

## THREE

### POLES IN ROTHERHAM AFTER THE WAR

At Yalta in 1945, Allied Leaders assembled to finalise their arrangement for post-war Europe. In the case of Poland, they confirmed the Curzon line frontier, the demarcation line between Poland and Soviet Russia, agreed in Tehran two years earlier, thereby ratifying Poland's loss of territory in the East to be 'compensated' by the award of former German territories in the West. Poland's western frontier was fixed on the Oder and Western Neisse and Poland was then left to the Soviets.

This had very serious implications for those wishing to return home and many were reluctant to do so, as they feared for their lives.

In the case of Rotherham, the first influx of Poles occurred in 1947. This influx was composed of members of the Polish Western forces, whose involvement in the War had come to an end and who did not wish to return to a Poland under Communist control. After they had gone through the PKPR: Polski Korpus Przysposobienia & Rozmieszczenia (the Polish Resettlement Corps) and having been demobbed, they embarked on a new stage in their lives.

The soldiers, being members of the Resettlement Corps, faced a number of stark choices:

- ❖ to return to Poland at some point in the future;
- ❖ to emigrate to another country;
- ❖ to enlist in the British army;
- ❖ to find work and settle in the UK.

Of the soldiers who chose to find employment and settle in the UK, the majority took work down the coalmines and in steel works, as the work available for foreigners was rather limited. In the years that followed, the number of Poles in Rotherham rose to around 300-500 as others of their fellow countrymen arrived here from Germany after that country's surrender and the liberation of the concentration camps. These "Displaced Persons" were incorporated into British industry; they, too, decided to work in Great Britain rather than return to Poland. An example of such a displaced person who settled in Rotherham was Józef Kopcik (1924-1993). It wasn't possible to retrieve his story; however he appears in photos later in Chapter IV.

#### **The Miners' Hostel, Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham**

Many of the Poles found accommodation in regional Miners' hostels and, ironically, the way of life in those early years shared many of the same features as camp life during the war. With the influx of Poles, accommodation was needed, and it was in such camps that religious and social aspects of their culture had to be re-created. One such hostel was the Miners' Hostel situated at the bottom of Herringthorpe Valley Road.

The hostel comprises a number of separate buildings of various forms of construction and size dispersed over an area of about 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> acres. The buildings were designed to accommodate 200-250 miners or miner-trainees, together with administrative and operational staff, all on a residential basis. They were built when war-time austerity was at its height [1944]. Nevertheless, they are remarkably well preserved in view of their

nearly 20 years life already, due in my opinion to first-class, regular and probably expensive, maintenance.

Roughly a half of the buildings comprise a tightly planned block of Nissen type huts used for dormitories and ablution arrangements. The remaining buildings are of more conventional (though still of semi-temporary sectional types) construction; generally concrete frames with brick or clay infilling to external walls, pitched roofs of asbestos sheets. They include a boiler-house serving the whole "colony" with steam and hot water for domestic and heating purposes, sick-bay, laundry, and staff-quarters.

Extract from Rotherham Borough Engineer's report, 09.09.1959.

The structures didn't last long, as nearly a year after their closure, an official letter stated that the clearance of buildings on the site was nearing completion.

Ministry of Works, 27.04.1960.

**ALIEN IDENTITY CERTIFICATE**  
**DOWÓD OSOBISTY OBCOKRAJOWCA**

POLISH RESETTLEMENT CORPS AND A.T.S. POLISH RESETTLEMENT SECTION. RELEGATION TO THE UNEMPLOYED LIST OR TO THE RESERVE FOR EMPLOYMENT APPROVED BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

