 in 194 equalled about US$143,000 in 2018. See https://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/inflation.php?amount=100&year=1942 (accessed August 10, 2018).

43 "Telegram z Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w Londynie do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych," January 29, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

44 "Telegram z Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych do Polmission Kujbyszew," February 18, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

45 Letter from Józef Marlewski to Ignacy Schwarzbart, April 17, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

Polish citizens under Japanese occupation was Poland's duty.[46] In February 1942, the Foreign Ministry of Poland asked Joint to transfer the money to Polish diplomatic missions.[47] The amount of US$4,000 was successfully delivered to Romer via the Moskowskij Narodnyj Bank in Shanghai in March, and the whole amount was delivered to Eastjewcom a few days later. According to Tadeusz Romer's reports, this amount provided help for 850 refugees.

While in Shanghai, Romer kept asking for visas to safe destinations for the Polish citizens. The Polish Foreign Ministry in London was mediating between the Polish ambassador and the British Foreign Office in organizing the transfer of Polish citizens possessing Palestinian visas.[48]

Prior to his departure, Tadeusz Romer informed the Japanese authorities of the situation of the Polish citizens staying in Shanghai. In his letter, delivered to the Consulate General of Japan in Shanghai, he expressed his concerns about the further situation of the Polish refugees and residents, lacking diplomatic care from the Polish legation. Romer referred to the Polish-Japanese friendship, stating that "with the return of peaceful and normal conditions, the fact of a good attitude, in times of war, of the Japanese Authorities towards Poles, will constitute undoubtedly a momentous element in the sentiments towards Japan of a nation of 30 million people, whose relations with that country were always marked by a lack of contradictory interests in the Far East and by a mutual friendly attitude."[49] In his letter, Tadeusz Romer expressed his own and the refugees' unconditional gratitude for the asylum provided by the Japanese authorities.

Soon after, he ordered the Polish diplomats staying in Manchuria and in Yokohama to leave their posts respectively on June 1 (Harbin) and June 10 (Yokohama).[50] However, since the evacuation was postponed till the end of

46 "Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w Londynie," February 4, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

47 "Telegram szyfrowany do Polmission Waszyngton z Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych," February 6, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych, folder 528/30.

48 "Telegram Szyfrowy do Pomission Kujbyszew z Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych," March 18, 1942, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych.

49 Tadeusz Romer, Letter to the Japanese Consulate General in Shanghai, May 28, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.

50 Tadeusz Romer, Radiogram, May 29, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.

July, Romer asked at the beginning of June for additional funds to support the legations.[51]

While waiting for the evacuation, Romer kept receiving from Edward Raczyński information about further refugees–the refugees who travelled with the "Sugihara visas"–to include on the evacuation list. Among them were Leon Ilutowicz (no. 819 on the list from the Japanese consulate in Kaunas), Natalia Muchniewska (no. 2107), Dubekirer (no. 2008; listed as Dubekir in Raczyński's telegram), Samue Iwri (no. 1046; listed as Samuer Iwre in the telegram), with their families.[52] Identifying these specific names of people who are considered to have been saved by Sugihara alone, but who were in fact marked directly by their names by the Polish foreign minister, doing his best to facilitate their journey to a safe place, sheds light on the whole story of the rescue of the Polish refugees who received transit visas in Kaunas. Among the answers sent to London by Romer, the Landau family (no. 56 and 57 on Sugihara's visas) was also mentioned by name.[53] Romer kept preparing successive evacuation lists, because the first was already full. Consequently, he emphasized the need for financial support for the Polish refugees in Shanghai to be able to escape starvation. This telegram, sent at the end of June, shows the great care Polish diplomats took in providing help to the refugees stuck in extremely difficult conditions in the Far East. The Polish government provided aid to the amount of 5,000 Shanghai dollars for July and the same amount for August.[54] In the summer, Romer was allowed an additional quota of forty refugees to evacuate.[55] Moreover, the Polish diplomatic mission in Switzerland asked Tadeusz Romer to include on the evacuation list the next person travelling from Lithuania with a Japanese transit visa, Lila Ginsburg (no. 1968).[56] Prior to his evacuation, Romer informed Japanese authorities about the Polish refugees who had left at the beginning of December 1941 for the United States and were stuck in Manila, Philippines.[57] He also informed them about future evacuation plans and about the recipients of further

51 Tadeusz Romer, Radiogram to Kuibyshev, June 2, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
52 Radiogram to Romer from Kuibyshev, June 18, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
53 Radiogram to Romer from Kuibyshev, June 27, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
54 Radiogram to Romer from Kot, June 27, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
55 Radiogram P2/H178, no date, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
56 Radiogram to Romer from Kuibyshev, July 19, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
57 Tadeusz Romer, Letter to the Japanese Consulate General in Shanghai, August 1, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.

financial help from the Polish government or from Joint, via the Polish mission in the Soviet Union.[58]

As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the confirmation of Polish citizenship, provided by the passports issued in Tokyo, situated the refugees in a better position than those who remained stateless. The refugees could now be evacuated from Shanghai. Those who could not prove their Polish citizenship had to stay in Shanghai. One case of the kind of trouble this could cause is that of Irena Budzinska, who was reported to the Japanese consulate general in Shanghai as not being covered by Polish diplomatic assistance.[59]

Detailed information on Romer's aid to the Polish refuges was given in the report he wrote on August 31, on Kamakura Maru ship, during the evacuation.[60] After his arrival in Africa, despite having a new mission to think about, he still took care of the refugees. He took on the care of their further journey and visas.[61] The Polish government took charge (also financially) of those who were evacuated from Shanghai together with Romer.[62] Despite the impossibility of evacuating all Polish citizens from Shanghai during the war due to the ongoing war, the efforts made by Tadeusz Romer helped the refugees to survive and to believe that Poland had not forgotten about them.

In his goodbye letter, published in *Echo Szanghajskie,* Stanisław de Rosset summarized Tadeusz Romer's efforts as follow: "Having the enormous task of helping the exiles in the USSR and the refugees in the Far East, the size of which can be seen in the note published in this issue of *Echo,* referring only to a certain episode, Ambassador Romer did not limit himself to this kind of work [...]."[63] This statement shows perfectly the role of Romer's independent decision to help the Polish Jews who appeared in 1940–1941 in Japan and then moved to Shanghai together with the diplomatic mission.

58 Tadeusz Romer, Cablegram to Kuibyshev, August 4, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
59 Tadeusz Romer, Letter to the Japanese Consulate General in Shanghai, August 6, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
60 Tadeusz Romer, "W sprawie pomocy finansowej dla polskich uchodźców na Dalekim Wschodzie" (On financial aid for war refugees in the Far East), August 31, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
61 Telegrams, September 14, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
62 Raczyński to Minister Łepkowski, August 21, 1942, Tadeusz Romer fonds, C-10451.
63 Stanisław de Rosset, *Echo Szanghajskie,* no. 10–13 (116–119), May 15-July 1, 1942, 3.

Conclusion

At a time of growing popularity of the history of the Shanghai Jews among researchers and public opinion, the story of Tadeusz Romer's efforts is poorly known. Besides the publications by Polish researchers mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the question of the Polish Jews in Japan has not been looked at separately by those who have analyzed the Shanghai period of the Jewish displacement. Among the almost twenty thousand German- and Yiddish-speaking Jews who arrived in Shanghai between 1938 and 1941,[64] the group of Polish citizens was very small. Therefore, the frequently repeated claim has been that of the refugees' stateless status. The group of Polish Jews in particular has not being the topic of individual research, especially among Western researchers, but also among Poles. Therefore, the activities of Tadeusz Romer have remained unknown in the academic and public debate.

The efforts of Tadeusz Romer in providing the refugees with financial and consular help, presented briefly in this paper, seem to have been one of the key factors for securing the safety of the Jews who travelled to Japan with visas issued in Kaunas. His dedication to informing the Polish authorities about the situation and the needs of the Jews in Shanghai is also a fact that should be highlighted in the research on this issue. Furthermore, the fact that the Polish-Japanese friendship was the major factor determining Japanese cooperation, as confirmed in Tokyo by Ito Nobufumi, is frequently overlooked in analyses of the Jewish refugees in East Asia during World War II.

One of the reasons for these omissions could be the attitude of the refugees themselves. An example can be seen in Shoshana Kahan's diary, in which she describes Tadeusz and Zofia Romer's activities. After withdrawing from the queue for Canadian visas, Shoshana discovered that she had a growth on her liver. She subsequently went to Tokyo to ask Zofia Romer to convince her husband to urgently give her and her husband Canadian visas. Zofia Romer provided Kahan with a letter in which the Polish embassy informed her that it was impossible to provide her with a visa at the time, but that it would cover all her expenses in Japan, and that Zofia Romer would personally take care of her. Kahan refused Zofia Romer's offer and said that she did not want her

64 Irene Eber, *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*, 7.

grace.[65] This attitude towards the offer of help could have been the result of Kahan's openly communist convictions as a member of the Bund, and the aristocratic roots of Romer's family (emphasized by Kahan in her diaries by calling them "their highness"). Another reason could have been internal problems in the religious groups. Even when faced with the possibility of evacuation from Shanghai, they kept setting their own conditions. For example, they considered it damaging or dangerous for the students to travel individually or in small groups because of the separation from the main school.[66] This lack of decisiveness when it came to being involved in the evacuation lists hindered the effective evacuation of Polish citizens, due to which this group remained together with other groups of religious Jews in Shanghai and merged with them.

Also in the Polish public sphere and in popular opinion, as was mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the history of Tadeusz Romer and of his help to Polish Jews is little known. Therefore, I claim that it is the role of the Polish government to study Tadeusz Romer's activities during his function as Polish ambassador in Japan and to promote him–both in Polish public opinion and outside of Poland–as an equal member of the humanity chain, next to diplomats such as Sugihara Chiune and Jan Zwatendijk. Only through cooperative action between the Polish government and the Japanese, Lithuanian and Dutch governments can Tadeusz Romer regain his position among those who focused during their diplomatic career on helping Polish Jews.

65 Shoshana Kahan, *In fajer un flamen*, 278.
66 Tadeusz Romer, "Report on the circumstances of the preparation...," December 9, 1943, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Archiwum Akt Nowych, box 612, file 39, 2.

Ambassador Romer and the Sugihara Visa Recipients: Efforts to Help Jewish refugees by the Polish Embassy in Tokyo, 1940-1941

Aya Takahashi
Journalist

Chiune Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat during the Second World War. He issued Japanese transit visas, now called the "Sugihara visas" or "Visas for life," at Kaunas, Lithuania, in July and August 1940 and saved the lives of thousands of refugees. They were mainly Jewish people from Poland who were trying to escape Nazi and Soviet forces. Tadeusz Romer, the Polish ambassador to Japan from 1937 to 1941, together with his staff made every effort to help Polish refugees, including Sugihara visa recipients, who arrived in Japan in 1940 and 1941.

I have been conducting research on the Sugihara visa recipients and their descendants who came to Canada. In 2012, I produced a video of the testimonies and statements by seven families of Sugihara visa recipients in Vancouver. The video is about three hours in length and was donated to the Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall in Gifu Prefecture in Japan, Yad Vashem in Israel, the Montreal Holocaust Museum and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

My research has expanded since that time. I have now interviewed Sugihara visa recipients, their descendants, their relatives and other related people in Canada, the United States, Australia and European countries, and have received information about between eighty and ninety visa recipients. In the course of my research on those of the Sugihara visa recipients who subsequently came to Canada, I found evidence of the ways in which the Polish embassy in Tokyo and the Polish Relief Committee, which was set up by Ambassador Romer, helped refugees.

The Sugihara visas

The story began in July 1940 in Kaunas, Lithuania. On July 18, Sugihara and his family noticed many refugees swarming the gates of the Japanese consulate.

They were mainly Jewish people, who were asking for Japanese transit visas in order to escape from the Nazis and Soviets and get to safe countries.

Most of the refugees did not have proper documents, such as passports, identification papers or visas to their final destinations, though they claimed to Sugihara that they were going to the United States, Palestine, South American countries and Curaçao, which was a Dutch territory near Cuba. The Curaçao visas had been issued by Jan Zwartendijk, the Dutch honorary consul in Kaunas.

"It is a matter of humanity," Sugihara appealed to his government; but Japan ordered him not to issue transit visas to those who had no visas to final destinations.

Nevertheless, after being in agony, Sugihara started to issue visas to the refugees, disobeying the order from his government but obeying his own principles to help people in great danger. Later, he made a list of the issued visas. The total number on the list was 2,139, but it is said that he issued many more.

The refugees, with Sugihara visas in hand, crossed the Soviet Union by the Trans-Siberian Railway and boarded Japanese ships at Vladivostok, which was the far eastern port of the Soviet Union, for the port of Tsuruga in Japan.

As a result, from the autumn of 1940 to the spring of 1941, waves of refugees from war-damaged Europe arrived in Japan. The majority of the refugees were Jewish people from Poland.

Polish refugees and the Polish embassy in Japan

Tadeusz Romer and his embassy staff became busy responding to the arrival of Polish refugees. Romer had been stationed in Tokyo since 1937 along with his wife Zofia and his three daughters.

Therese Romer, the eldest daughter, was a teenager at that time. I met Therese, who lives in Montreal, in June 2014 and interviewed her there for the first time. She recalled the Polish refugees who visited the Polish embassy in Tokyo in 1940 and 1941.

Most of the refugees stayed in Kobe, several others in Tokyo, after arriving at Tsuruga. The Jewish community of Kobe took care of them. Jewish organizations in the United States provided them with supplies and funds to stay in Japan and to leave Japan. Japanese people, including a Hebrew scholar,

Setsuzo Kotsuji, also helped Jewish refugees in many ways.

The Polish embassy in Tokyo also made every effort to help the Polish refugees. Embassy staff went to Tsuruga and Kobe and provided Polish or Yiddish interpretation between the refugees and Japanese authorities.

Since many of the refugees arrived in Japan without documentation, they needed passports and official documents to apply for visas to go further on from Japan. Embassy staff helped them to get proper papers.

In order to issue passports, the embassy had to work first on establishing the identities of the applicants in the absence of proper documentation such as birth or marriage certificates. Doing so was not always easy, once they were in Japan. For instance, embassy workers had to cross-interview people who knew each other so as to verify the details.

Ambassador Romer set up a "Polish Relief Committee" among the Polish colony in Tokyo, assigning his wife Zofia as its president.

In the course of my research, I found evidence that showed some of the ways in which the Polish embassy and the Polish Relief Committee helped refugees. Here are some of the documents I found:

1) Passports issued or renewed by the Polish embassy in Tokyo.

The stamps of the Polish embassy in Tokyo along with the signature of Karol Staniszewski, secretary of the Polish embassy, are found on the passports.

2) A telegram asking Ambassador Romer to facilitate getting Canadian visas for refugees.[1]

The telegram says:

April 22, 1941

ROMER POLISH EMBASSY TOKYO SHALL GREATLY APPRECIATE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO FACILITATE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION CANADIAN VISA APPLICATIONS MRS MARTA HEYMAN MY FORMER SECRETARY AND MEMBERS HER FAMILY WHO POLISH CITIZENS STOP MANY THANKS GREETINGS BECKELMAN[2]

1 Owned by the Heyman family, descendants of Stefan and Marta Heyman, who were Sugihara visa recipients from Poland.

2 Moses Beckelman was the representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Vilnius, Lithuania, and Kobe. He was also a

3) A letter of appreciation endorsed by the Polish Relief Committee.[3]

The original letter was written in Polish on the letterhead of the Polish Relief Committee. It was translated into English in and certified by the Consulate General of Poland in Montreal. The English translation says:

POLISH RELIEF COMMITTEE
To Mr. Ing. Wolf Beiles
in Kobe

Tokyo, August 25th, 1941

The Polish Relief Committee in Tokyo wishes to express to you its thanks and appreciation for your efficient work in the Refugee Section of the Committee in Kobe carried by you from February 1941 until today, i.e. during the whole period of your sojourn in Japan.

In your work you have shown great efficiency and excellent gift for organization, which have been of great help in the success of the evacuation of Polish refugees from Japan, carried out by the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo with the cooperation of the Committee.

We hope that the continuation of your work in new surroundings may contribute to the success of relief work performed by the Polish organization.

For the Committee

Chairman:
by (-) Karol Staniszewski

Chief of the Refugee Section:
(-) Kl. Zyngol

Seal
The Consulate General of Poland in Montreal certifies hereby that the foregoing in a true and correct translation of the original document written in Polish language.

Montreal, July 8, 1944

CONSULATE GENERAL OF POLAND
by:
(the stamped name illegible)
Secretary.

Ambassador Romer's views on the imperative to help refugees

Therese says that "my father was very careful whenever he spoke to us, not to mix up his office work with family talk." Even so, she understood her father was very worried about the refugees and Poland.

The embassy received telegrams from Poland and the Romer family knew terrible things were happening in Nazi- and Soviet-occupied Poland.

In 1941, the Japanese government came under more pressure from the military due to several developments, such as the formation of the Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan in September 1940 and Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Under these circumstances, the Polish embassy in Tokyo was closed in October 1941. The Romer family and the embassy staff left Japan and moved to Shanghai, where many Jewish refugees from Europe, including Sugihara visa recipients, lived. Romer and his staff again did their best to help Polish refugees there.

In October 1942, Tadeusz Romer was appointed as the ambassador to the Soviet Union. Therese and her family were devastated to hear that the Soviet authorities did not consider Polish Jews as Polish. Ambassador Romer always told his family that Polish citizens had full citizenship rights, regardless of whether they were Jews, Poles, or members of other ethnic minorities.

Conclusion

After the war, in 1948, the Romer family moved to Canada and lived in Montreal.

Former refugees visited the Romer family in Montreal and the family received cards and letters from others. I believe these former refugees never forgot about the relief they had received from the Polish embassy in Tokyo.

Tadeusz Romer did not hesitate to work for Jewish refugees. It was not easy to help them when many of the countries on earth, including Canada, were reluctant to extend a helping hand to Jewish refugees from Europe.

As we continue to see many tragedies in the world, the story of Tadeusz Romer's work in Japan and Shanghai should be told more often, not only in the context of the Sugihara story, but also because he was a universal humanitarian unafraid to act as a leader to help people who needed it.

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INTERVIEW

Therese Romer interviewed by Aya Takahashi in Montreal, 2014.

The Montreal Years, 1948–1978: The Tadeusz Romer Archive at the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada

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I originally conducted the research summarized in this paper for a conference of archivists and librarians on the subject of documents left by historical figures in the archives of libraries and museums founded by the Polish diaspora. The collection of documents left by Tadeusz Romer in the archives of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada is relatively small. The better part of Romer's documents, including materials relating to his diplomatic activities during the Second World War, was acquired by Library and Archives Canada in 1975 and 1979.[1] Another large collection was transferred to the National Library of Poland by Romer's daughter, Therese Romer, in 2007. What remains at the Polish Institute is a fairly modest collection of documents pertaining to Romer's activities as the president of the Institute and in certain other related areas. About 70 percent of the archive is correspondence, both private and official. There are also reports, briefs, speeches, and press releases.

