

[Bronisław Zbigniew Bulkowski papers](#)
Bronisław Zbigniew “Bruce” Bułkowski.
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Translations of Diary.
5 December 2022
By Vincent E. Slatt

31 January 1942 - 11 May 1946.

1. 31 Jan 1942. Farewells at Mr. and Mrs. Luba’s home. 915am.
2. 1 Feb 1942. Last farewells at the station. Arrival to [Kołomyja](#). Nighttime in the corridor--its cold--black coffee--we head to [Przemysł](#).
3. 2 Feb. Loading onto the wagons. In a car without seats, about 80-100 people.
4. 3 Feb. [Przemysł](#). The bathhouse. The camp. Black coffee. They play “[Serenada włóczęgi](#)” on the Pathefon.
 - a. [Written by Hal Hallifax and Melle Weersma, this is a 1930s tango released in released in Polish as “The Vagabond’s Serenade,” and in English-lyrics as “[Penny Serenade](#).” Pathefon is a player similar to a gramophone.]
5. 4 Feb. Morning incentive: evening in the hall there were about 400 people, packed like sardines. On 5 straw mattresses we slept 10 people, including 4 young ladies.
6. 5 Feb. Morning on our feet from the start [od natarcia].
7. 6 Feb. Tadeusz L goes to the hospital: congested, fever, and a cough. 9 o’clock in the evening we go for lunch.
8. 7 Feb. Transfer to a new room. The guys are hit in the face.
9. 8 Feb. At night another set of beatings. A German broke a large stick beating the guys.
10. 10 Feb. Tadeusz Luba returns from the hospital.
11. 10 Feb. I sleep on the stove because there is no space on the floor.
12. 11 Feb. 5:45 am. We leave for [Kraków](#), no transfers. Kraków, [Katowice](#), etc., etc., all the way to Berlin.
13. 13 Feb. In Berlin, the bathhouse, hot soup and once again on the trains.
14. 14 Feb. We arrive to [Altona](#).
15. 15 Feb. Morning on our feet, and the finger on my left hand swells so badly that at night I cannot sleep. I don’t go to work, but help in the kitchen.
16. 25 Feb. For lunch we have potatoes cooked in their skins.
17. 27 Feb. I went to the doctor.
18. 28 Feb. Now the second finger begins to swell. A new group of 35 workers arrives.
19. 1 March 1942. In clothes and jacket I weigh 63 kilos (140 pounds)
20. 8 Mar. We can hear the artillery fire. Bombings in Dortmund. During the day there are air raids and alarms.
21. 14 Mar. Three guys escape.

22. 13 June 1942. The meal is radishes, but more like radish leaves.
23. 15 Jun. Left index finger is starting to swell.
24. 24 Jun. Someone stole 1.5 kg of tobacco from Tadeusz L.
25. 3 July. A train killed a worker. He is survived by a wife and 3 children.
26. 5 July. One of the workers is left crippled by a train, another partially.
27. 8 Aug. Train catastrophe at our station. An engine and ten cars went off the tracks. We work all day and all night.
28. 16 Aug. We leave for [Siegen](#). We dig a tunnel 2651km in length. We work through the night from 10.10 till 5 in the morning. I serve as the translator, therefore I'm not laboring.
29. 20 Aug. For a 1.5 kg loaf of bread they charge us 30-40 reichsmarks, when the same bread in the stores would go for 0.60 rm.
30. 7 Sept. First time in Germany, a "vehicle" comes at 9.30 in the evening.
31. 10 Sept. We finish making the tunnel in one direction, and now we begin on the second track.
32. 14 Sept. Tadeusz L. had an accident. While working on the electrical lamp, the electricity got him, but he is fortunate, the electric was unplugged and about the whole accident everyone talked all night long.
33. 16 Sept. Frequent air raid sirens, three or four times a day.
34. 17 Sept. We have 2000m till the end of the tunnel.
35. 28 Sept. We are transferred to the barracks.
36. 5 Oct. Bombing of Siegen at 12:30, no casualties.
37. From 5 Oct. to 20 Nov. The train killed one of our workers. We finished the work in the tunnel and we began to work in Blichhammer, a station about 30 km from Siegen (one hour ride by XXX). We get up at 4 in the morning, depart at 6, and work starts at 8 am. We return to the barracks at 8 in the evening. Clocks from 1 Nov are wound back 1 hour. One of my pals is released from the hospital to a recuperating house for his lungs. Someone stole my shirt.
38. 22 Nov. News about the taking our people to Śniatyn. I started playing cards (21) at 5 in the afternoon on Sunday and played till 4 in the morning on Monday. I won 250 RM. On Monday I didn't go to work.
39. 15 Dec. We receive half our lunch and dinner, because we were once one and now we are two. We finish work at 4 and are in our barracks at 4.45.
40. 24 Dec. Christmas Eve. For the entire holiday we receive 2 loaves of bread, cheese, butter, margarine, candies, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bottle of vodka, kielbasa, pasztetówka [liverwurst] (naturally just a small piece), a pack of tobacco and 20 cigarettes. For lunch, potatoes with gravy. Through the whole holiday I am fed like a bull [American: stuffed like a turkey].
41. 28 Dec. The first snow. Work is simply sweeping, tossing, and removing snow.
42. 1 Jan 1943. New Year.
43. 2 Jan 1943. I won 110 RM. I eat bread which is cheaper after the holidays--20 RM.
44. 3 Jan 1943. I spend the day with the Soviets in their barracks.
45. 13 Jan. It has warmed up, there is wind and rain.
46. 19 Jan. Almost every day there are air raid sirens.