POLSKI KORPUS PRZYSPOBIENIA I ROZMIESZCZENIA ORAZ POLSKA SEKCJA PRZYSPOBIENIA I ROZMIESZCZENIA (A.T.S.). PRZENIESIENIE NA LISTĘ, NIEZATRUDNIONYCH LUB DO REZERWY CELEM PODJĘCIA ZATRUDNIENIA ZATWIERDZONEGO PRZEZ MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Number/ Numer ewidencyjny <b>30071015</b>	Rank/Stopień <b>Cpl.</b>	Name (Block Capitals)/Nazwisko (litery drukowane) <b>HASIUK STANISŁAW</b>	
Date of Birth Data urodzenia <b>15. 11. 16.</b>	Height/Wzrost <b>5 ft. 4 ins. stóp cali</b>	Colour of hair/Kolor włosów <b>d. blond</b>	Colour of eyes/Kolor oczu <b>grey</b>
Complexion/Cera		Marks or scars/Znaki szczególne	
Address to which proceeding/Adres miejsca przeznaczenia <b>OAKDALE TRAINING CENTRE, BLACKWOOD MON.</b>			
Occupation/Zawód <b>COAL MIN. VOLUNTEER</b>		Employer (name and address)/Pracodawca (nazwisko i adres)	
Ministry of Labour occupational Classification No. (if known) Numer zawodowej klasyfikacji Ministry of Labour (jeśli znany) <b>225.27.</b>		Date of relegation for an indefinite period Data przeniesienia <b>6 OCT 1947</b>	
Local Office of the Ministry of Labour and National Service at which he/she will report Miejscowy Urząd Ministry of Labour and National Service do którego winien/a się zgłosić		<b>CHURCH STR, NEWBRIDGE, MONTGOMERY</b>	
A. I CERTIFY that the above named alien has been relegated from military service to the Unemployed List/Class "W" Royal Army Reserve. <del>He/she</del> has been instructed to report to the Police on his/her arrival in <b>OAKDALE MON.</b> and thereafter to the local office of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. STWIERDZAM, że wyżej wymieniony obcokrajowiec został przeniesiony ze służby wojskowej na Listę Niezatrudnionych/do Rezerwy.* Został/a on/a pouczony/a, że z chwilą przybycia do <b>OAKDALE MON.</b> ma się zgłosić do Urzędu Policyjnego, a następnie do miejscowego Urzędu Ministry of Labour and National Service.			
Date/Data <b>6 OCT 1947</b>	Signature of Officer Commanding Podpis Dowódcy Oddziału <i>[Signature]</i>		
B. I understand that, with my consent, I have been relegated to the Unemployed List/Reserve* from the Polish Resettlement Corps/A.T.S. Polish Resettlement Section* in order that I may take up work with the employer specified above or such further work as may be approved by the Ministry of Labour and National Service. I understand that if I fail to take up such work or if I change this work without the permission of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, I shall be liable to be recalled, and, if recalled, any pay or allowances in lieu of leave which I may be given when I am again relegated to the Unemployed List/Reserve* will be deducted from the amount of any financial benefit due to me on final relinquishment of my commission/discharge*. I also understand that I shall not be entitled to another civilian outfit or cash grant in lieu, or a further issue of supplementary clothing coupons. Jest mi wiadome, że za moją zgodą zostałem przeniesiony z Polskiego Korpusu Przysposobienia i Rozmieszczenia/ Polskiej Sekcji Przysposobienia i Rozmieszczenia (A.T.S.)* na Listę Niezatrudnionych/do Rezerwy* celem rozpoczęcia pracy u wyżej wskazanego pracodawcy lub też takiego dalszego zatrudnienia, które zatwierdzi Ministry of Labour and National Service. Jest mi również wiadome, że, w wypadku niepodjęcia przeze mnie takiej pracy lub zmiany zatrudnienia bez zgody Ministry of Labour and National Service, mogę zostać odwołany i że w razie odwołania zold i należności pobrane zamiast urlopu, które mogą mi być następnie wypłacone w związku z ponownym przeniesieniem na Listę Niezatrudnionych/do Rezerwy*, zostaną potrącone z sumy należności, przyznanych mi w związku ze złożeniem stopnia oficerskiego/demobilizacji. *Wiadomo mi również, że nie będę uprawniony do dalszego wyposażenia w odzież cywilną lub otrzymania równowartości w gotówce, ani do dalszego otrzymania dodatkowych kuponów odzieżowych.			
Date Data <b>6 OCT 1947.</b>	Signature Podpis <i>[Signature]</i>		
	Counter signature of an officer Kontrasygnatura oficera <i>[Signature]</i>		

\* Delete whichever is not applicable/\* niepotrzebne skreślić

P.T.O./ODWRÓCIĆ

**NATIONAL COAL BOARD**  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Government Training Centre,

Moss Road,

ASKERN,

Nr. Doncaster

7 OCT'47

Dear Sir,

I have to inform you that your course of Stage "A"  
training at this centre will be completed on Saturday,

11 OCT'47

You have been allocated by the Ministry of Fuel and  
Power for stage "B" training with

*Smithywood Colliery, Rotherham.*

and you are instructed to report to the above-mentioned  
colliery on Monday,

13 OCT'47

Further information in respect of travelling  
Instructions, railway warrants, etc, will be given to  
you by the Placing Officer at this Centre.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. *L. Majewski*

A. J. COLES

Manager.

DH 20525/4/8 1m 6/47 L

Mr. LIGEZA, E.