When he arrived in Montreal in 1948, at the age of fifty-four, Romer had already had a full life: groomed from a young age to serve his country, he had had an impressive diplomatic career and had been present at some of the twentieth century's defining historical events. Practically from one day to the

1 In 2005, Library and Archives Canada in turn donated them to the National Archives of Poland in Warsaw.

next, he found himself in a new country, where he did not know anybody, where he was cut off from everything that had defined his life until then, and where history was only ever heard as a distant echo. He then began his second life, as an instructor at McGill University's French Department and as a figure of note in Montreal's Polonia.

The Romer archive at the Polish Institute provides unique insight into how Romer navigated this transition. The most striking thing it reveals is probably the imperturbable continuity he maintained between his old life and the new. In a resolution drafted for the McGill Senate on the occasion of Romer's death, his colleague Eva Kushner wrote: "this seemingly modest academic career does not reveal the whole man that professor Romer was, his humaneness and his vast knowledge of men and countries, his passionate idealism, his unfailing faithfulness to the values he defended; and the humility that befits the true aristocrat."[2] Indeed, Romer's papers suggest that in each of his decisions, no matter how ordinary, he was guided by a profound commitment to his ethical convictions, informed by his Christian humanist worldview. In this sense, it seems that Romer really did not see his emigration and career change as much of an interruption. He believed first and foremost in a life of moral and civic duty, and this ideal he could continue to fulfill as teacher and community organizer when he was no longer statesman and diplomat.

While the documents in the Romer archive at the Polish Institute cannot compare, in terms of historical interest, to notes taken at events of crucial geopolitical importance, speeches written during Romer's diplomatic career in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, or other materials of this kind owned by the National Archives, they can serve to build a portrait of his tireless and varied activity during the final thirty years of his life; a period in which, despite his age, he was no less active than before. They show that Romer, in fact, saw his life in Canada as a continuation of his diplomatic missions, while also illuminating how he viewed diplomacy itself. It was much more to him than an art of negotiation or a tool for attaining political goals. To Romer, diplomacy meant creating bonds between people based on mutual trust and empathy, working together to actualize shared values, and–it follows–not

2 Eva Kushner, resolution adopted by the Senate of McGill University on April 5, 1978, from the personal archives of Therese Romer.

intrigue, glamour, or heroism, but rather unceasing, often tedious, sometimes thankless work in service to a community. The time and effort Romer devoted to it, while working gruelling hours at the university and taking care of his family, even as an almost eighty-year-old man (Romer never retired) shows that it was, truly, a vocation rather than a job.

Romer's emigration activities fall into two broad categories. The first of these can be seen as a kind of continuation of his work for the Polish government-in-exile during World War II. In 1950, Romer was one of the founders of the Canadian chapter of the "National treasure commission" (Komisja Skarbu Narodowego), an institution called to life by president Zaleski in 1949 to finance the activities of the Polish state-in-exile. The National Treasure was financed by voluntary donations from members of the Polish diaspora. Funds amassed by the Canadian chapters served, among other things, to finance conservation work on the "Wawel treasures,"[3] to support the work of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, and for bursaries and summer camp funds for students and children of Polish descent. Romer worked for the Commission until his death, among others in an administrative capacity and as editor of the Commission's newspaper.

The other area that Romer was active in was the social and political life of the Polish community in Montreal. First among these activities was his work for the Polish Institute, initially as a correspondent for the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, based in New York City, and then, from 1963 to 1977, as director of the Canadian Institute in Montreal. Indeed, it is under Romer's presidency that the Canadian Polish Institute, which until then had been a branch of the American one, gained autonomy. Among other achievements in this role, Romer enriched the Institute by making academic conferences a central part of its programme. Besides the Polish Institute, Romer also gave time to a panoply of local organizations, such as the Canadian Polish Congress *(Kongres Polonii Kanadyjskiej)* and the Polish

3 During the German invasion of Poland in 1939, curators at Wawel, the Royal Castle in Krakow, arranged for the most precious works of art and historical artefacts in the castle museum's collection (these included for instance the "Szczerbiec," the sword used in coronation ceremonies of Polish kings for centuries) to be secretly transported to Canada for safekeeping. The treasures were repatriated to Poland in 1961. For information about this topic, including the almost year-long journey of the treasures to Canada and the repatriation process, see Daniel Stone, "New light on old treasures," *The Polish Review* 62, no. 1 (2017): 3-18.

Association (Stowarzyszenie polskie), whether it be as advisor, as mediator, or by generally furthering these organizations' work through the extensive network of contacts that he had built, both among the diaspora and in local political and academic structures.

The majority of documents in the Polish Institutes' archives concern this second area of activity. They reveal that he pursued these cultural and academic projects as a kind of continuation of the cultural diplomacy that he had considered to be of central importance during his postings overseas before and during the Second World War. Romer believed that sharing cultural and scientific heritage had real potential for fostering understanding and tolerance between nations. For instance, Beata Szubtarska shows that when he was the Polish ambassador to Japan during the war, his efforts to showcase Polish culture had a tangible positive effect on Polish-Japanese relations, and possibly contributed to Japan allowing the Polish diplomatic mission to continue as long as it did. This in turn allowed the embassy to provide the lifesaving help to Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe transiting through Japan discussed in some of the other papers in this volume.

The Polish Institute had been founded during the war with a mandate to preserve Polish knowledge and culture, but also to serve as an independent source of information about Poland. This work continued to be important in the postwar decades, as Poland became a socialist state. The Institute's archives show that Romer significantly improved the Institute's offerings, both in quantity and in quality: under his patronage, it began hosting regular conferences in the sciences and the humanities. Particularly distinguished speakers during Romer's years were the writers Julian Tuwim and Melchior Wańkowicz or Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor to United States president Jimmy Carter. Even as he served as president of the Institute, Romer mostly organized these events in person.

Aside from these scientific activities, memos written by Romer for the Canadian Polish Congress show that the Institute served as the advisory body to the Congress in matters of science, culture and art.[4] This meant, for

4 This role was spelled out by Romer in a letter to the board of the Canadian Polish Congress written on June 21, 1977. Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

example, that the Congress deferred to the Institute when it had to take a position regarding events transpiring in Poland, or regarding official state propaganda. An example of this kind of advising work is the analysis Romer wrote for the Congress in 1959 concerning the stance taken by the Polish People's Republic on the celebrations surrounding the 1000th anniversary of Christianity in Poland. In this memo, Romer counsels the Congress to clearly and decisively distance itself from the propaganda broadcasted by the regime in Poland. The state, which was opposed to the church, had been attempting to portray the approaching celebrations as the 1000th anniversary of Polish statehood, rather than as a religious event. Romer, who described this as a "primitive swindle," advised the Congress on the terminology it should use and, in the same breath, concisely defined the educational mission of the Polish diaspora:

> Our fundamental duty as free Poles living in the free world is the defense of truth. We must carry this responsibility also in the name of our brothers and sisters in Poland who in the current circumstances do not always have that opportunity. We must state these truths clearly, and in clear opposition to communist propaganda. In the present case, the truth is that 1966 does not mark the 1000th anniversary of the Polish state, which has long come and gone though we cannot ascertain its exact date for lack of documentation, but the anniversary of the beginnings of Christianity in Poland, an event of capital significance in Poland's religious, but also cultural and political history.[5]

Romer's correspondence shows that his "cultural policy work" was well served by his wide-ranging contacts in Canadian academic circles. Thanks to his relationship with the chancellor of Université de Montréal, Romer played a role in ensuring the successful founding and operation of a Chair

5 Letter to the board of the Canadian Polish Congress, October 5, 1959, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. Translation mine.

of Polish Studies, the only one that Quebec has ever had. Those who know how underrepresented Polish studies are in Quebec today will be surprised to learn that in the 1960s, close to eighty graduates of this program at the Université de Montréal had teaching positions in universities across North and South America.

The seemingly innocuous work of promoting Polish matters in academia could at times have a darker aspect. In 1963, Romer intervened with the chancellor in the case of Professor Domaradzki, the head of the Slavic studies department who was purportedly having trouble with a communist plot among some of his Russian colleagues. In a letter to the delegate of the Polish government-in-exile to the Vatican, Romer described this situation in colourful terms:

> In recent years, international trends have made Russian studies fashionable, to such an extent that they have come to occupy the first place in the Slavic Studies department of the University of Montreal, to the great financial satisfaction of university authorities and of the ever more numerous professorial staff associated with the field. Among these new recruits, the department has invited in a number of shady Russian types who, in the hopes of ousting prof. Domaradzki and replacing him with one of their own, have been engaging in subversion and intrigue. [...] One of these gentlemen, when put in charge of student registration, has gone so far as to secretly confuse records and even purposely create dead souls in the goal of blaming this on Domaradzki and embarrassing him, eventually leading to his suspension.[6]

As the Université de Montreal was, at the time of these events, still affiliated with the Catholic Church, Romer's letter to the Vatican was meant to elicit a possible intervention by the Apostolic Delegate of Canada. Sadly, the archives

6 Letter from Tadeusz Romer to Valeriano Meysztowicz, May 5, 1963, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. Translation mine.

contain no further documentation that would shed light on whether any agents of the Vatican did get involved; all we know is that the victimized professor was eventually allowed to go back to work. The fate of Polish Studies on the whole was less positive in the long term. They did end up being subverted by Russian Studies, as we learn from a 1970 letter of protest written by Romer in response to the University's decision not to admit any new candidates into the master's program.

Another frequent theme in Romer's correspondence is the question of Polish anti- Semitism. Romer was a lifelong proponent of a pluralistic and multicultural model of the Polish nation. Within the scope of his policy of fostering friendly relations between the Polish diaspora (which, in the Cold War context, he saw as the true representative of independent Poland) and the West, it was important to him that this idea of Polish nationhood not be completely forgotten. The archives contain numerous letters and newspaper snippets that bear witness to this side of Romer's work. One such example is the polemic in which he engaged Rabbi Richard White in the pages of the Montreal Gazette in 1968. Writing about the latest anti-Semitic campaign of the Polish government, the rabbi had referred to the "innate anti-semitism" of Poles. Romer's eloquent response resulted in an equally elegant apology from the rabbi in the newspaper:

> To you and to the Polish community in Montreal, I offer sincere apologies for my bitterness, assurances of support for the liberation of Poland, and extend my hand in friendship. I will always try to remember the best of Polish-Jewish relations and the example of the Polish martyrs of which you write. May their names never disappear from our memory. Thank you for your considered response.[7]

Besides working for the Institute in an overseeing capacity, Romer also wrote articles and gave talks about history and international relations, many

7 "Rabbi White on Anti-Semitism in Poland," Letters to the Editor, *The Montreal Gazette,* August 1, 1968, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

of them based on his own experience in the field. The Polish Institute's archive contains rough drafts and annotated copied of conference papers such as, for instance, the talk Romer gave during the Third Congress of Polish Scientists in Montreal in 1975, on the "Diplomatic strategy of the Polish government in London in defense of Polish borders in 1944."

One significant proof of the respect that Romer's intellectual and ethical stances commanded, and which extended beyond the bounds of the Polish community, is the fact that both the federal Canadian government and the provincial government of Quebec consulted him on matters relating to the policies of multiculturalism that were being developed in the 1960s and 1970s. In a 1965 letter present in the archive, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism officially asked Romer, as an eminent representative of immigrant circles in Canada, to provide an evaluation of the role of the Polish minority in Canadian society. The archive also contains a copy of the nearly 100-page report that Romer wrote in response to this request.

In 1970, Romer co-authored another memorandum of interest to the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, this time presented in the name of the Montreal chapter of the Canadian Polish Congress, for the occasion of a consultation with organizations representing ethnic minorities. In 1974, it was the turn of the Quebec government's Commission d'enquête sur la situation de la langue française to ask Romer for his opinion on the proposed Bill 22 (Projet de loi no 22 sur la langue officielle), the landmark law that shaped Quebec's linguistic and cultural policy as we know it today. Romer voiced his thoughts on this topic in a letter to Stanley Haidash, a member of the National Assembly with a Polish background, in a 1976 letter (i.e., two years after the law was passed). This passage, incidentally, also summarizes Romer's idea of Canadian identity:

> As you know, it was in search of a freedom that was sadly lacking in Poland under the communist yoke that I settled in the welcoming city of Montreal in 1948 with my closest family. In 1961, I received Canadian citizenship. I believe that I've shown my gratitude to the Province of Quebec by teaching French language, literature and civilization for more than a quarter of a century. During my life, I myself have

> had the opportunity to operate fluently in seven modern languages, not counting classical Greek and Latin. Of my thirteen grandchildren, all are fluent, besides their native Polish language, in French and English. All the greater was my surprise at the passing of Bill 22 which undoubtedly goes against the principle of basic freedom and equality of all Canadian citizens in imposing on certain segments of the Quebec population learning method and school choice, which always and in all places have been left up to parents.[8]

After this passionate appeal, Romer went straight to the point, informing the MP that "if the Quebec government does not publicly and unequivocally revise its stance in this matter before the upcoming elections, I will be forced to withhold my vote from the liberal candidate running in my own Montreal riding."[9]

It was not unusual for Romer to call on his extensive network of contacts to try to influence local politics in cases when policies could have an impact on the Polish community. One notable such case took place in 1962. A long-term, trusted member of the Canadian Polish Congress, colonel Stefan Sznuk, had a chance to be nominated to the Canadian Senate. Romer's letter to Sznuk on the occasion reveals that the members at large of the Canadian chapter of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America voted to authorize the board to do everything in its power to support Sznuk's nomination.[10] Beyond promoting Sznuk's candidacy in the Polish Institute, Romer also wrote letters to the chancellors of McGill University and Université de Montréal to ask them to support the nomination. Of interest in the archive is a handwritten draft of a letter to Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, which Romer wrote on behalf of Chancellor Irénée Lussier of Université de Montréal, who had agreed to grant his support. In this letter, Romer again called on the multiculturalism argument, reminding the prime minister that only seven of the 102 senators were born outside of Canada. He stated that accepting Sznuk

8 Letter from Tadeusz Romer to Stanley Haidasz, October 4, 1976, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. Translation mine.

9 Letter to Stanley Haidasz.

10 Letter from Tadeusz Romer to Stefan Sznuk, March 12, 1962, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. Translation mine.

as senator would be "proof for Canadians of non-Anglo-Saxon origin that the possibility of occupying a higher post is open to all qualified Canadians, no matter their place of birth."[11]

Overall however, the focus of Romer's political work was not local affairs, but the liberation of Poland. Considering the feeling of powerlessness that must have resulted from the geopolitical distance that rendered most action ineffectual in advance, but also the difficulties in mediating between the different organizations of the diaspora, which seemed to be in constant strife, this must have been tedious and thankless work. A strictly confidential exchange of letters between Romer and the representatives of the National Treasure Commission in Western Canada from the early 1970s reveals important disagreements between different Polish groups in Canada, as well as a serious trust problem between the Canadian and British Polish communities.

Another interesting collection of letters dates from 1972. It is addressed to higher representatives of the Canadian Polish Congress and the National Treasure Commission, whom Romer was trying to convince to work together to unite the Polish diasporas in Canada and the United States in the context of a strategically important political moment: the 1972 presidential election, in which Richard Nixon ran for a second mandate. In his correspondence with Antoni Mazewski, the president of the American Polish Congress, Romer pleaded with him to effect a rapprochement with the Congress' Canadian counterpart, so that together they might have a better chance at pressuring Nixon to speak out against Moscow's efforts to push through its policy of exclusive influence in Central European countries in its sphere of influence.

In most cases, the only possible avenue for political action was raising awareness about the actions of the Polish government, or symbolically protesting them. Romer worked hard to ensure that the Canadian Polonia not remain silent in the face of repression in Poland. Evidence of this type of work includes personal copies of documents such as: the resolution of the Canadian Polonia against the repressions towards labourers in Poland in 1970; a press release announcing a public demonstration of Polish organizations

11 Draft of Tadeusz Romer's letter to the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, [date illegible], Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

in Montreal; or the protest speech that Romer wrote for the same occasion. The archive also contains copies of letters to the editors of the main Quebec newspapers imploring them to publish articles about the situation in Eastern Europe. One particularly precious artefact is a short 1977 exchange of letters between Romer and the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, who was living in the United Kingdom at the time, attempting to coordinate certain protest actions in Canada and Europe.

Lastly, during his time in Montreal Romer also continued to pursue humanitarian engagements, albeit on a much smaller scale than during the war. I suggested earlier that the goal of diplomacy in Romer's view was to help others. Romer's correspondence is a source of information on his efforts in this direction, some of which were more successful than others. Among his successes was the aid he provided to Poles who, for one reason or another, had found themselves in precarious financial circumstances in Canada. The many letters of thanks in the collection bear witness to how needed this help was, and to how much time Romer put into finding funds to help these individuals. Less successful, unfortunately, for political reasons, were his efforts to repatriate Poles who had been forced into exile in the Soviet Union[12].

Romer's documents in the archives of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada allow for a better understanding of his life and character, as shaped by his humanist values. In the light they shed on the comparatively small and monotone undertakings of his life as an emigrant, these materials show the extraordinary continuity of his ethical stance throughout his life. Although in some ways standing up for his values was undoubtedly easier now that his life was not in danger, in another sense it must have also been harder. As an immigrant to a prosperous, peaceful country so far removed from the place he came from, Romer must have had the sense that nothing he did would go down in history as a heroic action, that none of his actions would change the course of history; yet, he worked tirelessly and never

12 Thousands of Polish citizens were forcefully resettled by the Soviet Union during World War II and found themselves cut off from their families, with no way to return home after the war, as the Soviet authorities refused to release them. Upon hearing of this while he was still the ambassador to Japan in 1941, Romer began compiling the names and locations of these migrants in order to reestablish contact with their families in Poland, and to begin political efforts to free them. He was eventually forced to relinquish this work in the 1960s, after years of bitter disappointment at the inaction of international and local authorities. Some information about this can be found here: www.tadeuszromer.com.

doubted the necessity and urgency of his labours. I leave Romer the last word, quoting from a letter written to an old friend a few years before his death:

> Dear Alfred, I don't know if it's the same in Toronto, but here in Montreal I am sensing among our intelligentsia an unmistakable feeling of growing hopelessness in Polish matters. I'm afraid that the perception that, for the foreseeable future, nothing of value can be done, is becoming entrenched. This is of course an oversimplification and a kind of laziness in reasoning that leads to an all-too-comfortable laziness. It is with this in mind that, in light of the upcoming conference, I've prepared a paper entitled "How I see the role and destiny of the Polish Nation at the end of the twentieth century." I begin with the premise that there is a continuity of purpose, of mission and of ideology between what we call the "Great Emigration" [in the first half of the nineteenth century] and our own generation, and I explain that considering the current situation in Poland, our role as emigrants in the free world remains important, urgent and effective. I go on to show that, contrary to what one might think, our situation is not that desperate, because the stance of the majority of the population in Poland, including the young generation, [...] remains right despite political, economic, and police pressure. The role of Russia in the world, on the other hand, is based on curtailing freedom, it operates thanks to the power of bayonets, of prisons and of deportations, which on the whole is a very shaky foundation. Would you be so kind as to assist me with the organization of my talk? In December I will be eighty years old. I'm afraid that, at my age, I will be quite a curious sight at the conference. But what can you do? One must cut one's coat according to one's cloth.[13]

13 Letter from Tadeusz Romer to Alfred Sas-Korczyński, November 11, 1974, Tadeusz Romer Archive, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. Translation mine.