“Part III.” Frequent air raid sirens. Bombs “eat”--almost one entire street is gone.

47. 15 Mar. I ride from one station to another on the bumper of the last car.
48. 25 Mar. I am riding a freight train and at full speed I have to jump out of it. Luckily, I only scraped some skin of my hands.
49. 7 May. I got acquainted with a Soviet lady; named Zina?
50. 8 May. Like before. I return home at 11 at night, rain, I enter the barracks soaking wet, but was it worth it?
51. 9 May. I bought an accordion for 100 RM.
52. 14 May. I've spent the entire month building a new barrack. There are supposed to be 80 Soviet POWs brought there.
53. 22 May. Zina has been replaced, Sourka now has her place. Green Week-Pentecost. Just like on Monday, I ate such a dinner I didn't eat again till Tuesday.
54. 20 June. Celina -we work under the tunnel--block W.S.
55. June. One of the workers is crippled by a train. They take him with Tadeusz to the hospital.
56. July. Inspection of provisions requires the registration of camp residents with the Kreisoppman.. [Kreishauptmannschaft -- the District Administration of County Authorities]
57. 21 July. Someone stole 80 RM from Tadeusz L.
58. 27 July. Tadeusz L got hurt in the hand.
59. 27 July. 2. 1.5 days, that is 32 hours, eight times the air ride sirens. Mussolini resigned, Marshal Badoglio. Amongst the Germans it is an awful XXXX and they are resigned. They don't believe they will win.
60. 1 Aug 43. Finally I found what I was looking for. By the name of Sewerka (sp?), a girl truly worth sinning. Tadeusz L. also has his, but that is still horribly {illegible}. From 26 or, that is, 28 {illegible}
61. 6. Aug. We've transferred to Kombach. There we have 800 meters of rail tracks to build.
62. 10 Aug. At night I won 425 RM.
63. 11 Aug. Intentionally I lost 70 RM so there wouldn't be too much shouting that I had won so much. Wine goes for 5-10-20 RM.
64. 29. Aug. [On the margins of this entry it is written: in a different hand, different ink: Michal Czorny]. One of my friends working on gliding, via jumping from the train got caught under the wheel and died on getting pulled out. He wanted his fate; his brother and his girlfriend {whose?} had visited and learned about his death. The girlfriend couldn't calm down until evening. It is true, they really loved each other. He had 100 RM that I had lent him. Haba had also given him 100 RM for {illegible}. My girlfriend was also in heavy grief and asked me to be careful.
65. 30 Aug. I found the basket that someone had stolen from me on 20.Nov 1942.
66. 1 Sept. There is supposed to be the funeral of my friend named Michal Czorny. He was one of the best guys, and with his help I met my girlfriend. Tadeusz Luba is also very much “poisoning himself” with his, and I can't wait behind.
67. 9 Sept. I learned about the capitulation of Italy and also about the news about the taking of Kyiv by the Soviets. There are 21 of us now. Banzing from Czechia changes the