1. You are going to work in the British Coal Mines but before you can commence your training for this work it is necessary that you should learn sufficient English to be able to understand the instructors. Arrangements are accordingly being made for you to go to the English Teaching Centre at

Melbourne, Yorks, on 31 MAY '48

2. Your travelling expenses to this Centre will be paid and whilst you are there you will receive free lodging and food and be paid the sum of 30/- per week. This includes the 5/- per week pocket money you are already receiving together with a training allowance of 25/- per week. If you have been credited with this training allowance whilst learning English at Full Sutton the accrued arrears will also be paid. The training allowance is subject to regular attendance at the English classes and to applying yourself conscientiously to the study of the English language.
3. Your stay at the English Teaching Centre will last from four to eight weeks according to the progress you make in learning the language. You will then proceed to a Mining Training Centre. Whilst there you will be paid surface wages according to your age as follows:-

Age 18	£3 6s. Od. per week
19	£3 12s. Od. " "
20	£3 17 6d. " "
21 and over	£5 0s. Od. " "

Out of the above wages you will have to pay approximately 35/- per week for your lodging and food including supper meal.

4. After three weeks in the Mining Training Centre you will start work in a mine underground and your wages will be increased immediately by 14/- for men 18 to 20 and 15/- for men 21 and over, per week. You will have a chance to earn still more.

DH 23123/2/541 5m 2/48 L

2

Nº 017752

ALIENS ORDER 1953

CERTIFICATE OF  
REGISTRATION

You must produce this certificate  
if required to do so by any Police  
Officer or Immigration Officer

SEE ALSO THE NOTICE ON THE BACK  
OF THIS CERTIFICATE



Signature of Holder *E. Ligęza*

Received the sum of 5s 0d for the issue of this certificate

*W. W. W. W.*  
Registration Officer  
Chief Superintendent.

Date of Issue 31st August, 1955

Place of Issue C.P.O. Preston

Name (Surname first in BLOCK CAPITALS)  
LIGEZA, Edward

Nationality Polish

Born on 2.2.14 in Czeszochowa.

Passport or other papers as to Nationality and Identity  
Idt Cert . U.S. Zone PC. 26229

Marital Status Single

1

Training and Registration: Edward Ligęza (1914-1981) was discharged from the resettlement corps on the 08.05.1947 and like other Poles opted for work as a miner and settled at the Herringthorpe Miners' Hostel.

## County Borough of Rotherham

TELEPHONE NOS. 982-983

Any further communication on the subject  
of this letter should be addressed to:-

THE CHIEF CONSTABLE  
ROTHERHAM

and the following number quoted :-



*Chief Constable's Office*

*Rotherham*  
August, 1951.

YOUR REF. No. 736

R. HALL  
CHIEF CONSTABLE

**MINERS HOSTEL**

You are required to attend the ~~Aliens~~  
~~Registration Office, Police Office, Frederick Street, Rotherham,~~  
at 4.45 P.M. on FRIDAY the 10TH day of August, 1951,  
for interview by an Immigration Officer.

You must bring with you ALL documents of  
identity including:-

1. Documents showing landing in this country.
2. Discharge Certificates from the Army, Navy or Air Force.
3. Police Registration Certificate.
4. Any Passports (new or old).
5. Military Service papers (any country).
6. National Registration Identity Card.
7. Any foreign identity papers.
8. Birth Certificate and Marriage Certificate.

BRING THIS PAPER WITH YOU AND PRODUCE IT ON  
ARRIVAL AT THE ~~POLICE OFFICE.~~ **HOSTEL.**

PLEASE KEEP TO THE APPOINTED TIME AND THEREBY  
AVOID UNDUE WAITING.

*R. Hall*  
Chief Constable.

To: MAJEWSKI Leopald

Immigration interviews: suspected Communist infiltration in the UK after the War led to interviews such as these for 'aliens'. These were designed to try to catch out any Communist spies. Every foreigner (i.e. Pole, Ukrainian...) had to go through this procedure.



First photo: Stanisław Hasiuk at left, Fr. Szymankiewicz at centre left. In the second photo, Marian Macko is the upright figure second from right.



Poster: September 1939, POLAND risked all for liberty, yours as well as hers. September 1944, you have your liberty, but don't forget POLAND's. Finally, at lower right, English girls would visit the lads for weekend dances at the camp (name unknown).



Herringthorpe Valley Road Miners' Hostel; the Polish miners show everyone how to play netball.



Herringthorpe Valley Road Miners' Hostel; Polish miners' netball team photo; late 1940s.