The Tadeusz Romer Collection at Library and Archives Canada

Christine Barrass
Senior Archivist, Library and Archives Canada

In 1974, the former Public Archives of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada), approached Tadeusz Romer to ask if he was interested in donating his papers, and invited him to visit their facilities. Professor Romer, along with his wife and daughter, visited in April of 1975. At the conclusion of his visit, he decided he still needed more convincing before donating his material. Archivists managed to assuage his concerns regarding access conditions, and in 1976 he donated his papers, becoming one of the earlier donors to the Public Archives' fledgling National Ethnic Archives program.

The Romer collection is a treasure trove that documents his extensive diplomatic career, as well as his academic career in Canada. Carrying official documents from posting to posting, Romer accumulated correspondence, memos, and reports that provide great detail about the diplomatic activities of the Polish government abroad, as well as the Polish government-in-exile. Also documented are his exhaustive efforts to find safe passage for many Polish refugees, the majority of whom were Jewish.

The material from his diplomatic career was microfilmed and digitized and is available online: http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_131585?usrlang=en. Some examples of documents from the collection follow.

AMBASADA
RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ [illegible]
w TOKIO

Tokio, le 30 mars 1940.

No. 49/J/8/40.

Monsieur le Ministre,

D'ordre de mon Gouvernement j'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement Impérial japonais ce qui suit:

Les autorités soviétiques d'occupation en Pologne procèdent actuellement à la confiscation générale des objets appartenant à l'Etat polonais ou aux ressortissants polonais et ayant une valeur historique ou artistique / tableaux, livres et manuscrits, argenteries, porcelaines, tapis etc./. Cette mesure constitue une violation flagrante de l'art. 46 al. 2 de l'annexe à la IV Convention de la Haye sur les lois et coutumes de la guerre sur terre, dont la teneur est la suivante:

"La propriété privée ne peut pas être confisquée"

ainsi que de l'art. 56 de l'annexe à ladite Convention ainsi conçu:

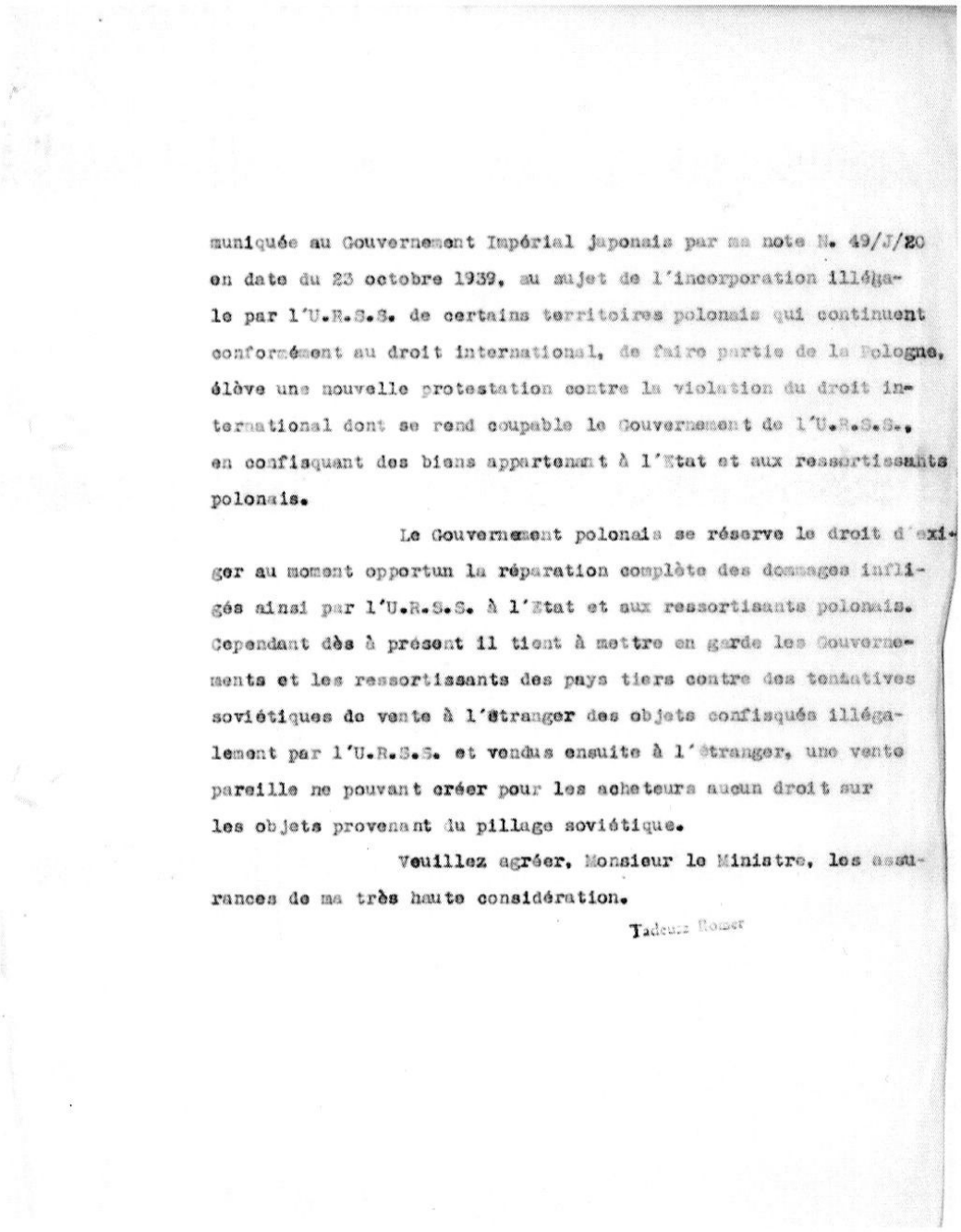
"Les biens des communes, ceux des établissements consacrés aux cultes, à la charité et à l'instruction, aux arts et aux sciences, même appartenant à l'Etat, seront traités comme la propriété privée.

Toute saisie, destruction ou dégradation intentionnelle de semblables établissements, de monuments historiques, d'oeuvres d'art et de science, est interdite et doit être poursuivie".

Le Gouvernement polonais se référant à sa protestation com-

Son Excellence
Monsieur Hachiro Arita
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
à Tokio.

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 10, 1937–1940



muniquée au Gouvernement Impérial japonais par ma note N. 49/J/20 en date du 23 octobre 1939, au sujet de l'incorporation illégale par l'U.R.S.S. de certains territoires polonais qui continuent conformément au droit international, de faire partie de la Pologne, élève une nouvelle protestation contre la violation du droit international dont se rend coupable le Gouvernement de l'U.R.S.S., en confisquant des biens appartenant à l'Etat et aux ressortissants polonais.

Le Gouvernement polonais se réserve le droit d'exiger au moment opportun la réparation complète des dommages infligés ainsi par l'U.R.S.S. à l'Etat et aux ressortisants polonais. Cependant dès à présent il tient à mettre en garde les Gouvernements et les ressortissants des pays tiers contre des tentatives soviétiques de vente à l'étranger des objets confisqués illégalement par l'U.R.S.S. et vendus ensuite à l'étranger, une vente pareille ne pouvant créer pour les acheteurs aucun droit sur les objets provenant du pillage soviétique.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma très haute considération.

Tadeusz Romer

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 10, 1937–1940

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 10, 1937–1940

This letter, written by Ambassador Romer to the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Hachiro Arita, discusses the looting and destruction of Polish cultural heritage by the invading Soviets, specifically the theft of art, books and archival manuscripts and other items. Between the Germans and the Soviets, a significant portion of the cultural heritage of Poland was plundered during the Second World War. Romer warns the minister against purchasing these illegally obtained items from the Soviets, indicating that such a sale would not give the purchaser ownership of the items.

Tokio, dnia 5 marca 1941r.

Pocztą lotniczą z San Francisco

R.165/41

Zabiera p. Schenker na Tatsuta maru 5.3.41 R

Mój Drogi,

Korzystam z wyjazdu na statku japońskim całej grupy naszych obywateli , ażeby pośpieszniejszą drogą skreślić parę słów do Ciebie. Przypuszczam, że nadejdą one jeszcze przed moim listem z 28 lutego skierowanym amerykańską pocztą dyplomatyczną. Przyniesie Ci ona odpisy moich raportów w sprawach - pomijając politykę - chwilowo dla mnie najbardziej palących, jak napływający tu uchodźcy i jak opieka syberyjska.

Co do pierwszej z tych spraw to skupiło się już w tej chwili w Japonii około 1300 Żydów obywateli polskich, wyczekujących na możliwość dalszego wyjazdu. Posiadają oni jedynie tranzytowe wizy japońskie, które wszakże wydawane im były bardzo liberalnie i są tu również liberalnie i życzliwie traktowane, co pozwala im na przedłużanie pobytu w miarę potrzeby, ponad normę. Międzynarodowe organizacje żydowskie łożą na tych ludzi ogromne sumy , tak że strona materialna przyczynia mi stosunkowo mniej kłopotu niż wizowa i komunikacyjna. Robię jednak co mogę by umożliwić szybkie rozlokowanie po świecie jaknajwiększej ilości tych osób, bowiem od ich wyjazdu z Japonii uzależniona jest w dużym stopniu zgoda rządu japońskiego na przyjazd tutaj, znowu na prawach tranzytu , tym razem mniej licznych, ale bliżej nas obchodzących grup czysto polskich, pozostałych na Wileńszczyźnie w dużym niebezpieczeństwie. Sytuacja tam jest taka, że władze sowieckie dały do wyboru, albo opcję na rzecz obywatelstwa miejscowego, co zamyka wszelkie perspektywy na dalszy wyjazd, i pociąga za sobą dla młodzieży obowiązek służby wojskowej, albo konieczność natychmiastowego wyjazdu, z pozbawieniem wszelkich praw do mieszkania , zarobkowania jednym słowem do egzystencji. Trzecią alternatywą jest tylko zesłanie. W tych warunkach całe mnóstwo osób musiało ulec przymusowi inni zaś rozpaczliwie starali się o wyjazd. Byłem tu poprostu zasypany telegramami błagającymi mnie o ratunek. Dowodem niesłychanego bałaganu sowieckiego jest okoliczność, że przepuszczono wiele telegramów adresowanych do mnie jak najoficjalniej jako do Ambasadora R.P.. Zapoczątkowaną już akcję wyciągania całego szeregu osób wskazanych mi przez Londyn lub Sztokholm albo notowanych tutaj, prowadzę nadal z dużym wysiłkiem. Dopomóc mi w tym możesz , wyjednując w Departamencie Stanu możliwie najliberalniejsze traktowanie wiz dla obywateli polskich. Zresztą przyznać muszę że jest już pod tym względem duży postęp i że placówki konsularne amerykańskie na tutejszym terenie od pewnego czasu traktują mniej rygorystycznie podania obywateli polskich.

Wśród osób które wyjeżdżają tym statkiem znajduje się dr. Oskar Schenker, sędzia grodzki z Małopolski, który zamieszka z bratem narazie w Los Angeles 475, S.New Hampshire Ave., c/o Jan Erteszek. Był on tu nam naprawdę pomocny i oddał w akcji uchodźczej

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941

duże usługi. Na wypadek gdyby mógł Ci się przydać do jakiejś pracy polskiej w Stanach, załączam odpis jego podania do Ministra Sprawiedliwości R.P. w Londynie w odpowiedzi na zarządzenie dotyczące rejestracji prawników. Jest to Żyd całkowicie spolonizowany.

Co do naszych zesłańców na Syberii, to poza sygnalizowaną Wam już uprzednio obywatelką amerykańską p.Kochańską, która wydobyła się z Z.S.R.R. po 6-ściu miesięcznym zesłaniu i udała się ostatnio do Chicago, prześlizgnęła się nam tu przed kilku dniami między palcami niepostrzeżenie druga Polka z amerykańskim paszportem niejaka pani Przybylska z małym dzieckiem, która również podobno wydarła się z Syberii i wyjechała stąd do San Francisco 2 b.m. na s/s"Prezydent Coolidge". Niestety nie zdołaliśmy na czas jej odkryć i przesłuchać.

Korespondencja moja z zesłańcami rozszerza się z dnia na dzień i doprowadzi niebawem, jak przypuszczam do skonstruowania bardzo pożytecznej sieci osób zaufania w poszczególnych ośrodkach zesłańczych. Wzmoże to wybitnie naszą akcję ewidencyjną i przygotuje akcję pomocy na szeroką skalę w którą nie przestaję jednak wierzyć.

O sytuacji politycznej pisałem do Ciebie w innej drodze, z mego dzisiejszego listu, podyktowanego w wielkim pośpiechu, przekonasz się, że pracujemy tu ciągle pod parą, i że w związku z tym zależy mi bardzo na kontakcie z Tobą. Liczę więc na wzajemność listowną a tymczasem ściskam dłoń Twoją najserdeczniej

R 5/3/41

J.Wielmożny Pan
Jan Ciechanowski
Ambasador Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej
w Waszyngtonie.

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941

Taking advantage of the fact that a Japanese ship was on its way to the United States, Ambassador Romer sent this piece of correspondence to his counterpart at the Polish embassy in the United States. It was becoming increasingly difficult to secure visas for Polish refugees to exit Japan, and Romer was exploring all options. In this letter he describes how he is flooded with telegrams requesting his help, and asks his American counterpart for help in obtaining visas to the United States. He asks him if he could possibly find some work for a former Jewish judge who has managed to gain transit to the United States. He writes also of his efforts to assist Siberian refugees transiting through Japan and the ongoing work to build a network of trusted individuals in various deportee centres. It was his hope that these networks would help lay the foundations for a large-scale rescue mission.

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY
TOKYO

June 6, 1941.

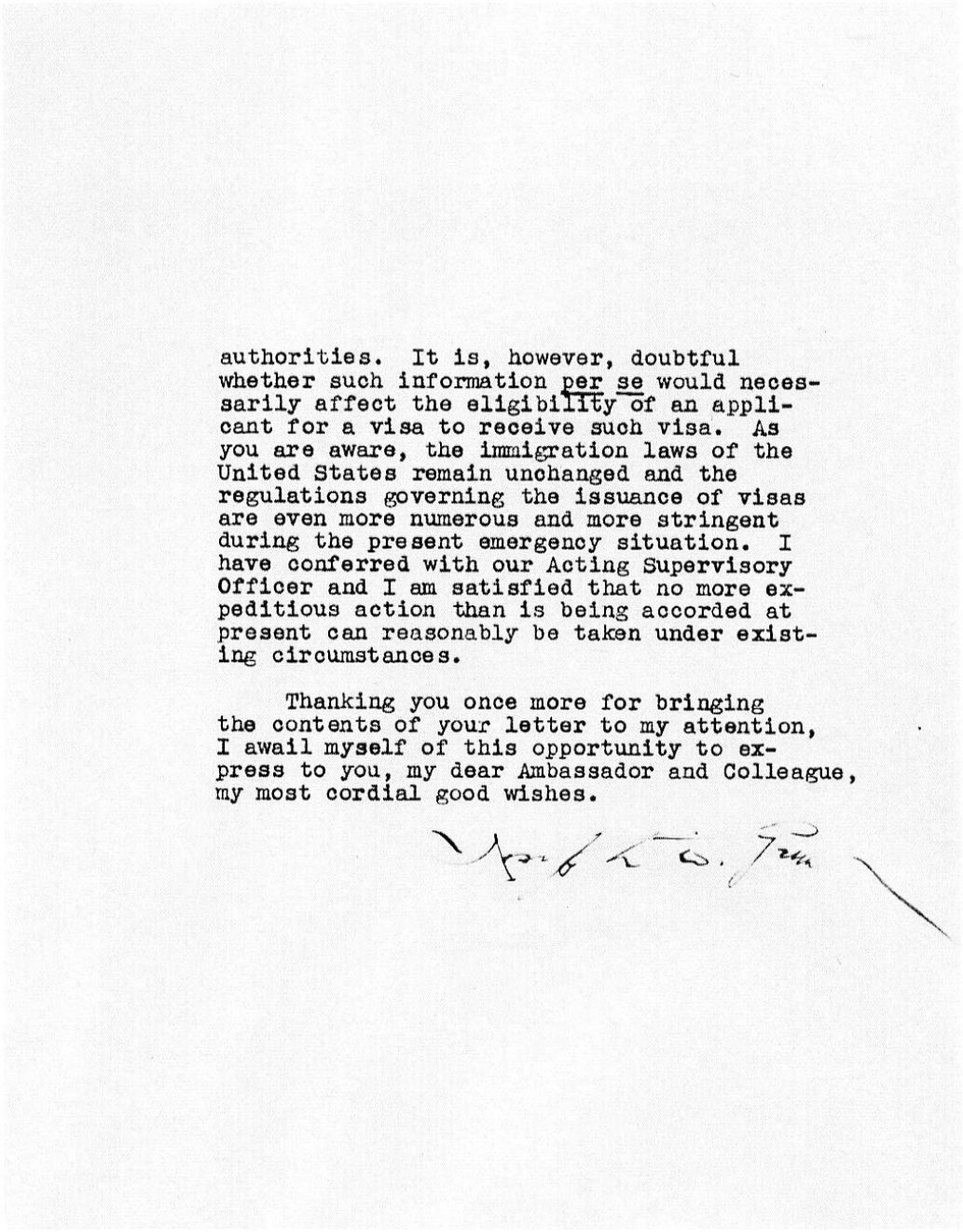
My dear Ambassador and Colleague:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 2, 1941, regarding the general question of Polish refugees who are applying for visas to enter the United States. I have noted with especial care the statement to the effect that among American circles you are attributed with the intention of sending undesirable elements from among the Polish refugees in Japan to the United States and I have made inquiries which have satisfied me that rumors such as that to which you refer do not in fact exist in American official circles. It goes without saying, of course, that not only your personal sentiments but the interest of your own country would make it impossible for such rumors to have any foundation whatsoever in fact.

I was very much interested in your statement that you are prepared always to give the interested authorities of friendly countries the opportunity of profiting from the information which your consular service has at its disposal concerning Polish refugees. Such information might be of considerable interest in certain instances to the American consular

His Excellency
M. Thadée de Romer,
The Polish Ambassador,
T o k y o .

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 17, May–June 1941



authorities. It is, however, doubtful whether such information per se would necessarily affect the eligibility of an applicant for a visa to receive such visa. As you are aware, the immigration laws of the United States remain unchanged and the regulations governing the issuance of visas are even more numerous and more stringent during the present emergency situation. I have conferred with our Acting Supervisory Officer and I am satisfied that no more expeditious action than is being accorded at present can reasonably be taken under existing circumstances.

Thanking you once more for bringing the contents of your letter to my attention, I avail myself of this opportunity to express to you, my dear Ambassador and Colleague, my most cordial good wishes.

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 17, May–June 1941

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 17, May–June 1941

This letter from the American ambassador in Tokyo, J.C. Grew, was written in response to a letter from Ambassador Romer in which he says he has heard that among Americans in Tokyo there was a general belief that amongst the Polish refugees there were "undesirable elements." Concerned this would have an impact on the refugees the United States were choosing for visas, Romer went so far as to suggest that they would be welcome to consult with them and profit from their own consular knowledge about individual refugees. Grew's response indicates that while this offer is appreciated, consultation with the Polish embassy would most likely not have an influence on the issuance of American visas.