- steering gears. Dzurig raises the gears some 15 meters with a wooden underlay like a feather and lays it on the tracks. Its really something to be admired.
68. 10 Sept. They took two friends to the police, most likely for for taking potatoes that had spilled out under the wagons. About Kyiv is it like a fairy tale, there is nothing in the newspapers to verify it.
69. 12 Sept. In the barracks there is a break from 4 in the afternoon until 8 (am? pm?). I escort one Polish lady who was running late for her train. She lives 4.5 km from us. Simply put "cztery mile pizki za kawalek kiszki" [This is an old Eastern Poland saying], rather as a "thank you" because, unfortunately, there were two of us. We both went so that our girlfriends wouldn't find out about it. They were at the engagement party for a girlfriend.
70. 14 Sept. Both colleagues returned from the police station. They came to work for 3 days.
71. 4 Oct. The clocks change an hour. 6am is now 5am.
72. 4 Oct. We learn that they've bombed Altena, the place where we first worked for 6 months. The bombings are now horribly frequent and large. Trains arrive with an hour or two delay, and sometimes more.
73. 13 Oct. The first frost. We build a fire and warm ourselves. By 10 it is already warm.
74. 17 Oct. My love with Aleksandra (Zawodna) Zaporozec has ended. I look for a new one!
75. 25 Oct. Somehow I can't get a new pair. I still think about my old pair.
76. 31 Oct. For entertainment one of the Poles...
77. Two pages of signatures from friends: Tadeusz Luba; Karol Chryszcz; Tomko Panieczuk; Tadeusz Zagrobny; Wregierak; Nykoly Chaszczuk; Stanislaw Lubuska; Fedorcza; Jan Zanysyna; Wasyl Begin; Frapak.
78. ... got beat up by our boys because he can't learn to behave like each has their own. My love wants to return to me. I don't know how that will be. I escorted the friend of my girlfriend and she told me all about it. I escorted her from Siegen about 3 km. On my return I was caught by the air raid sirens, but nothing happened to me.
79. 25 Oct [date out of order]. I won at cards a watch worth 250 marks and 400 marks cash.
80. 1 Nov. In our barracks now lives a Rumanian, the wife of one of our workers.
81. 15 Nov 43. Luba [Tadeusz] since the 11 Oct is going with a new girlfriend. The girl is very pretty and good. Tadeusz doesn't go to work anymore because of what happened to his legs. Today a girl came to the barracks from Geisweid. After the return as a penance he had to kneel in front of us and swear to us that he wouldn't go anywhere again. The whole scene was worth a laugh. My girlfriend now completely belongs to me. There is no end to the kissing. It is all for me. Unfortunately, Sunday is so short. Tadek is in love up to his nose. All day every day he can't talk about anything else, and at night we talk about girlfriends till 11 or 12.
82. 28 Nov. Disorder. I don't know what to do. I received from one girl a card with expressions of love and a request that I send her the same. A summary of the letter is [Transcription in Russian]. The girl is pretty, but not like my Shura. All the same, I have the intention of making my feelings for Klara. She is from a better, more intelligent family, and I would go with Tadeusz in the same direction because both live not far.

- About the new one, I have a better chance in all regards because the girl clearly likes me a from my part I've had enough of the old one and the new one pulls me in.
83. 28 Nov. One of my pals from Altena escaped with his girlfriend to us and wants to work here. The girl is gorgeous. They've been dating already 11 months. Already for the second night they are sleeping together in our room on Tadeusz's bed.
84. 1 Dec. I go to Klara for the first time. Unfortunately, I couldn't call to her; I'll go again tomorrow. Futka wasn't taken, and had to return to Altena. They intend to go to Frankfurt.
85. Dec. [no date]. An entire comedy has begun. Czyna, in all holiness, asks me to go out with her and Klara also wants the same. I am like between a rock and a hard place. I now have two girlfriends and I don't know what to do with them. Which one should I go to? Should I stay with. Its a scene worthy of pity.
86. Dec [no date]. Three times I've been at Klara's. I can't enter the house, so when everyone has gone to sleep that she then let's me into her room and there we sit until 12 at night. I sleep now about 3-4 hours a day. One time the landlady didn't sleep and so we met each other in the shelter and sat there.
87. 10 Dec. I begin the night shift. 8 doesn't happen, so I sleep all night at the rail road barrack and the days I have free. The work is good, but I can't see my girlfriend so often because before 8 o'clock she can't come over and I head to work at 7, returning at 6 in the morning.
88. 26 Dec. Klara told me that her boss-man is on vacation and he wants to see who Klara is going out with. I had to go there and I got permission from him to visit Klara in the evenings. The lady of the house also gave her permission so now I have free access
89. 26 Dec. At 2 in the afternoon there are already 35 girls in our barracks. In the evening there are about 60. Tomorrow I have to go to work for the day. For an entire two weeks I didn't work a single day. Each night I slept and the days were free.
90. 16 Jan [44]. Things with Klara are again at a standstill so I will return to my own.
91. 20 Jan 44. On Saturday it is 21 Jan and a new {illegible illegible} with Szucha at 9 pm. I am completely waiting for this moment. How will it be?
92. 21 Jan 44. It was prime!
93. I. Again snow fell and it was quite a lot
94. III. Two times now I have spent Sunday just like it is supposed to be!
95. 24. March. I work in the warehouse at Krentach [spelling?]
96. 28 March. Again working on the "straights"
97. 10 April. Me with my gal in the first on the first grasses?
98. 11 April. I begin my work on the windowpanes.
99. 6 June. The English have landed on the beaches.
100. 18 June. I left my girlfriend and now I can't find space for myself. Now I know that I never loved any of all the ones I've had so far. Neither Wanda, Maryla, Jadzia, Wisia, and the others were never as nice as this one. Oh well, that's rough. What will be I don't know. Am I still going to go out with her or not? It all depends on her. I simply can't look at another girl. Alte Libe rostet nicht!! [German: Old love never rusts!]
101. 30 July. Again my {illegible}