TELEGRAM SZYFROWY N. 113 DO MINISTERSTWA SPRAW ZAGRANICZNYCH R.P.

W LONDYNIE

Tokio, dnia 26 października 41.

Receptus telegram szyfrowy N. 133. Ukończywszy likwidację ambasady w możliwie najlepszych warunkach dzięki bardzo uprzejmemu zachowaniu się władz japońskich wyjeżdżam dzisiaj z personelem archiwami i kompletem szyfrów do Szanghaju. Cichy kontakt z rządem japońskim zapewniony; ochrona obywateli polskich w Japonii zapowiada się możliwie zadowalająco w ramach zainicjowanej przezemnie organizacji społecznej.

Zamknięcia konsulatu polskiego w Charbinie pomimo pogłosek dotychczas nie notyfikowano. Probuję przeciwdziałać ale ponieważ przewidujemy że zachodzi tu tylko zwłoka więc nasze przygotowania w toku należytym

/-/ Romer

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 19, October 1941

MG31-D68, Volume 2, Japan – file 19, October 1941

The Polish embassy operated officially in Japan until October 4, 1941. Staff were given until October 26 to leave. Ambassador Romer spent those few weeks frantically preparing to close the embassy and transport all embassy staff and their families to Shanghai, where he would assume his position as the Polish ambassador on a special mission to the Far East. The telegram above, number 113, was sent to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London by Ambassador Romer hours before leaving Japan to sail for Shanghai. In the telegram, he says that he was able to complete the liquidation of the embassy under the best possible conditions thanks to the cooperation of the Japanese authorities. Romer indicates that he has with him the embassy's 10 archives and a set of cipher codes, both of which he is bringing to Shanghai. It is this practice of bringing his archives with him from posting to posting that allows historians to study the activities of Ambassador Romer over time.

in England, have also arrived in Tokyo and from here are going, as opportunities offer, to the United States or to Canada. Of the persons referred to in this paragraph, a total of 74 has already been able to embark for various destinations, as follows:

34 for Canada, especially in transit for English possessions
29 for various countries of Central and S. America
4 for South Africa
5 for Shanghai and
2 for Australia.

Of the 126 Polish refugees who are now sojourning in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kobe about 60 are in serious difficulties as to admission to the country of their choice. Among them there are persons not only indisputably recommendable but also disposing of personal resources which would permit them to support themselves suitably for the duration of the War and to live in such a way as to be profitable both to their motherland and to the country which will offer them its hospitality.

III. DIFFICULTIES WITH REGARD TO THE PROBLEM OF THE POLISH REFUGEES IN THE FAR EAST.

In the meantime, the situation is becoming from day to day more difficult for the refugees, who are not yet placed. Menaced by the increasing influx of refugees from Europe of all kinds, among others Jews from Germany, Austria and the Baltic States, the various countries of America are shutting their doors more and more inexorably against them. Visas of definite entry have almost ceased to be given to refugees. The granting of visas of transit and even visas of temporary or touristic sojourn are strictly subordinated to the possession of a visa of immigration or abode in some other neighboring or not dis-

Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941.

tant country which offers sufficient guarantees. Cases are multiplying in which authorities of the ports of debarcation refuse to recognize consular visas regularly drawn up and refuse to admit passengers already arrived on the spot, which sometimes obliges the steamship companies to bear the cost of carrying them back. For this reason the said companies are taking novel precautions, increasing their demands and imposing new burdens on passengers. By repercussion the Japanese authorities are not only becoming much more difficult about delivering their visas of transit but are urging the refugees more and more not to delay in their transit through the country.

All these difficulties weight equally on the Polish refugees, despite their insignificant number compared with the mass of the others. They apply not only to the few dozens of persons abovementioned who are waiting in Japan to go to their destination but especially to those, certainly far more numerous, who are at present about to come to Japan by the Trans-Siberian or who still have chances of escaping the Hell of Soviet domination. It is difficult to state precisely their number, which depends on the unpredictable and often capricious attitude of the Russian authorities and also on the hitherto remarkable goodwill of the Japanese authorities.

Let us venture, as a guide, to estimate the number at 500; and admit the probability that the arrival of Polish refugees, at least in compact groups will not be tolerated much longer than the next spring by the Soviet authorities, who, as they get their administration into better order in Lithuania, will not be slow in perceiving the inconveniences which this Polish emigration will raise up for them. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that among this number there may well be included elements of great value for Poland.

Thus, for example, the arrival is mentioned, in the near future, of the familly of a general who has a command in the Polish Army in England, an arrival which may save this family from a very real danger. It is also hoped to save in the same way two children, whose father a high officer of prominent position in the

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Polish Army, disappeared during the campaign of September 1939 and whose mother, a very distinguished deputy of the Polish Diet, has been languishing for long months in a Bolshevik prison. A certain number of young men, desirous, despite of all the risks, of joining the colors of the national army figure also among the persons announced. Among others may be mentioned the names of renowned Polish artists, some University savants, politicians, landowners, industrials and merchants of good reputation and some representative of the liberal professions. A large proportion will probably consist of women and children.

If, on the other hand, we could succeed in carrying out an infinitely more difficult enterprise at which we, on the Polish side, have been working for many months, up to the present, alas, without great hope, a number of unfortunates of national and intellectual value far above the average might without doubt be withdrawn to foreign refuges from their places of deportation in Asiatic Russia where they are now dying.

IV. CONCLUSIONS.

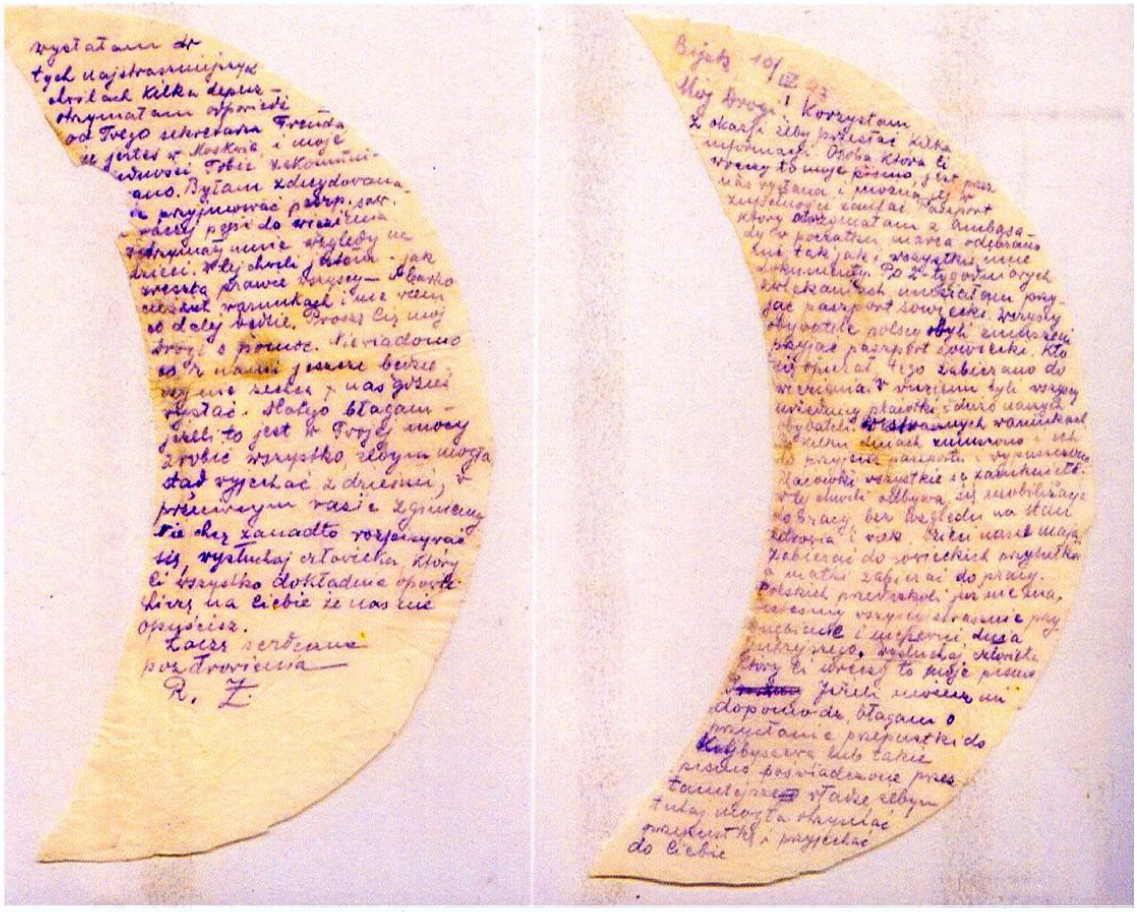
The search for the most appropriate practical solutions of the problem which interests us, demands, in order to facilitate the previous definition of some principles which we shall test.

A special treatment to be accorded by the Allied countries to the Polish refugees in the Far East is justified for various reasons. Their number is very much smaller than that of the refugees from other countries, and they have no need of large material assistance, the more so because, as a rule, they possess connections abroad which facilitate their leading an independent existence. They limit their desires to seeking an asylum for the duration of the war, advantageous, because of their activities, not only to themselves, but equal-

Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941.

Volume 2, Japan – file 16, January–April 1941.

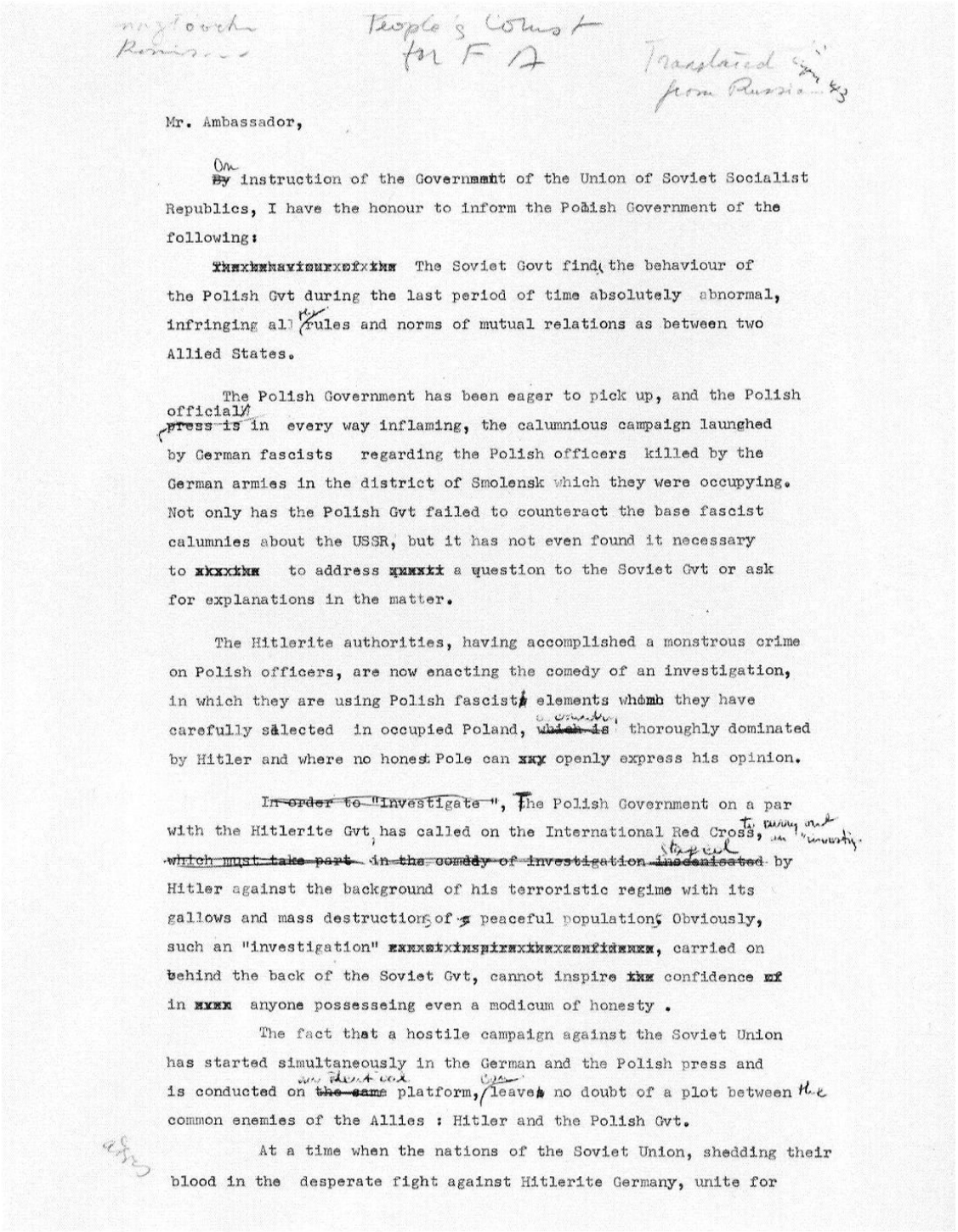
As more Polish refugees entered Japan, it fell upon Ambassador Romer to explore safe haven options for them for the duration of the war. Appealing to his colleagues in the Canadian, Australian and British embassies in Tokyo "on [a] purely informal and personal ground," Romer drafted a report entitled "The Problem of the Polish Refugees Coming to the Far East". This particular document speaks to the plight of the Polish refugees coming through Japan and the work Romer was doing on their behalf. He breaks the report into four chapters: the origin of the problem; the current situation; the future challenges; and possible solutions. In chapter 3, the three pages of which are pictured above, he points out the ever-increasing difficulties the refugees are facing not only in terms of getting visas, but of having existing visas recognized by other ports of entry.



Volume 2, Polish Deportees – file 2, 1-16 April 1943 15

Volume 2, Polish Deportees – file 2, 1-16 April 1943 15

As of April 1943, Romer was the Polish ambassador to the USSR, stationed in Kuybyshev. This letter, written on April 10, 1943, was smuggled to Ambassador Romer in the visor of a cap. Written by a Polish citizen deported by Soviet authorities, it briefly details her current struggles and the terrible conditions that she and her children are living under. Adults are being recruited to work, most likely for forced labour, and the children are being placed in Soviet facilities so that the parents can be made to work. The writer's future is bleak and uncertain, and she begs Romer for a transit visa to get to Kuybyshev.



Mr. Ambassador,

On instruction of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have the honour to inform the Polish Government of the following:

The Soviet Govt find the behaviour of the Polish Gvt during the last period of time absolutely abnormal, infringing all rules and norms of mutual relations as between two Allied States.

The Polish Government has been eager to pick up, and the Polish officially press is in every way inflaming, the calumnious campaign launghed by German fascists regarding the Polish officers killed by the German armies in the district of Smolensk which they were occupying. Not only has the Polish Gvt failed to counteract the base fascist calumnies about the USSR, but it has not even found it necessary to address a question to the Soviet Gvt or ask for explanations in the matter.

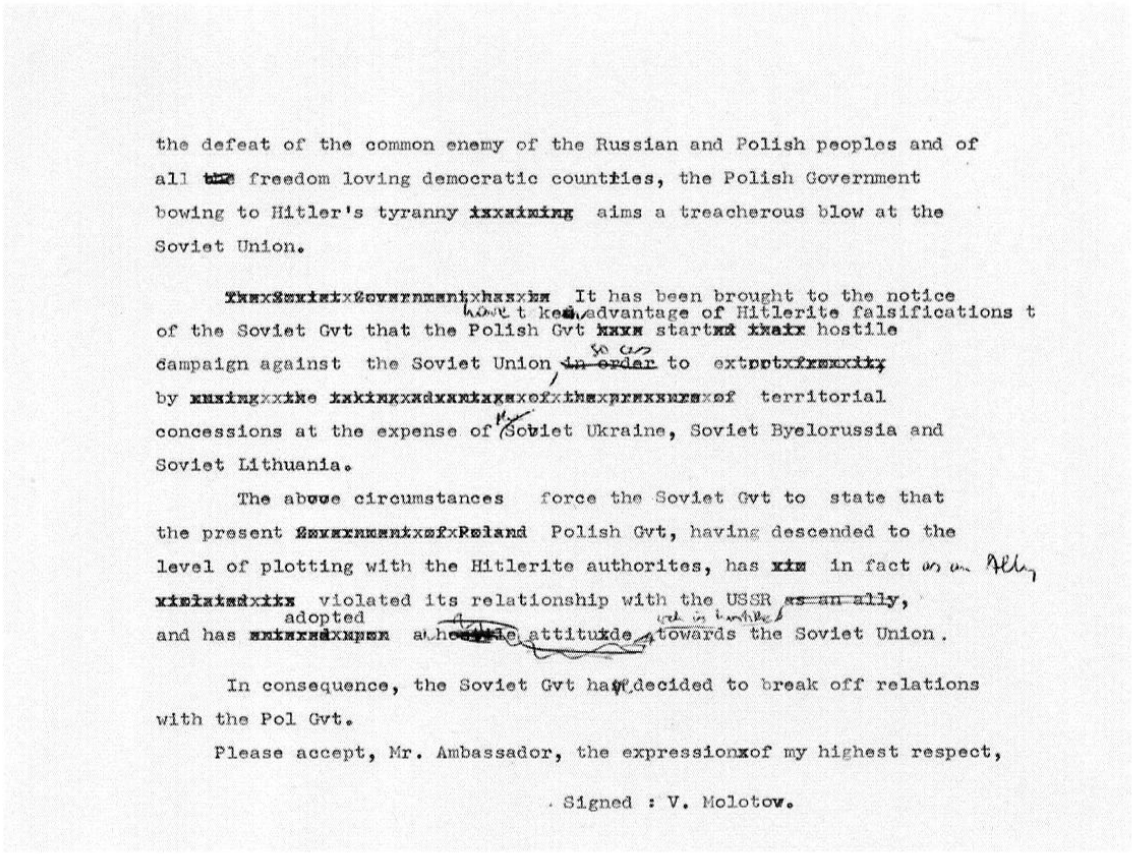
The Hitlerite authorities, having accomplished a monstrous crime on Polish officers, are now enacting the comedy of an investigation, in which they are using Polish fascist elements whom they have carefully selected in occupied Poland, which is thoroughly dominated by Hitler and where no honest Pole can openly express his opinion.

~~In order to "investigate"~~, The Polish Government on a par with the Hitlerite Gvt, has called on the International Red Cross, ~~which must take part in the comedy of investigation indecisted~~ by Hitler against the background of his terroristic regime with its gallows and mass destructions of peaceful populations. Obviously, such an "investigation", carried on behind the back of the Soviet Gvt, cannot inspire confidence in anyone possesseing even a modicum of honesty .

The fact that a hostile campaign against the Soviet Union has started simultaneously in the German and the Polish press and is conducted on ~~the same~~ platform, leaves no doubt of a plot between the common enemies of the Allies : Hitler and the Polish Gvt.

At a time when the nations of the Soviet Union, shedding their blood in the desperate fight against Hitlerite Germany, unite for

Volume 2, USSR General–file 3, January 1943–October 1944.



the defeat of the common enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples and of all freedom loving democratic countries, the Polish Government bowing to Hitler's tyranny aims a treacherous blow at the Soviet Union.

It has been brought to the notice of the Soviet Gvt that the Polish Gvt started hostile dampaign against the Soviet Union to by territorial concessions at the expense of Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania.

The above circumstances force the Soviet Gvt to state that the present Polish Gvt, having descended to the level of plotting with the Hitlerite authorites, has in fact violated its relationship with the USSR and has attitude towards the Soviet Union.

In consequence, the Soviet Gvt has decided to break off relations with the Pol Gvt.

Please accept, Mr. Ambassador, the expression of my highest respect,

Signed : V. Molotov.

Volume 2, USSR General–file 3, January 1943–October 1944.

Volume 2, USSR General–file 3, January 1943–October 1944.

On April 26, 1943, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish government-in-exile in London. They alleged that the Polish government, in collusion with the Germans, had asked for an investigation by the International Red Cross into the mass graves of Polish officers found in the Katyń Forest in Smolensk. The above document, a translation of the letter from the Soviet minister of foreign affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, was sent to Ambassador Romer in April 1943 and indicates their displeasure at what they saw as a campaign against the Soviet government. The letter finishes with the declaration that the Soviet government has decided to break off relations with the Polish government. It was not until many decades later, in 1990, that the Soviet government confirmed its responsibility for the massacre.

RW. SECRET. /Prof. Oskar LANGE/ w Moskwie. COPY.

May 17, Conference with Marshal Stalin and Mr.Molotov. Length: 2 hours, 20 minutes. Language: Russian. Also present Mr.Pavlov, who took notes of the conversation

Marshal Stalin started by asking me my impressions of the Polish army. I told him what I had seen and heard, and observed that the ideas of the soldiers and officers were more radical than those of the members of the Union of Polish Patriots. I pointed out that whereas the overwhelming majority of the soldiers are for nationalization of big industries and banking, the Union of Polish Patriots holds back on this point. I mentioned that, in particular, the Polish Communists are now the right wing of the Union of Polish Patriots /as compared with the Socialists and the Peasant Party/, and that they object to the demand for nationalization of big industries because they think this would undermine national unity. Stalin smiled and said, "That's because I've bawled them out". He added that he is very gratified to know that there is considerable demand for nationalization of big industries, and that he thinks that is very beneficial because it will serve to strengthen the power of the Polish government by providing it with a source of income independent of taxation. If the Polish people want to nationalize their big industries, its their business, but the Soviet Union refuses to put any pressure in this direction; on the contrary, it will lean backward. I observed that I had the impression that he underestimates the radicalism of the Polish people, and that the social composition of the Polish army in the USSR is not representative. It consists largely of government settlers and wealthier peasants. Once Poland is liberated, the Polish working class and the landless proletariat as well as the poorer peasants will become vocal. Stalin replied that he thinks the German occupation had destroyed class lines, particularly between poor and wealthy peasants. The reaction of the different social strata will be rather uniform.

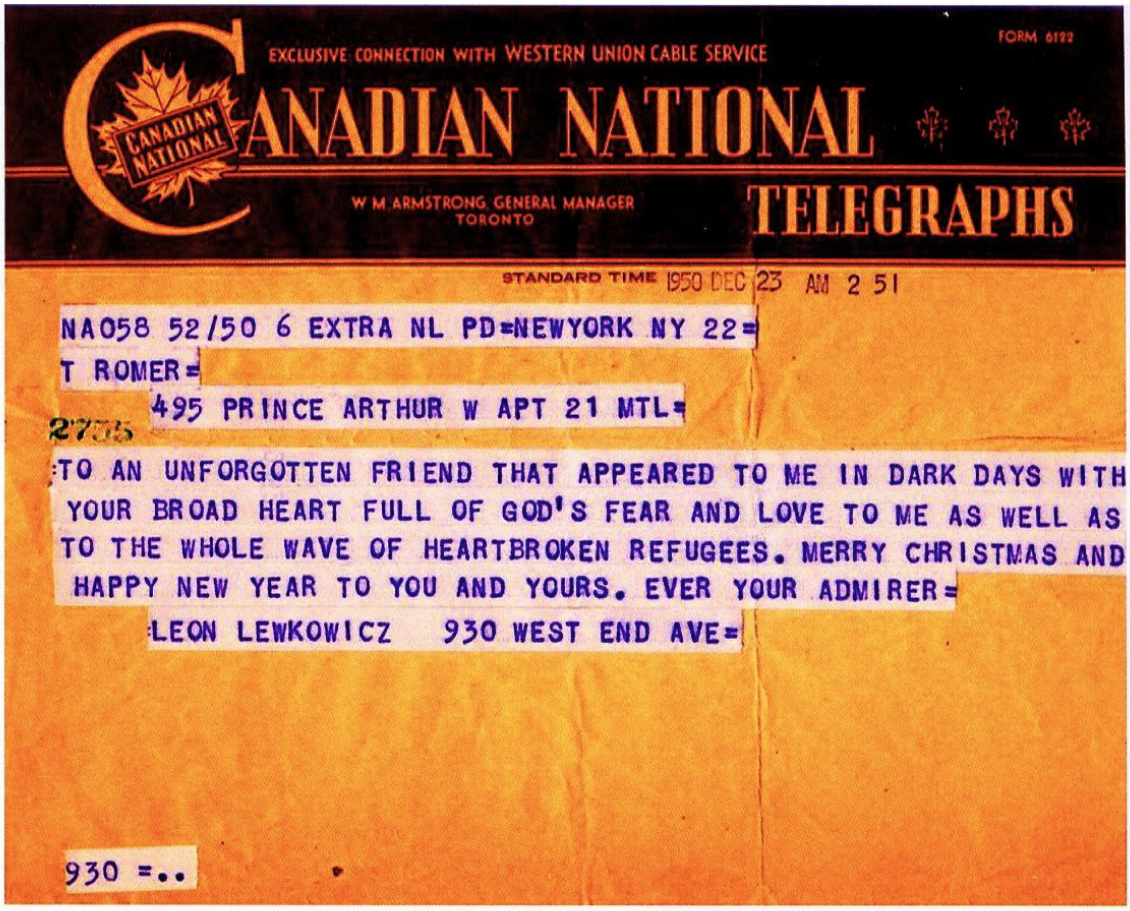
I pointed out that the soldiers in the Polish army complain very bitterly about the condition of their relatives in the interior of the Soviet Union. I told him that I consider the dissatisfaction to be reaching a crisis, unless something is done. Stalin replied that he is well aware of it, but there is a war on and that the condition of the Polish population is no worse than that of the Soviet people in similar walks of life. I told him that I know this fully and appreciate the difficulties of the situation, but there are certain special hardships to which the Poles are subject because they are refugees or deportees with no roots among the population. I pointed out further that even if some special privileges should be created for the Poles, this would be in the interest of the Soviet Union. When the refugees and deportees return to Poland, they will tell stories of their treatment in the Soviet Union, and these tales will be a potent factor in shaping Polish public opinion with regard to the Soviets. If these stories will be entirely of deprivations and sufferings, the Polish public will think of the Soviet Union very adversely. Strong measures on behalf of the Polish population taken now will create a much more favourable attitude. Stalin said that this was true, and fortunately now the economic situation in the Soviet Union is improving rapidly and special measures may be taken. /The next day Stalin called in Wanda Wasilewska, told her that in view of the improving economic condition, improvement in the situation of the Poles is possible, and that the Union of Polish Patriots should prepare plans for improvement and submit them to the Soviet government/.

We returned to the question of Poland. Stalin said that he wants Poland as an ally, and therefore is interested that Poland be strong both internally and externally. He is ready to help the Poles build an army, and he wants to contribute with arms and equipment for 1.000.000 men. It is by no means the intention of the Soviet government to force Poland into the position of a small and weak buffer state. On the contrary, after the defeat of Germany, Poland will play a leading role in Europe. I asked whether he did not consider that the territorial demand of the Union of Polish Patriots with regard to Germany is exaggerated. I observed that even the demand for East Prussia has considerable opposition in American and British public opinion, but that I think the German nation will swallow the loss of East Prussia and Upper Silesia. The demands of the Union of Polish Patriots, however, go much farther and there might be some reason to fear that if granted, they would hurt German national feeling so deeply as to perpetuate German desires for revenge and make impossible the absorption of Germany into a new European order. Stalin answered that he did not care. There are two possibilities: either the peace will be such that it will create no desire for German revenge, or it will be such as to make German revenge impossible. In the latter case, it is bound to hurt German national feelings. The first course would be too risky to embark upon and almost certainly Germany would start another war of conquest within a generation. Stalin then went on to describe the history of German wars of aggression, and he

Volume 3, Negotiations with Stalin and other Soviet leaders, 1944.

Volume 3, Negotiations with Stalin and other Soviet leaders, 1944.

Professor Oskar Lange, a Polish-born professor of law and economics, emigrated to the United States in 1937 and became a citizen in 1943. In 1944, Lange travelled to the Soviet Union at Stalin's request so that Stalin could speak with him personally, seeing him as a person of pro-Soviet sympathies. It was during this visit that the conversation recorded in this 4-page document took place between Lange, Stalin, and Molotov. They discussed, in broad terms, the Polish Army, the Polish government-in-exile in London, and the formation of a new Polish state following the war. This document may have been given to Romer by his American ambassadorial colleagues while he was minister of foreign affairs.



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TO AN UNFORGOTTEN FRIEND THAT APPEARED TO ME IN DARK DAYS WITH YOUR BROAD HEART FULL OF GOD'S FEAR AND LOVE TO ME AS WELL AS TO THE WHOLE WAVE OF HEARTBROKEN REFUGEES. MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOURS. EVER YOUR ADMIRER=

LEON LEWKOWICZ 930 WEST END AVE=

930 =..

Volume 2, Polish Deportees in the USSR – file 4, Reports and Maps, 1941–1943

Volume 2, Polish Deportees in the USSR – file 4, Reports and Maps, 1941–1943

A telegram sent to former Ambassador Romer from a grateful former refugee at Christmas.

STATEMENT MADE BY FORMER AMBASSADOR OF POLAND TO RUSSIA TADEUSZ ROMER TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE KATYN FOREST MASSACRE DURING PUBLIC HEARING OF FEBRUARY 6, 1952 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

When I was Polish Ambassador in Japan, one of the main problems I had to deal with was the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Polish deportees in Soviet Russia who were deprived of any assistance whatsoever on the part of the Polish authorities, owing to the fact that diplomatic and consular relations between the two countries were broken off after the invasion by Russia on September 17, 1939, of the Eastern part of Poland. In the first part of 1941 I had published already a first list of ~~over~~ nearly ten thousand names and addresses of Polish deportees in Russia, with whom some kind of contact had been established. Already then, in the letters I was receiving, I could find many signs of fear on the part of the families in regard to the fate of the Polish prisoners in the three camps of Koziełsk, Starobielsk and Ostaszkow.

When I came to Russia, as Polish Ambassador, in October 1942, the relations between the Russian and the Polish governments were already xxx seriously strained. The battle for Moscow was lost for the Germans, the tide of the battle for Stalingrad was changing in favor of the Soviets, the American supplies were flowing to Russia in mighty large quantities. The Polish-Russian agreement of July 1941, which had been subsequently enlarged during General Sikorski's visit to Russia in December of the same year, was becoming a liability to the Soviet Government owing to the favorable change of war events. The Soviet Government apparently considered those agreements as temporary expediencies.

My predecessor had left Moscow in July 1942, and in the meantime

Volume 3, Katyn – file 3, February–March 1952, 1971

a great number of Polish relief workers and representatives of the Polish Embassy throughout Russia were arrested and many offices closed, so that the vast relief organization planned for the Polish deportees in Soviet Russia was slowed, if not completely jeopardized.

The Polish army Corps formed in Russia under General Anders had to be withdrawn during the year of 1942 to the Middle East because of lack of food and adequate equipment. Notwithstanding the fact that this decision had been approved by Stalin himself, the Soviet Government bitterly criticized later on this move accusing the Poles that they were not willing to fight with their Russian comrades the common German enemy.

One of the main topics I had to examine on my arrival to ~~Moscow~~ Kuibyshev, in the light of previous correspondence, was the question of the missing 15,000 Polish war prisoners from the three above mentioned camps. Among them were top and high ranking Polish Army officers captured by the Russian in September-October 1939. The evidence/lists I had at that time proved that since the spring of 1940 no sign of life had come from those men to their families and that the correspondence had suddenly ceased. Among those prisoners were also well known scientists, politicians, lawyers, officers of the Police Corps, physicians, economists, and even clergymen, in other words the flower of Polish intelligentsia. These men were badly needed not only for our war effort but also in connection with future plans in liberated Poland. I hardly know of any family in Poland which was not alarmed by the fate of missing members of the family or friends.

I looked over the numerous minutes of conversations between Polish

Volume 3, Katyn – file 3, February–March 1952, 1971

diplomatic and military representatives in Soviet Russia when unsuccessful inquiries on the whereabouts of those prisoners were made. I was particularly struck by a remark that Beria and Merkulow, the top ranking Soviet security executives already in October 1940, made to Colonel Berling and to a small group of Polish officers who joined him. These were Beria's words at that time: ..... In regard to them we made a great mistake .....

My Embassy and myself we were receiving hundreds of letters from Poles anxiously inquiring over the fate of the disappeared men. I did not lose any occasion to question those arriving from remote Russian regions in order to trace any possible sign of evidence of the missing prisoners. Everything was in vain. I had no instructions to continue conversations on this subject with the Soviet Government, because we saw clearly after our numerous previous unsuccessful attempts that the Russians were unwilling to help us in finding these prisoners. Apart from that, I was mostly concerned over the fate of the Polish deportees numbering about one and a half million Polish citizens living in appalling conditions in remote regions of European and Asiatic Russia. The help of our Embassy in food, clothing, medical and other supplies, which were provided for some 270,000 of them, was threatened to be completely suppressed.

My line of thinking about the war prisoner problem was, on the basis of my studies, the following. There was no doubt for me already at that time that the great majority of these men were no more alive, because we had lacked sufficient evidence of all the deportees being spread all over the territo-

Volume 3, Katyn – file 3, February–March 1952, 1971

Volume 3, Katyn – file 3, February–March 1952, 1971

In 1952, the House of Representatives in Washington, DC, struck a Select Committee to investigate the Katyń Forest massacre and asked former ambassador Romer to testify. In the resulting six pages of testimony, three of which are pictured above, Romer claimed that the Polish government made numerous separate requests between 1940 and 1943 to the Russian government for information about the missing fifteen thousand Polish war prisoners, but did not get a reply until the Germans announced, on April 13, 1943, that they had discovered the mass graves at Katyń. During his testimony, Romer describes his thought process as he came to realize that the responsibility for the fate of the fifteen thousand men lay with the Russians. Assuming that they had been sent to an Arctic region and subsequently perished due to starvation and harsh conditions, he never suspected that they had been murdered. In a brief personal remark at the end of his testimony, Romer says that by testifying he was in pursuit of the truth and of promoting

Reflections on Writing Ambassador Tadeusz Romer's Diplomatic Biography

Beata Szubtarska
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Translation by Agnès Domanski

Tadeusz Romer[1] was a remarkable diplomat whose career in the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic spanned more than two decades. When he started, in 1919, the Polish state was being reborn after more than a century of partitions and the devastation of World War I. The year 1944, when he ended his service, saw the death of Poland's dreams of freedom. Romer's diplomatic work thus coincided with a period of Polish history that was equal parts difficult and fascinating: a period that saw the reconstitution of the state and its institutions, the laborious building of Poland's power and authority on the global stage, and the calamity of another war, which began while Romer was posted to faraway Tokyo. The period of the Second World War would bring Romer the biggest challenges of his career: the leadership of the most difficult diplomatic mission in Moscow and the job of minister of foreign affairs for a government tasked with fighting for Poland's postwar future. These painful experiences, coloured by a sense of failure, shaped his idea of diplomacy. Years after his work in the foreign service, Romer would state that "real, conscientious diplomacy is not a job like any other; it is an art, the

1 The original spelling of the name–Römer–was used until the 1920s, when a part of the family stopped using the umlaut to conform to Polish orthographical norms. "As was oftentimes the case in those days, the spelling of our family name changed several times [...]. The Saxon spelling with 'ö'–Römer–did catch on, and it stuck around until our generation. Despite this, the name was generally pronounced the Polish way, with a regular 'o.' A few of the family members, led by Mr. Eugeniusz Romer and including his younger brother Stanisław, my older brother Maciej and myself, upon meeting in Warsaw in 1925, decided to change the spelling of the family name to the Polish version, as had already been done for the pronunciation. We presented this decision, in writing, to the rest of the family. Antoni Römer of Janopol did not join us. However, my brother Maciej and I, who were at the time already doing our state service, started upon formalizing our citizenship by registering in the book of permanent residents of the City of Warsaw and, in accordance with the aforementioned decision, had all our identity documents and those of our families thenceforth made out with the Polish spelling of the name, 'Romer,' which is thus the version that is formally and legally correct." Excerpt of Tadeusz Romer's 1947 preface to *Eugeniusz Romer, Dzieje rodu Romerów na Inflantach i na Litwie* (Eugeniusz Romer. The Life and Times of the Romer Family in Livonia and Lithuania), 3. From the Romer family archive.

honest and selfless practice of which can influence the destinies of societies, or even of nations."[2]

Despite the crucial role that Romer played in Polish diplomacy and politics, for many years there were no book-length publications devoted to his efforts. It was my conviction that this had to change, that Ambassador Romer's life and work in the service of the Polish Republic during the extraordinary and extraordinarily arduous years of the reconstruction of the Polish state and World War II, warranted a monograph. My book *Niezwykłe misje. Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen* (Extraordinary missions. Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), Diplomat in a World of Wars and Dictatorships)[3] is the first to take up this mission. Romer's diplomatic activities took place in the years 1919–1944, but the book's timeframe stretches beyond those dates to embrace the whole of his life.

The goal of this article is to present information about Tadeusz Romer's life and work, in two parts. The first part is about my book on this exceptional Polish diplomat and his achievements. The second part is about his private life. Family was incredibly important to the main character of this story, and that is why I have decided to include my research in this area.

Researching Tadeusz Romer's life story: introduction

My research interests had for many years centered on international relations, twentieth-century Polish foreign policy and diplomacy. In addition, I had always striven to put the human aspect of history at the center of my work, to remember the individuals who, in one way or another, were the subjects of politics. Already during my master's studies in the 1990s, I was particularly interested in Polish-Russian relations. The first years following the political transformation in Poland, which is when I started studying history, offered opportunities to fill in some of the "blanks" that had accumulated in the historiography of the Polish People's Republic. One of these blanks was

2 Excerpt from a March 17, 1977 talk, "Złudzenia brytyjskie co do planów ZSRR w toku drugiej wojny światowej" ("Soviet plans and British illusions during World War II"), given by Romer during a Polish-language lecture series organized by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in 1976–1977 at McGill University. From the Romer family archive.