102. 10 August. 10:20 am. I am with mine in the forest. We're happy even though {illegible}. Not knowing what we had under us, we started an idyllic {illegible} and... returning to the barack I saw that I am completely covered in mud-- my ankles, knees and legs. With three {illegible} supports. And her? It was worth a laugh.
103. 11 August. My girlfriend is taken with a trench-digging company. She went at 8 in the morning, probably for 3 weeks. I go around like at a loss, but I don't allow myself to recognize is. I have regret/unhappiness for everything and everyone. That only she would return after the month.
104. 16 Aug 44. Bombing of Siegen. 12 o'clock. 3 in the afternoon.
105. 16 Dec 44. Bombing of Siegen city is 10% destroyed. About 3000 fire bombs, 350 harvest bombs, and 35 minutes airborne. Szurba was brought from Holland to Germany. Dusseldorf.
106. 29 Jan 45. Monday, 11 in the morning. One plane bombed Siegen. A bomb fell near our barrack, just 5 meters away. In this place (there is an x indicated), it was a bomb 1-10 meters, from 2-7 meteres nothing happened to me. In this space (xx) a friend was hit and seriously wounded in the head.
107. 1 Feb 45. Thursday, 4:10 am to 7:33 am. Nighttime bombings are horrible experiences. Everything around us burns. Here after the bombings I have come to the station on the other side of the tunnel. Here some of the bombs that didn't burn are broken up. Fear. From this time we will not sleep peacefully more than 3-4 hours a day and the rest of the time in the tunnels.
108. 9 Feb. Alarm from 11 to 330. News about the shooting of my girlfriend Szura. She didn't want to go with a soldier and so he shot her. With a reason or not, we don't know.
109. 14 Feb. Bombings, but, rather, shootings with machine guns. Siegen. I stand near the fence and luckily nothing happened to me.
110. 19 Feb 45. Third big bombing of Siegen, but only {illegible illegible}.
111. 22 Feb 45. Bombing of Kreuzstadt Main Station.
112. 23 Feb 45. With help they are shooting around Siegen with machine guns and they threw two bombs. A transport of Poles arrived from Silesia. I recognized one Polish lady, Wasz{second half of name illegible}
113. 28 Feb 45. Bombing of Siegen, primarily the railway lines.
114. 1 March. Again the bombing of Siegen main station. No it is every day 1, 2, or 3 bombs and shots from the machine guns. Since 28 Feb 45, I sleep only in the tunnels and am merely a guest in the barracks.
115. 8 March 45. Two times in one day they bomb Siegen.
116. 9 March 45. Today we didn't go anywhere and there was nothing to eat.
117. 10 March 45. Today we got a bowl of soup and 3 pounds of bread for 5 people. Now we cannot leave the tunnel. Planes now fly without alarms and sometimes with. All day from 8am until 7pm, and again after 8pm there is more.
118. 11 March 45. Again, the bombing of Siegen. The entire northern half of the city is on fire.
119. 12 Mar 45. They are starting the city evacuation of Siegen and the surrounding area.