3 Beata Szubtarska, Niezwykłe misje. *Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), dyplomata RP w świecie dyktatur i wojen* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014).

the lot of Polish citizens who had been victims of the Stalinist regime. My inquiries at the archives of the Sybirak association's historical commission (Archiwum Komisji Historycznej Związku Sybiraków) in Łódź, where I consulted exiles' accounts of deportation to Siberia, as well as my personal meetings with deportees and my recording of their memories, allowed me to write and defend my master's thesis, "Skradzione dzieciństwo. Losy dzieci polskich w Kazachstanie w latach 1940–1942"[4] ("Stolen childhood. The fate of Polish children in Kazakhstan, 1940–1942"). In this thesis I touched on, among other things, the question of the relief efforts organized by the Polish embassy (first established in 1941) in the USSR. This was the first time that I encountered Tadeusz Romer in my scholarly research. The decision to conduct a detailed study of the activities of the Polish diplomatic mission in Moscow-Kuybyshev during World War II in my doctoral dissertation followed naturally from the abovementioned investigations. I published the results of my research on this subject in five academic articles, as well as in Ambasada polska w ZSRR w latach 1941–1943[5] (The Polish Embassy in the USSR in the Years 1941–1943), the book that resulted from the dissertation. It was the first, and remains to this day the only, publication about the activities of the Polish embassy in the USSR in the years 1941–1943. It considered the embassy from the legal and administrative point of view of its establishment and of the determination of its duties and of its organizational structure, as well as from that of its material and technical circumstances, its finances and its staffing. It also took up the question of the embassy's contacts with Soviet government representatives and with the Main Staff of the Polish Army under the leadership of General Władysław Anders. The topic that received perhaps the most attention in the book was–as far as the sources available at the time allowed–that of the embassy's outreach activities, especially those relating to welfare and assistance. I also devoted a good deal of space to the two heads of the mission, Stanisław Kot and Tadeusz Romer. An important part of my

4 Master's thesis "Skradzione dzieciństwo. Losy dzieci polskich w Kazachstanie w latach 1940–1942," written under the supervision of Dr. Albin Głowacki, defended on September 1, 1997 at the University of Łódź Historical Institute.

5 The Polish People's Republic's embassy in the USSR was the subject of my doctoral dissertation, supervised by Prof. Albin Głowacki and defended at the University of Łódź on June 4, 2003. External examiners: Prof. Wojciech Materski (Polish Academy of Sciences) and Prof. Marek Mądzik (Marie Curie Skłodowska University). The revised version was published as Beata Szubtarska, *Ambasada polska w ZSRR w latach 1941–1943* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2005).

work was getting in touch with relatives of Ambassador Romer and receiving from them rare copies of letters he wrote to his family during his time in the Soviet Union.[6] This invaluable personal correspondence helped me better understand not only the ambassador's work, but also him as an individual.

Thus, Ambassador Romer accompanied me in my work from the beginning. I learned about his dedication to serving Poland over the span of many years. In Moscow-Kuybyshev, Romer's efforts were focused on the most important issue at stake at the time, that of rescuing the greatest possible number of Polish citizens from the destruction of war. It is essential to note that working in the kind of host country that was the Soviet Union required an extraordinary amount of diplomatic training and an ability to manoeuvre in difficult territory. The achievements that Romer fought for were remarkable and they were recognized by Prime Minister Sikorski, who personally awarded him the Cross of Merit with Swords in Cairo in 1943. Romer was an exceptional diplomat, an excellent writer and a gifted conversationalist. Cultivated, open-minded and personable, he respected people regardless of differences of opinion and easily got to know them; importantly, he also knew when to be silent.[7] He was hardworking and conscientious and showed an uncommon desire to help others. Romer lived by the principle that a person's worth is not determined by money or pedigree, but by their work, defined as service to country, society and family. This is what gave him the greatest satisfaction.[8] Knowing all this,[9] a year after my PhD defense in 2004 it was

6 Tadeusz Romer, *Listy do żony Zofii z Wańkowiczów (1942–1944)*, ed. Beata Szubtarska, trans. Iwona Goral (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2011).

7 On the qualities of a good diplomat, see François de Callières, *The Art of Diplomacy*, ed. H.M.A Keens-Soper and Karl W. Schweizer (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983).

8 Tadeusz Romer's recollections, collected by Stanisław Rostworowski in December 1971 in Montreal (henceforth cited as "Tadeusz Romer's recollections"), box 7.

9 I drew my knowledge from the rich literature available for this area of study: Henryk Batowski, *Między dwiema wojnami 1919–1939: zarys historii dyplomatycznej* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988); Eugeniusz Duraczyński, *Rząd Polski na Uchodźstwie 1939 1945. Organizacja, personalia, polityka* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1993); Andrzej Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1999); Albin Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków na ziemiach wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1939–1941* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1998); Bogdan Grzeloński, *Dyplomacja polska w XX wieku* (Warsaw: Szkoła Główna Handlowa, 2006); Marek K. Kamiński and Michał Jerzy *Zachariasz, Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej 1918–1939* (Warsaw: LTW, 1998); Historia dyplomacji polskiej, vol. 4, 1918–1939, ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: PWN, 1995); vol. 5, *1939–1945*, ed. Waldemar Michowicz (1999); vol. 6, 1944/1945–1989, ed. Wojciech Materski and Waldemar Michowicz (2010); Leszek Jerzy Jasiński, *Bliżej centrum czy na peryferiach? Polskie kontakty gospodarcze z zagranicą w XX*

clear to me that Ambassador Romer and his diplomatic work would be the subject of my next research project.

This project required exhaustive and laborious investigations in archives in Poland and in other countries. Among the institutions whose materials proved the most important to my work were: Poland's Central Archives of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych), the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation, the Historical-Diplomatic Archive in Italy (Archivio Storico Diplomatico), the Hoover Institution Library & Archives (United States), the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada and the Polish Library in Montreal, and Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Materials from the private Romer family archive proved to be an invaluable source of information: I was able to obtain original photographs, private correspondence, recordings of Romer's recollections made by family members, as well as working drafts of public speaking engagements and lectures and notes towards an autobiography.[10] Published sources, scholarly literature, memoirs and news

wieku (Warsaw: TRIO, 2011); Jan Karski, *Wielkie mocarstwa wobec Polski 1919–1945. Od Wersalu do Jałty* (Warszawa, [1992]); Warren F. Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (New York: W. Morrow, 1997); Piotr Łossowski, *Dyplomacja II RP. Z dziejów polskiej służby zagranicznej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1992); Wojciech Materski, *Na widecie: II Rzeczpospolita wobec Sowietów 1918–1943* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2005); Janusz Pajewski, *Budowa Drugiej Rzeczpospolitej 1918–1926* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007; Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Polityka Japonii wobec Polski 1918–1941* (Warsaw: Nozomi, 1998); Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich 1904–1945* (Warsaw: Bellona, 1996); Stanisław Sierpowski, *Stosunki polsko-włoskie w latach 1918–1940* (Warsaw: PWN, 1975); Krzysztof Szczepanik, *Organizacja polskiej służby zagranicznej 1918–2010* (Warsaw: Akson, 2012); Beata Szubtarska, *Ambasada polska w ZSRR w latach 1941–1943; Władze RP na obczyźnie podczas II wojny światowej 1939–1945,* ed. Zbigniew Błażyński, vol. 1, *Materiały do dziejów polskiego uchodźstwa niepodległościowego* (London: Polskie Towarzystwo Naukowe na Obczyźnie, 1994).

10 The meticulous preservation of family documents and heirlooms of all kinds was a trait that ran in the Romer family and was passed on from generation to generation along with these artefacts themselves. According to Tadeusz Romer, each family member had his or her own folder, which held birth and baptism certificates, report cards, information about university studies and achievements, marriages, children, etc. These documents comprised the large and excellently organized family archive, which has mostly survived to this day and constitutes a valuable source of information for patrons of the National Library in Warsaw (Special Collections). For more information about this archive and its history, see Ada Romer-Wysocka, "Jeżeli wspominam o moich przodkach… Historia rodzinnych poszukiwań," in *Ta pamięć w nas tkwi… Rody Rzeczypospolitej Wielu Narodów w kręgu tradycji i współczesności,* ed. Iwona Goral, Andrzej Gil and Jerzy Kłoczowski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2008), 31–38; Danuta Kamolowa, "Wędrówka po archiwum rodzinnym Romerów z Litwy," in *Ta pamięć w nas tkwi,* 137–149.

clippings provided valuable additional context to the archival materials and family documents.

The biography of an exceptional diplomat

I divided the results of my investigations and analysis into six chapters. Chapter 1 was devoted entirely to the protagonist's childhood and youth. For the first time, information about his patriotic ancestors, his parents and siblings, as well as his hurried coming-of-age after his parents' death, were collected in an academic publication. This chapter also included information about his university days in the shadow of World War I, his first job and his acquaintance with a few remarkable Poles who played a not insignificant role in shaping the young Romer: Henryk Sienkiewicz, Ignacy Paderewski and Roman Dmowski.

In chapter 2, I described the beginnings of Romer's diplomatic career. In 1919, Romer was hired by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was just then coming back into existence with the restoration of Polish sovereignty. He was given the most important Polish diplomatic mission of the moment: the Polish Republic's legation in Paris. Next, from 1921 to 1927, Romer worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' headquarters. In 1928, he went to Rome in the role of counsellor. Thanks to my use of previously unexploited materials, I was able to show in this chapter, among other things, Romer's little known but important part in organizing Józef Piłsudski's visit to the French capital and in preparing sovereign Poland's first military treaty in 1921. Archival materials also allowed me to retrace Romer's activities in the MFA's headquarters as well as his sense of duty during the dramatic May Coup of 1926 when, as head of the Western department, he remained in charge of the MFA's communications. I was also able to show more closely how, as chargé d'affaires ad interim at the Polish embassy in Rome, Romer managed a very difficult international situation, that is the preparations for the signing of the so-called Four-Power Pact in 1933.

In 1935, Romer was again promoted in the diplomatic service, becoming head of the Polish legation in Lisbon. Since Polish-Portuguese relations and the Polish diplomatic mission in Portugal had not previously been the objects of particular interest on the part of Polish historians, I considered it especially valuable to give a picture of the everyday activities of the mission in

chapter 3, as well as of Romer's exceptional engagement in working towards an economic rapprochement between Warsaw and Lisbon. An important part of these efforts was Romer's organization of an economic tour of Poland and his drafting of a report for the MFA containing information about Polish companies interested in economic cooperation with Portugal in 1936. Romer's initiative met with high esteem from headquarters. My book is the first written account of this. Moreover, I was able to use sources to reconstruct Romer's role in the development of Polish-Portuguese cultural relations. Information about the visit of the passengers of the first Polish transatlantic liner, Batory, to Lisbon also provided for a fascinating addition to the book.

Romer's work in Portugal was noticed by the upper echelons of the MFA and earned him yet another nomination, this time a very prestigious one. He became Poland's first ambassador to Japan–and also, as it would turn out, its last until after World War II. In chapter 4 of my book, I drew on little known reports of the ceremony during which the ambassador presented his letters of credence at the court of Emperor Hirohito, complete with details of the stately protocols characteristic of the Japanese monarchy. I devoted considerable space to Romer's day-to-day diplomatic activities in the difficult context of international tensions preceding the outbreak of the war. Thanks to the archival sources I obtained, I was able to gain insight into his views on the Sino-Japanese conflict, and into his efforts relating to the ever more strained situation in Europe. I was also able to show what the situation was like at the Polish mission once combat had begun in Europe, when the embassy, for all intents and purposes, became a consular office, as its work now consisted mostly in providing aid to Polish citizens, not only in the Far East, but also in the farthest reaches of the USSR. This chapter ends with a description of the difficulties encountered in leaving Japan, and with the proposition of a new challenge for Romer.

As fate would have it, Romer was called to serve his country during the war years in the most arduous posts. First, as ambassador in Moscow-Kuybyshev, he had to face an unfriendly host country, its policies towards the Polish government-in-exile and towards Polish citizens. I showed how Romer worked not only to improve these relations, but above all to come to the aid of the many Polish citizens who were forcefully kept in the USSR. In chapter 5, I wrote about Romer's difficult mission, which came to an end after

the evidence of the Katyń massacre was revealed to the world. My attempts to understand the causes of the failure of Polish foreign policy towards the USSR in 1941–1943 also led me to analyze documents produced by the ambassador during this time.

After Romer's departure from the Soviet Union and the tragic death of Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski and his entourage in a plane crash off Gibraltar, Romer was offered a new post: he was to become the head of Polish diplomacy. He accepted the task even though, as documents show, he knew that it would be an extremely difficult one. In chapter 6, I included information about his vision of Polish foreign policy, but also about the desperate struggle to keep Poland from falling under Soviet "protection" after the war. The materials I analyzed show that Romer believed that the success of this mission depended on the victory of Poland's Western allies as well as on firm political support from them. This, as we know, is not how things went: restoringz relations with the USSR proved impossible, as did convincing the Allies to decisively take up the cause of Polish sovereignty. The Polish delegation's two visits to Moscow were fruitless, as were Romer's numerous conversations with representatives of the British government. The Red Army's triumphant advance, its 1944 entry onto the territory of prewar Poland, the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising and the lack of support from the United States and Great Britain destroyed any hopes for the existence of a Polish republic after the war. On November 24, 1944, Romer resigned from his post together with the entirety of Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk's cabinet; though documents show that Romer himself was opposed to this move.

Romer never went back to diplomacy after this defeat of Polish foreign policy and the failure of the Yalta Conference agreement. The postwar situation made an exile out of him. In 1948, together with his family, he left for Montreal, Canada, where he accepted an offer of a teaching post at McGill University's French department. Unique archival documents show that he was respected and valued by students and coworkers. Romer was also actively engaged in community work, among others by working for the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, whose director he eventually became. He was involved in the National Treasure Commission (Komisja Skarbu Narodowego), acted as editor and publisher of the local Polish newsletter Wiadomości and worked with great dedication for different causes

within the Polish Canadian community. This heretofore unknown period of his life is taken up in the epilogue of the book.

Writing this book-length study of Romer's life and diplomatic work was a demanding scholarly endeavour. His activities spanned three historical periods and took place in countries as historically and culturally distinct as France, Japan, Italy, Portugal, Russia and Great Britain. I also had to deal with an immense quantity of primary sources, held in various institutions in Poland and abroad. Moreover, Romer himself left behind a truly impressive quantity of documents. These were important to me, as I wanted to make sure that the main character–Tadeusz Romer–be at the center of the story, as an individual and as the author of the events I was reconstructing.

The long years of painstaking work were also in many ways an exciting and rich time in my professional life. I hope that this pioneering study allows for Tadeusz Romer, his actions, views and thoughts, and his family history, to become better known. I also hope that it contributes to our knowledge about his family.

Husband, father, grandfather

Romer did not find himself in the diplomatic service of the Second Polish Republic by accident. He was raised in a patriotic home, where the notions of God, honour and homeland ("Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna") were much more than just words. Educated first in an elite high school in Krakow and then at quality Swiss universities, he spoke several languages besides Polish: French, which he mastered at home, as well as German, Russian, Italian and English. His talent for languages (a family trait) and his travel experience undoubtedly helped him in his diplomatic work. Romer's upbringing also gave him something that was intangible, but that he himself pointed to as formative: the family's relatively international way of life, which gave Tadeusz the opportunity to "move through the world and look at it up close." Beyond preparing him for life and providing an education, it developed in him the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and the sense–which in my opinion was very important for a future diplomat–that he was no better, and no worse, than other people.[11]

11 Tadeusz Romer's recollections, box 2.

As a person, Romer was fundamentally honest and loyal, even in moments as critical as those in which, as foreign minister, he was making decisions about the next steps to take in response to As a person, Romer was fundamentally honest and loyal, even in moments as critical as those in which, as foreign minister, he was making decisions about the next steps to take in response to demands from the Soviet Union or Great Britain. Even when he could already sense that Poland's allies were letting the country down, he remained forthright, because he believed in mutual trust and in the grand, overarching goals of freedom and justice for the postwar world and for Poland. He was not naïve.

Tadeusz Romer devoted his life to Poland, but also to his family. He was profoundly attached to the national and ancestral traditions he grew up with in the Lithuanian countryside surrounding the family estate at Antonosz. The wonderful family he founded was one of his great accomplishments. He met Zofia Wańkowicz,[12] then director of the Trade Commissioner's Office of the French legation in Warsaw, while working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The acquaintance turned out to be the beginning of a lifelong attachment. Tadeusz and Zofia married a year after meeting, on June 2, 1925, at Jasna Góra, Częstochowa. According to Romer, Zofia's influence made him a better man. She had qualities and abilities that helped him and served as an example to him in everyday life, as well as in his professional career. He valued her unique and profound mind, that is her "great incisiveness in judgment and her common sense founded in deeply entrenched moral values," as well as her "extraordinary warmth and affection, a combination rarely found in one person."[13] The Romers had three daughters: Therese (Renia), born in Warsaw on May 26, 1926, and Elżbieta (Ita) and Gabriela (Alba), born respectively on January 8, 1929 and April 30, 1931 in Rome. Family life was atypical for the Romers due to Tadeusz's work: they moved frequently, and their life was filled with travels, new places, interesting people, multiple languages, cultures and colours.

Zofia and Tadeusz cared deeply about their daughters' upbringing and education, which were paramount to them from the earliest years. That is why

12 Zofia Wańkowicz (1897–1981) was born in Zaświatów, near Minsk, Belarus. For more information about her life, see Zofia Romer, *Z wizytą u cesarza. Opowieść dyplomatyczna Zofii Romer,* ed. Beata Szubtarska (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie przy Filii Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2012).

13 Tadeusz Romer's recollections, box 7.

a private schoolteacher and governess, Maria Hubisz,[14] lived with the family from the Portugal mission on. As it turned out, she would stay by the family until her death in 2006. The eldest daughter, Therese, spoke of daily life at the Polish legation in Lisbon in the following words: "While the two older girls are in French school, Maja and Alba stroll in the parks and around the city. In the afternoons, all three have Polish lessons, and on the weekends the Romers, who like to get to know the country, go on interesting trips [...]. The legation's headquarters are also lively with official parties, receptions, banquets and music. Then, upstairs, Maja keeps an eye on the girls who try to peek at the elegant gowns and resplendent uniforms of the visitors. But the family is fondest of quiet evenings at home when, after supper, Tadzik sits down at the grand piano in the living room and the children, in their pyjamas, listen enchanted to Chopin and Schubert."[15]

The start of World War II, the German and Soviet invasions of Poland, brought colossal change to the Romers' lives. Fear and anxiety about the future tormented not only the adults, but also the children who, though they did not fully understand what was happening, felt their parents' uneasiness. For the first time, the girls took part in the mission's work, which consisted in providing assistance to Polish citizens in Japan: "All of the embassy's personnel, Maja, and even at times the children, were involved in the aid network. Soon, short of funds, the family had to give up its Japanese service staff."[16] The Romers faced even harder times in 1942, when Tadeusz was made ambassador in the USSR, the most difficult Polish diplomatic post of the period.[17] Because the Russians did not allow diplomats' relatives to accompany them in war time, Ziuta and the children had to spend this period in the relative safety of South Africa. "In Johannesburg, far from the war, news came to us through the radio and in letters from our father.[18] Following

14 Maria Hubisz (1904–2006). On the topic of her life and work, see Renia Romer, *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006* (Montreal, 2013).

15 Renia Romer, *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006*, 8.

16 *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006*, 22. More information about the situation in Japan at the time can be found in: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Polityka Japonii wobec Polski 1918–1941* and Beata Szubtarska, *Ambasada RP w Tokio a problem zesłańców polskich w ZSRR w latach 1940–1941 w świetle raportów ambasadora Tadeusza Romera, in W kręgu historii Europy Wschodniej. Studia i szkice*, ed. Paweł Chmielewski and Albin Głowacki (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2009), 129–138.

17 For more information about this embassy, see Beata Szubtarska, *Ambasada polska w ZSRR w latach 1941–1943*.

18 This correspondence was meticulously preserved by Zofia Romer. See Tadeusz Romer, *Listy do żony Zofii z Wańkowiczów*.

the discovery of the mass graves at Katyń,[19] the severing of diplomatic ties between the USSR and Poland and the tragic death of Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief General Sikorski, father was called to London. There, he took on the extraordinarily difficult role of foreign minister for the government-in-exile.[20] We wanted to join him as quickly as possible."[21] But travelling was difficult during the war and the family were reunited only in London in February 1944. Because of the bombing raids, after just a few happy days the Romers decided to send their daughters to safer places. Elżbieta and Gabriela went to Farnborough, a small town in the South of England, where they stayed until they finished high school, whereas Therese was admitted to Somerville College, Oxford. On the rare occasions that she visited her parents, the young woman was impressed by their ministerial lodgings bustling with political and worldly activity: "I remember fascinating meetings at lunch with remarkable figures like Jan Karski, Zofia Kossak, artists, diplomats, military officers," reminisced the eldest daughter.[22]

The determinations arrived at by the political representatives of the Big Three at the wartime conferences at Yalta and Potsdam transformed the Romers' lives yet again, as I already mentioned. The family stayed in London, but were financially strained. The ambassador could not find work,[23] and the family lived off savings. Poor housing conditions, boarders, Zofia working as a hat maker to earn extra money; this was the new day-to-day reality. Thus,

19 Katyń has been the subject of a vast number of scholarly works, among which are: Andrzej Przewoźnik and Jolanta Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia-Prawda-Pamięć* (Warsaw: Świat Książki, 2010); Andrzej Przewoźnik and Jolanta. Adamska, *Zbrodnia Katyńska. Mord-Kłamstwo-Pamięć* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011); Wojciech Materski, *Katyń. Od kłamstwa ku prawdzie* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Rytm," 2012); Wojciech Materski, *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni,* 4 vols. (Warsaw: TRIO, 1995–2006); *Katyń. Mart 1940 g.- sientiabr 2000 g. Rasstriel. Sudby żywych. Echo Katyni. Dokumienty,* ed. Natalia S. Liebiediewa, Neli A. Pietrosowa, Bolesław Woszczynski, Wojciech Materski, Ewa Rosowska (Moscow: Wies' Mir, 2001).

20 On the topic of the activities of the Mikołajczyk government and the international situation at the time, see: Warren F. Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War;* Jan Karski, *Wielkie mocarstwa wobec Polski 1919–1945. Od Wersalu do Jałty; Na najwyższym szczeblu. Spotkania premierów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Wielkiej Brytanii podczas II wojny światowej,* ed. Marek Kazimierz Kamiński and Jacek Tebinka (Warsaw: LTW, 1999); *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, vol. 6 lipiec 1943–kwiecień1944, vol. 7 maj 1944–listopad 1944,* ed. Marian Zgórniak, Wojciech Rojek and Andrzej Suchcitz (Krakow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2003, 2006); Jacek Tebinka, *Polityka brytyjska wobec problemu granicy polsko-radzieckiej 1939–1945* (Warszawa: Neriton, 1998).

21 Renia Romer, *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006,* 32.

22 Renia Romer, *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006,* 34.

23 Romer did not seek employment in the diplomatic service of the Polish People's Republic following the formation of the Provisional Government of National Unity.

when in 1948 Tadeusz Romer received an offer of employment in Canada, at the French Department of prestigious McGill University in Montreal, the Romers made one of the hardest decisions of their lives: emigration. They decided to start a new life, though this came with the painful realization that they might never go back to their homeland, never again see the friends and relatives who stayed in Poland. Their departure was made even harder by the fact that they would not be sailing across the ocean as a full family: Therese, who had married lieutenant Mieczysław Nitosławski[24] in 1947, was pregnant and had to remain in England for the time being. The younger daughters, Elżbieta and Gabriela, accompanied their parents. The family's long-time friend and helper Maria Hubisz chose to emigrate with them. The family's circumstances were drastically different from what they had been: this time around, they were not travelling with Polish diplomatic passports, but as stateless persons. Like so many refugees after the war, they were issued green travel IDs by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). In Canada, at first, they lived very modestly, but they did not give up and adapted to their new circumstances. With time, life improved, and the Romers eventually moved into their own home not far from the university. Therese, her husband and their two daughters joined them in 1950. The family was together again.

The years went by. Romer worked at the university where, as we know, he gained the respect and admiration of his colleagues and students. Together with Zofia, he was actively involved in Polish community organizations in Montreal, and in efforts to bring assistance to many in Poland.[25]

Elżbieta and Gabriela both started families, which, to everyone's joy, kept growing. Zofia and Tadeusz had thirteen grandchildren: Therese and Mieczysław had Jolanta (1948), Anna (1950), Maria (1953), Marek (1956), and Stefan (1960); Elżbieta and Jerzy Straszak[26] had Irena (1955), Paweł (1956), and Maryna (1959); and Gabriela and Charles Taylor had Karen (1958),

24 Mieczysław Nitosławski (1917–2012), member of the scouts (harcerze) and lieutenant in the Polish Army, was born in Vitebsk. He obtained a law degree from the University of Oxford. In Canada, he was active in several Polish organizations and worked at a sailing organization.

25 For more on this topic, see Beata Szubtarska, "Emigracyjna działalność ambasadora Tadeusza L. Romera," *Polityka i Bezpieczeństwo* 3 (2012): 209–219.

26 Jerzy Straszak (1922–2006) served in the Polish Navy during World War II. After the war, he completed his naval studies in Edinburgh. In Canada, he worked for the National Research Council of Canada.

Miriam (1959), Wanda (1960), Gabriela (1962) and Gretta (1965). "We happily vacationed together; soon there were cottages by lakes or in the woods [...]. As the children grew, life went by faster and faster for the young, my parents warmly keeping in touch."[27]

Thanks to the education that their parents had provided for them, the daughters found good employment in Canada. Therese worked as a conference interpreter and was involved in the AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters)28. Elżbieta, after completing a certificate in stenotyping with distinction, was employed as a recorder in international organizations in Geneva, New York City and Montreal. After she married, she got a job as editor at the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa, where she worked until retirement. As for Gabriela, she studied fine arts and social sciences at McGill University. She was a talented artist29 whose work was shown in several group exhibitions in Canada, England and the United States, as well as during a posthumous solo exhibition in 1990 in Montreal.[30]

With time, funerals began to punctuate the family's stable existence: Tadeusz Romer died on March 23, 1978, then, three years later, on September 14, 1981, Zofia. After their parents' death, the three sisters decided to pay tribute to their life and accomplishments by starting, in 1985, a foundation in their name. The Tadeusz and Zofia Romer Foundation, run by an autonomous board of directors, supported independent thought and culture in Poland as well as the promotion of Polish culture in Canada. "At the start, the Foundation provided financial aid for academics and artists from Poland, enabling them to come to Canada for several months at a time, usually upon invitation by one of the local universities. After the consular and financial situation for Poles improved, the Foundation helped with the purchase of Western-published academic works (political science, history, philosophy, economics), mostly for the Polish Academy of Science's Institute of Political

27 Renia Romer, *Maja. Maria Hubisz 1904–2006*, 38.
28 The AIIC, founded in 1953, is the only global association of conference interpreters. It represents more than three thousand members in over one hundred countries and promotes high ethical and quality standards in the professional field of simultaneous interpretation. See: aiic.net.
29 It is worth mentioning that there were many talented artists in the Romer family, such as Edward Jan Romer (1806–1878) and Alfred Isidore Romer (1832–1897). For more on this topic, see Jolanta Širkaite, "Artyści rodu Romerów do 1940 roku," in *Ta pamięć w nas tkwi*, 127–136.
30 Gabriela passed away from leukemia in 1990. See Therese Romer's written recollections of her in Teresa Romer, "Alba Romer-Taylor (1931–1990)," in *Ta pamięć w nas tkwi*, 23–30.

Studies (Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN) in Warsaw. After 1989, the Foundation began to support the advancement of political culture in Poland, and after organizing a press survey, we had the honour of hosting Jacek Kuroń, Leszek Balcerowicz and Janina Ochojska in Canada."[31]

The achievements of the numerous Polish scholars and artists who received financial support from the Foundation bear witness to its work, as did the continued existence of the Institute for Central Europe (Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej) in Lublin, to which the Foundation donated the remainder of its financial resources in 2003. A room in the Institute bore the Romer name.[32]

Today, Tadeusz Romer's descendants live in Canada, where they continue to study and work. Thanks to the efforts of Therese, Elżbieta and Gabriela, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue to treasure their Polish roots and their family history.

*

As well as an exceptional diplomat, Romer was also a flesh and blood person: he loved, dreamed, yearned to know the world, searched for answers and lost his way. He loved music, played the piano and, in his final years, composed pieces, which today are stored in the Romer family archive in Canada. Music was a pastime that allowed him to disconnect from the serious affairs of his daily life, and a piano followed Romer to all of his posts, with the sole exception of Russia. He also loved books–he had a special relationship to the work of Henryk Sienkiewicz, with whom he had worked in Switzerland–and read voraciously in different genres. His library grew to impressive proportions and, with time, came to include the works of many of the people he had known through diplomacy, including the likes of Churchill and de Gaulle. Romer's life was without a doubt fascinating. Beside service, the other great sphere it was made up of was family, which as I have highlighted

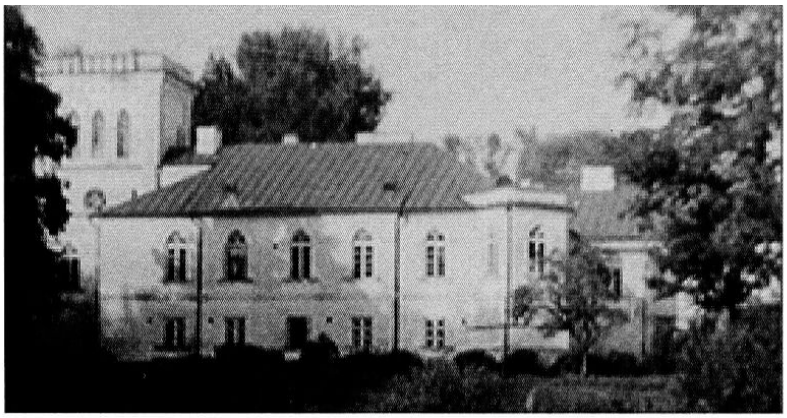
31 Teresa Romer, "Wspomnienia o moich rodzicach," in *Ta pamięć w nas tkwi*, 14–16.

32 According to the agreement between the Institute and the Tadeusz and Zofia Romer Foundation, the funds were to be used for four main objectives: the modernization of the building; the creation of a bursary program for young historians and scientists from Belarus, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine; the furnishing of the Romer room; and the organization of a conference about families from the Kresy (Eastern Borderlands) area, including the Romer family.

was extremely important to him. In turn, his descendants are devoted to cultivating their father and grandfather's memory.

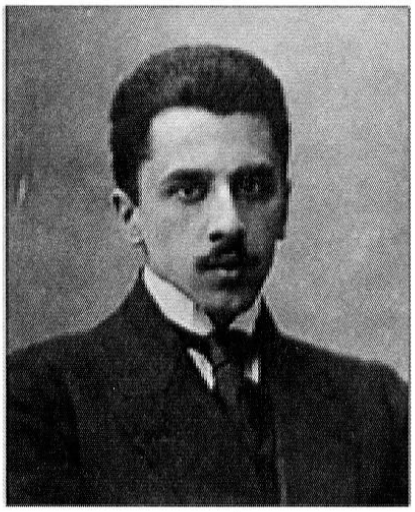
Ambassador Tadeusz Romer is buried in the Polish section of the Saint-Sauveur cemetery. He never got to return to the homeland that he loved so much and that he served all his life. Writing the story of his life and of his family was, for me, a duty.

Photographs from the Romer family archives

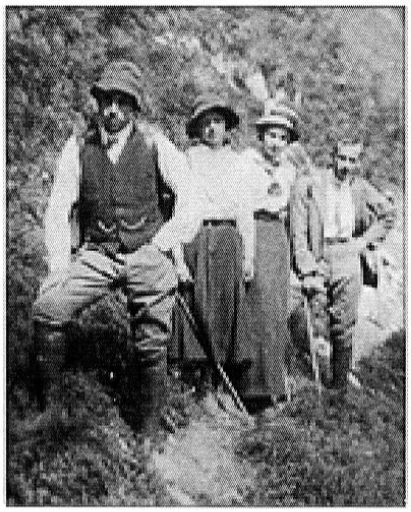


'Antonosz' seen from the lake :
the manor-house in Lithuania where Tadeusz was born in 1894.

The family in 1895: Tadeusz with his parents, two older brothers and a nanny.



In Switzerland as a student,



Hiking in the Swiss Alps with three

Rome 1927: after assignments at headquarters in Warsaw, Romer's first posting abroad was at Poland's Embassy to the King of Italy

Romer addressing a Portuguese Parliamentary gathering, 1936.

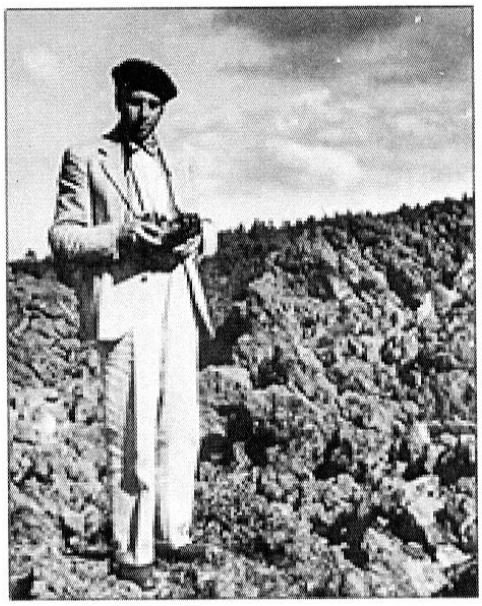
Lisbon 1935:
the Polish Legation's new Head
of Mission.

Tokyo 1937: in the imperial coach,
Romer in full diplomatic regalia, bearing
Letters of Accreditation to the Emperor
of Japan.

On the way to his next posting in Japan, a brief stop-over in Geneva
with his wife Zofia, 1937.

Romer on his first official visit
to the Imperial Palace.

Zofia Romer, née Wankowicz, ca 1938.
Among Tokyo's diplomatic corps,
she was the only wife who, at full-dress
receptions, could wear her row of
miniatures medals and decorations
awarded to her in her own right.



Romer enjoyed photography on weekend
excursions. Here, on the lava fields of
Mount Asama.

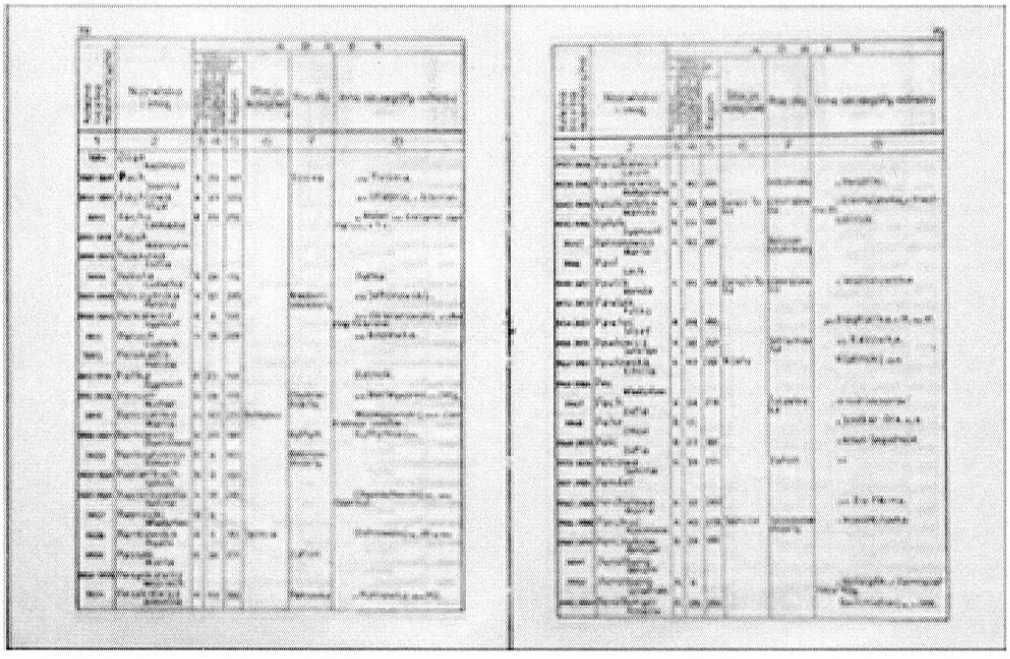
A Japanese farewell reception offered to the Ambassador's family and staff before departure fromTokyo, october 1941.

Moscow late 1942: arrival for the hardest diplomatic posting in Romer's life.

In spite of war-time restrictions (the USSR was under German attack), diplomatic visiting cards were still de rigueur.

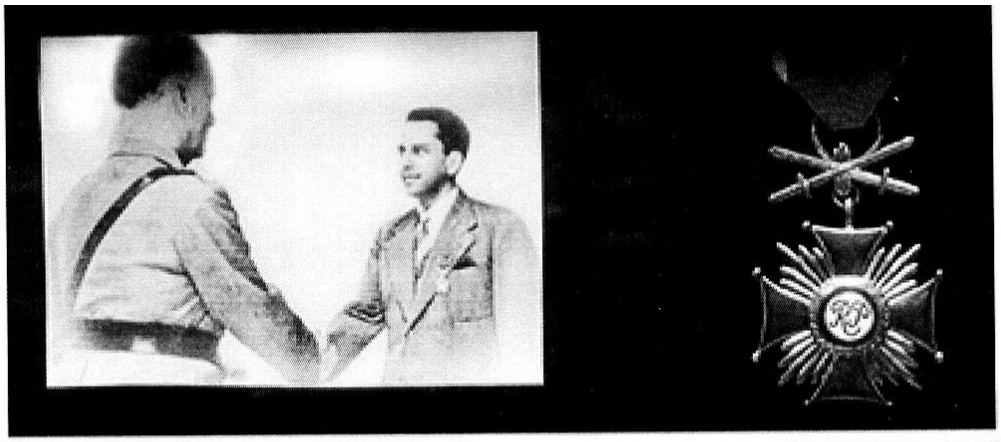
In addition to helping the large, unexpected flood of refugees from Eastern Poland arriving in Japan via the Trans-Siberian, the Embassy began receiving S.O.S cards from deportees deep in USSR labour camps.

Romer mobilized volunteers to document the data, producing this first, remarkable handbook on the extent of the mass Deportations.



May 1943: Stalin breaks off relations with Poland.
Romer accompanies his Embassy staff and numerous refugees
evacuated in many lorries through mountain passes to Persia.

Teheran, May 1943:
at Polish gatherings, many rejoice at survivors of the USSR
ordeal and prepare to resume the fight for freedom at the Allies' side.