120. 16 Mar 45. 4 bombs
121. 17 Mar 45. 4 bombs in Siegen. They destroy 4 postal wagons with different products. Candies, chocolates, cakes, cigarettes. They have {illegible}. Already its the second day at this German lady's house. I intend to sleep but am not sure how that would be. I slept and {something} so I won't go again. [Note, in the margin it says "Blanka"]
122. 19 Mar 45. Several bombs in Siegen.
123. 20 Mar 45. 4 airplanes shot up the entrance to the funnels, luckily no one was hurt. Karol Chreszcz didn't {illegible} about a meter from his {illegible}
124. 21 Mar. 4 bombs
125. 22 mar. 6 bombs
126. 23 March 45. Friday. Bigger boms in Siegen
127. 24 March 45. 6 bombs in Siegen
128. 26 March 45. They are taking us to Baur--- in Siegen East to the tunnel.
129. 28 Mar 45. We don't go to work. There is some movement. All the Germans are escaping and our {illegible} is supposed to travel to W--- E--- {illegible place}. We call for a conference in Siegen.
130. 29 Mar 45. The first artillery missiles fall on Siegen
131. 30 March 45. The next wave of artillery beats Siegen. They have military {illegible} between the people and in the tunnels they have candies, chocolates, cakes, cigarettes, and canned goods.
132. 31 Mar 45. Further artillery
133. 1 April. Individual machine gun shots.
134. 2 April. Americans have come to the city. They keep it in two places. There are still Germans.
135. 4 April. Many peasants flee the Americans. They attack our bunker from on high where there are Germans.
136. 5 April Today almost all of them go and we go after them. Everything we {illegible}. The entire trunk of chocolate and various {illegible}. The Germans maintained their positions above us on the hill.
137. 6 April 45. We leave Siegen. We go via Eisern and the front is shooting artillery. {illegible} second artillery and shots. We cross happily/luckily and at night we stay in Neuenkirchen.
138. 7 April 45. At 8am we are still on the road to Friedenwald. Evening we are in Hachenburg. We sleep in a factory. First time I saw Black people [murzynow]. A funny nation. [śmieszny naród].
139. 9 April 45. At 1030am we leave by car towards Bonn. They take us through Bonn to Kieln (Cologne) and we are in barracks--about 3000 Poles--and after a day {illegible} again. Noone receives any work. No {illegible} and what will later become of us is unknown.
140. 12 April. 33 couples get married. At the evening an american orchestra plays ({illegible}).
141. 15 April 45. Sunday. Zacha.

142. 21 April 45. Night with girlfriend in bed and 22 April departure to Brohl for work with the American army.
143. 27 April 45. Tadeusz Luba advises my {water-damaged blurred word} to work and I stay in Brohl. I cannot find myself a place.
144. 28 April 1945. I find work in an office as a secretary of the company.
145. 6 May 45. First time in Germany in {illegible}
146. 10 May 45. First time in Germany I bathe in a river (Ren). About the {illegible} its primarily mostly just bacon fat and meat, but, the German girls are protected with the other girls.
147. 27 May 45. A Czech girl by the name of Ani. I didn't at all expect that it would go so well but getting to her was about 12km of road. It took me 45 minutes by bicycle.
148. 29 May 45. Again at Ani's and 11pm return home
149. 31 May 45. I sleep at Ani's and in the morning I return and our company is moving on. Quickly to the car and on towards Kassel. We quarter in {illegible} factory
150. 14 June. Departure from Kassel to Giessen. Work in an airplane barracks. We sleep in tents.
151. Its been a while since I've written, so I'll try to summarize from 14 June to 20 August. In Giessen there are three Polish camps that I was in several times and in the end I started going to one particular camp where the girls were bold. I met her on 1 August and now I often go to see her. The camp is about 300meters from us--hence very close--which is convenient for me. 2 August about 60 Poles from our company were let go and they went to Poland but at the border they were detained and returned but were not allowed to return to the company. Our boys now work in the food warehouses sorting and loading the packages of provisions sent from America for the army. There are only 3 Polish companies, about 500 people, and now they have formed 2 companies and there are about 350 people. I am still a secretary and I don't work, just doing what is in the office and after a few minutes I rest. A few times I bathed in Giessen in the stream or in the pond. I've learned how to ride a motorcycle. We all wear American military uniforms but on our left arms there is white writing on red for the Poles.
152. 17 Sept 45. I broke up with Aniela S.
153. 27 Sept 45. Marysia?
154. 3 October 45. Poles from the camp are departing for Poland and my Marysia along with them. We receive American military uniforms died a navy blue. {granatowy}
155. 15 Oct 45. We are let go from the company and we walk to the camp. Here are mostly Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians and very few Polish girls. I obtain a position as a secretary and run the Polish office.
156. 21. I met a German, Analiza, and tomorrow she will sleep over at my place. Analiza didn't sleep over, but she took my pants and left a skirt and that is all I saw of her. Olga and Aniela.
157. 18 November. We depart for the camp in Wetzlar. I recognize the face of a girl, but...
158. 29 February 46. Departure to guard company {kompania wartownicza} to Mannheim Kafertal.
159. 16 March. I work as a secretary in the {illegible} company

160. 10 April. Again in the guard company.
161. 12 May. I figured out that Ala has started going out with another guy.
162. 11 May. In a delegation to the cemetery to the dedication of tombstones on the graves of two killed Poles.

--End of Diary; Last entry: 11 May--