ZŁOTY KRZYŻ ZASŁUGI Z MIECZAMI

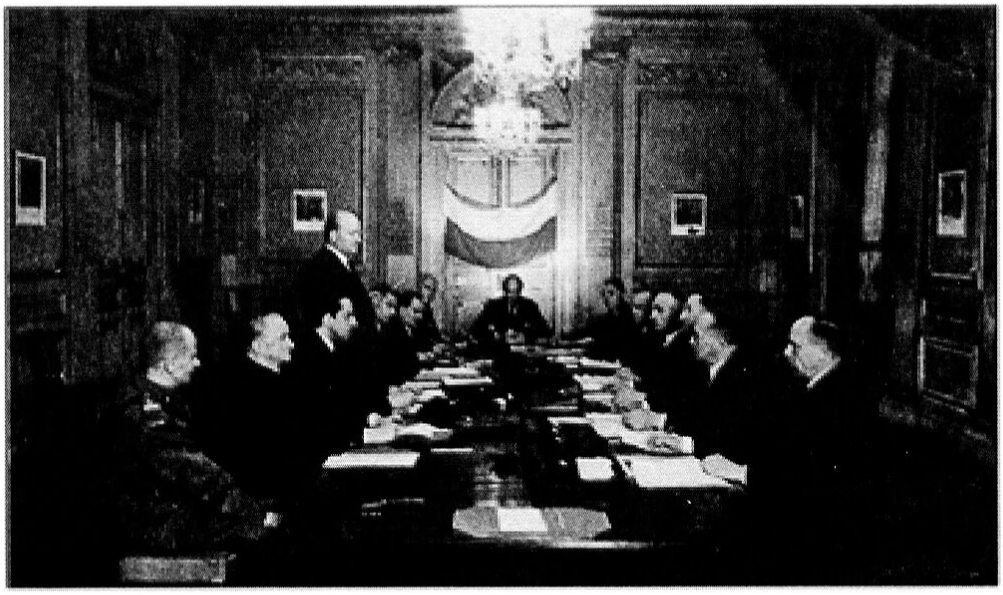
I-y, najwyższy stopień tego odznaczenia, ustanowionego przez Prezydenta R.P. w 1942 r.

Oficjalne uzasadnienie : "Order ten jest odznaczeniem wojennym i stanowi nagrodę za czyny męstwa i odwagi dokonane w czasie wojny nie bezpośrednio w walce z nieprzyjacielem, a także za zasługi położone w czasie wojny względem państwa lub jego obywateli w warunkach szczególnie niebezpiecznych".

Złoty Krzyż Zasługi z Mieczami został nadany **ambasadorowi Tadeuszowi Romerowi** w Kairze, w czerwcu 1943, w pełnym wirze II Wojny Światowej, przez **generała Władysława Sikorskiego**, Premiera Rządu R.P. , tuż przed jego tragiczną śmiercią w Gibraltarze, a po dogłębnych i osobistych naradach Sikorskiego z Romerem w Teheranie i Libanie, po zakończeniu misji tego ostatniego w ZSRR.

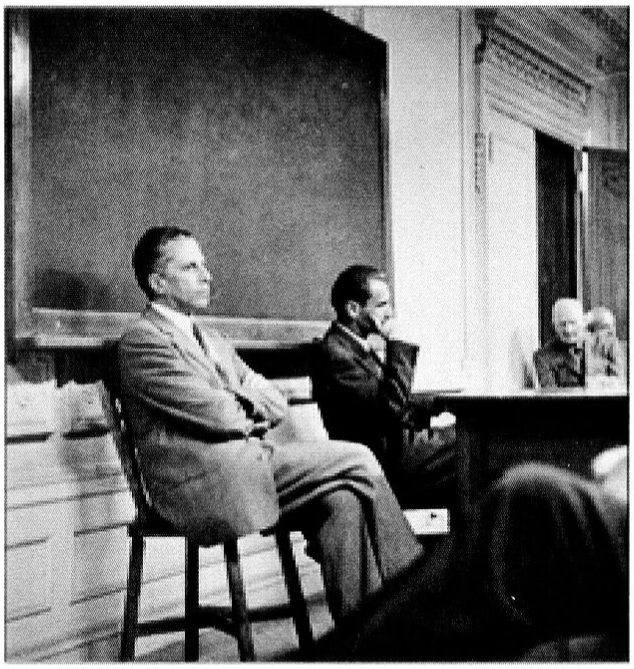
Cairo, June 1943: after extensive meetings and discussions with Poland's Prime Minister, general Sikorski, Romer is awarded the highest Polish wartime decoration for civilian bravery and merit in uncommon danger.

Cairo, July 1943: at the Polish Legation, Romer and others confer with Prime Minister Sikorski hours before his depature for London via Gibraltar - where his plane tragically crashes.



London, August 1943: the new Polish Cabinet.

Somewhere in England, 1944: on a visit to Polish airmen, Romer on the right.



Montreal, 1960's: a McGill University
lecture hall where Romer introduces Jan Karski,
Polish Resistance hero, to a faculty audience.

Romer accompanies Cardinal Wojtyla's
visit to Montreal in 1969.
The future Pope signs the guest book of honour
at the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau and dignitaries, with leaders of the Polish community, greet Cardinal Wojtyla in front of the Copernicus statue, 1969.

SKARB NARODOWY
GŁÓWNA KOMISJA
Prezydium

43, EMPEROR'S GATE,
LONDON, SW7 4HJ
Tel.: 01-373 5124

15 lutego, 1978

WPan Prof. Tadeusz Romer,
643 Milton Street,
Montreal (P.Q.)
Canada

Wielce Szanowny Panie Profesorze,

Otrzymaliśmy wiadomość z Komisji Skarbu Narodowego na Kanadę o złożeniu przez Pana Profesora rezygnacji z udziału w Głównej Komisji jako Delegata z Kanady. Z żalem przyjmujemy tą wiadomość, mając na uwadze niezwykle cenny wkład wysiłków i doświadczenia, jakie Skarb Narodowy zawdzięcza Panu Profesorowi.

Skarb Narodowy w Kanadzie jest jedynym przykładem w całej naszej sieci organizacyjnej na pięciu kontynentach wolnego świata, mającym w swym składzie kilkanaście ogniw stanowych kierowanych centralnie przez krajową Komisję kanadyjską. Jest to Pańską zasługą, Panie Profesorze. Pańska inicjatywa i troska sprawiły, że dzięki przyjęciu takiego układu organizacyjnego udało się uzyskać taką sprawność i największą wydajność, jaką Skarb Narodowy osiągnął na rozległym obszarze północnej półkuli amerykańskiego kontynentu.

Obszerna i wyczerpująca dokumentacja przedstawiająca 27-letnią, nieprzerwaną działalność Komisji Skarbu Narodowego na Kanadę pod kierownictwem Pana Profesora, przechowywana w naszych archiwach w celu przekazania przyszłym pokoleniom, będzie trwałym dowodem naszych wysiłków niepodległościowych. Będzie również świadectwem, jak wielkim był udział Pana Profesora w tych pracach.

Składając to stwierdzenie, zaopatrzone podpisami członków Głównej Komisji Skarbu Narodowego, prosimy Pana Profesora o przyjęcie naszych gorących podziękowań za pomoc okazaną Skarbowi Narodowemu i za uzyskane dzięki temu tak pomyślne wyniki.

(A. Polniaszek)

(J. Zaleski)

(-) M. Dolanowski

(A. Ostrowski)

(F. Wilk)

(-) S. Soboniewski

(-) K. Iranek-Osmecki

(K. Sabbat)

Lidia Ciołkosz

1978: commendation for 27 years of Romer's outstanding work in leading the Canadian branch of the world-wide "Skarb Narodowy" organization.

Londyn, 4 czerwca 1978

Londyn
Gazeta Niedzielna
46/47.78

Londyn
Gazeta Niedzielna
4/6.78

POŻEGNANIE AMBASADORA-SPOŁECZNIKA

27 kwietnia londyński krewni, przyjaciele i polski Londyn żegnał Mszą św. w Little Brompton sp. Tadeusza Romera, ambasadora RP i m. ministra spraw zagranicznych, znakomitego dyplomaty, profesora uniwersytetu McGill w Montrealu, prezesa Polskiego Instytutu Naukowego w Kanadzie, cudownego działacza Polonii kanadyjskiej, ofiarnego społecznika, działacza katolickiego — zmarłego w Montrealu 6.IV.1977.

W Glasbrdu przybyła córka Zmarłego, Alla, z mężem prof. Charles Taylorem, i z córkami. Przybyli przedstawiciele świata politycznego i społecznego, koledzy i przyjaciele, na czele z amb. K. Ratyńskim i min. Z. Zawadowskim.

Mszę św. odprawił ks. Tadeusz Kukla.

Miesiąc przedtem, 27 marca, na pogrzebie w Montrealu żegnał sp. Tadeusza Romera — członkiem polskiego społeczeństwa — Artur Tarnowski. Fragmenty Żałobnego Słowa ukazały się w „Gazecie Niedzielnej", ale warto zanotować niektóre myśli, wyjęte z przemówienia dotyczące Kanady oraz słowa, które znakomicie charakteryzują i są świadectwem uznania dla dyplomaty, oddanego sprawie i Polakom Ambasadora-Społecznika.

„Żebraliśmy się licznie w tym ciężkim, drogim kościele Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej, by złożyć ostatnią posługę sp. Tadeuszowi Romerowi, modlić się za Jego duszę, pożegnać i odprowadzić. Jego ciało na zawsze ostatniego spoczynku... W smutnych dniach i twardych kolejach naszej powojennej tułaczki emigracyjnej, sp. Tadeusz Romer zyskał wśród nas — nie tylko w Kanadzie — dużą, zawsze prawdziwą charakterami, czystości pierwszej, dzięki uporowi, w pięknej zgodzie inteligencyjnej działania dla dobra niepodległościowej i dla naszego społeczeństwa emigracyjnego, jak i dla całej Polonii, naszą cześć i nasze przywiązanie — a wśród dawnych znajomków tego kroju rysuj nas czuć na to, co wniósł to pewną kulturę, osobowość i wiedzę, którą przekazywał im jako profesor.

Wiadomo, jak powszechny jest dziś brak umiaru i poszanowania dla prawa i autorytetów na całym świecie. Nie potrzebna tego dodatek stosunek nas, Polaków, do Zmarłego, bo stanowiliśmy, jakie wśród nas najpoważniejsze było wyjątkowe. Nie z tytułu urzędów kiedyś najpoważniejszych, czy z wytrwa, ale z powszechnego uznania...

... Wojna światowa, wreszcie kończy się... katastrofą Polski... Powstaje kwestia polska emigracja... Minister Romer, z dyplomaty i polityka przekształca się w [illegible]... Wyjątkowy w Kanadzie, zostaje profesorem na uniwersytecie McGill, gdzie wcześniej języka, literatury i kultury francuskiej. Najlepsze przy nadarzeń, a w fotelu kolejnej nakłada kurs francuskiego dla personelu prowincjalnego. Ustabilizowany się na uniwersytecie, zaczął z całą energią pracę, by się tym zajmować.

Przyjaźnie w 1949 prowadzenie Stowarzyszenia Polskiego, prowadzi je lat 10, a do zgonu się nim interesuje, pomagając jego prezesowi bezinteresownie. Od 1960 r. [illegible] przewodniczy Kanadyjskiej Radzie Narodowego na Kanadzie, by stworzyć fundusze na pracę międzypolskiego... Przewodniczy tej Radzie przez cztery wielkie, a do ostatnich dni nie przestaje troszczyć się o Radę Narodowy ... Zostaje członkiem zarządu, a z czasem dyrektorem oddziału w Kanadzie Polskiego Instytutu Naukowego w Ameryce. Oddział ten, za jego dyrektorowania, przekształca się w instytucję działającą pod [illegible] Polskiego Instytutu Naukowego w Kanadzie.

O tej wszechstronnej, 30 lat trwającej działalności Ambasadora Romera w Kanadzie, obszernie ...wiedzą dzienn... Wiedzą z jakim oddaniem, z jaką ofiarnością czas swój, wiedzę swoją i doświadczenie oddawał, tam wszędzie gdzie przejął na siebie ciężar takich czy innych obowiązków... Robił to wszystko z najwyższą sumiennością, nie oczekując jakichkolwiek podziękń. Czynił to z miłości do Polski, której cała dyla, a najwyższym odbiorem, służył.

Podobnie pragnął być pożyteczny kandydat, który się do niego zwrócił o pomoc, czy porady. Czy, [illegible] najlepiej... rozwiązać z życiowym ciężkim na twarzy - z miłości bliźniego.

Takim był, do ostatnich dni. Martwiło go, że... bliskie jego sercu odmawiały jak posłuszeństwa. Tych stan, bardzo przykry, zmusił z podziwem i pokorą. Nigdy słowa skargi z jego ust nie się słyszało. Był głęboko wierzącym chrześcijaninem i oddanym synem Kościoła katolickiego...".

(kg)

Tyg. Pol. 3/4/78

TADEUSZ ROMER

Tadeusza Romera poznałem latem 1941 roku, kiedy po zlikwidowaniu na żądanie rządu Józefa Stalina ambasady RP w Tokio przyjechał on do Szanghaju i zamieszkał w pensjonacie polskim, skrupulatnie prowadzonym przez rodzinę chińskim w Polsce. Towarzyszyła mu żona, Zofia z Wodzisławów i trzy dorastające córki. Powierzona mu była wówczas opieka nad uchodźcami z Polski, w większości pochodzenia żydowskiego, przybywającymi na Dalekiego Wschód kolejami transsyberyjską. Kiedy w rok później, personel ambasady tokijskiej i poselstwa w Szanghaju wraz z władzami zajmą zajętymi alianckimi odpłynął z Szanghaju na okręcie płynącym pod flagą amerykańską, aby dopełnić wymiany na odcinku japońskich misji dyplomatycznych z zachodniej Europy w portugalskim państwie Lourenco Marques w Afryce Wschodniej, największą grupę uchodźców na tym statku stanowili Polacy pochodzenia żydowskiego.

Powierzona mi była misja bezpośrednich i szczegółowych pertraktacji z władzami japońskimi w sprawie ewakuacji z wiosną 1942 roku, jakie zakończyły się powodzeniem Romerem, i z instrukcji jakich mi udzielał, jak prowadzić i zamierza traktować się on z zainteresowanie jak najlepiej Dalej miejsc na tym statku dla tej właśnie grupy obywateli polskich.

Kontakt się z ambasadorem Romerem w Afryce, skąd odleciał on do Kairu, by wkrótce potem objąć stanowisko ambasadora RP w Kuibyszewie, opróżnione przez Stanisława Kota.

Kiedy spotykałem się z nim później w czasie wojny w Londynie, dokąd przyjeżdżał on rzadko, w gościnnym Sikorskim i emigracji rządu polskiego, na trudne była na jego pogodnej zazwyczaj twarzy wyczytać trudne i ciężkie myśli, które nosił skrzętnie. W prywatnych rozmowach nie dał słowa o tej niepotrzebnie większych rzeczy Polaków, od tych na granicach na Dalekiego Wschód, zwłaszcza tym razem po nakładkach „niebolszej ziemi". O tych rozmowach z przywódcami wówczas [illegible] na temat tych zagadnień stosunków polsko-sowieckich milczał niechętnie, ale nie podawał się ukrywaniu przymówek. Chciał wierzyć i wierzył w pomoc i poparcie naszych sprzymierzeńców.

Zerwanie przez Rosję Sowiecką stosunków dyplomatycznych z rządem polskim w Londynie po odkryciu grobów katyńskich sprowodziło ambasadora Romera na Dalekiego Wschód, a stamtąd, po katastrofie gibraltarskiej, do Londynu na stanowisko ministra spraw zagranicznych. Pamiętam dobrze jak w dniu przybycia do Londynu na pogrzeb generała Sikorskiego minister Romer wrócił mnie do swego gabinetu i zapytał czy nie mógłbym objąć funkcji jego sekretarza osobistego. Bliski z nim kontakt w okresie poprzedzającym niedoszłe dla kapitulacji naszych zachodnich aliantów sobie dążeń. Kiedy w sprawie granic i losów Polski powojennej, powrócił mi jeszcze lepiej poznać zalety jego charakteru. Gorliwy, praktykujący katolik, nie podawał się nigdy uwypuklić w siły moralne [illegible] narodu. Dyplomata w każdym calu, ale i w najlepszy [illegible] na znakomitości, najczęściej do [illegible], który wyberał w szkole Romana Dmowskiego, którego [illegible] sekretarzem w Polskim Komitecie Narodowym w latach [illegible] wojny światowej, miał [illegible] sprawach ludzi, z którymi się stykał. Wychowanie na kulturze romańskiej, przekazał towarzyszom [illegible] narodów [illegible] stosunkach nad reprezentantów narodów anglosaskich i z tymi pierwszymi współpracował [illegible] lata spędzone [illegible] w Portugalii i we Włoszech.

Na wiadomość o śmierci ministra Romera przyjaciele Polaków, Ambasador Evron Kirkpatrick, ambasador Stanów Zjednoczonych w wolnej Polsce i przy rządzie polskim w Londynie. Po złożeniu [illegible] kondolencyjnej wizyty rozmowa [illegible] sprawie zagranicznej [illegible] odpowiadający do tego [illegible] ambasador Biddle powiedział mi na pożegnanie: „Jaki Pan szczęśliwy obejdzie się dzień z człowiekiem o taki [illegible]".

Antoni S. HUDOWSKI

1978: One of the many obituaries published throughout Europe and the Americas.

Tadeusz and Zofia before their Milton street home, next to McGill University, 1970's.

The Romer grave in the Polish section of the hillside cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, Québec.

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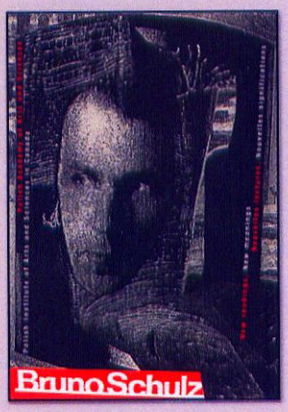

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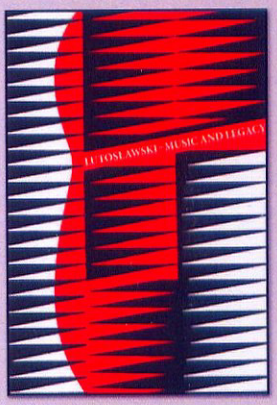

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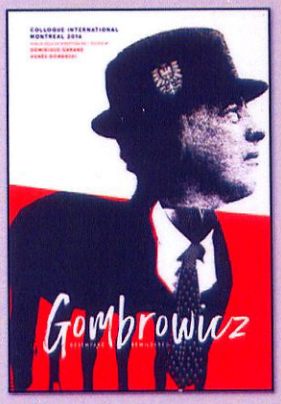

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The scholarly contributions assembled in this volume reconstruct the biographical arc of Tadeusz Romer's life, rightly moving Romer's diplomatic career toward the center of historical explorations of wartime migration routes, Holocaust rescue, and Polish émigré activities in Canada.

As Charles Taylor quipped at the conference, Tadeusz Romer was one of the few Polish "adversaries" who not only survived heated face-to-face exchanges with Joseph Stalin, but in fact walked away with tangible achievements.

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- Piotr Kosicki