

4 Polish Liberators and *Ostarbeiterinnen* in Belgium During the Cold War

Mixed Marriages and their Differences for Immigrant Men and Women

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INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Second World War, about 20,000 migrants arrived in Belgium. Among them were Polish soldiers who had served with the Allies and liberated parts of Flanders and Soviet women forced labourers, often called *Ostarbeiterinnen*, who travelled to Belgium after they had been employed in the Nazi war industry. Both groups had a lot in common. They were young and unmarried upon arrival, and they married Belgians soon afterward. Furthermore, they came from Central and Eastern Europe and their migration and settlement took place on the eve of the Cold War. This geopolitical context made it difficult or even impossible for them to visit or return to their homelands. The most important difference between the two groups was that these men and women were differently treated by the gender-specific migration and naturalisation policies of their home and host countries. This chapter explores the ramifications of these differences upon their experience of arrival and the settlement process.

TWO GROUPS OF MIGRANTS

The First Polish Armoured Division was established in Poland in the 1930s and numbered at its peak about 16,000 soldiers. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in September 1939, the Division fled the country and marched through Southern Europe and France. The Division helped to liberate Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands. In sixteen days it passed through Flanders.¹ During their stay, many soldiers fell in love with young Flemish women. After the Division had passed through the Netherlands it hoped to march on and liberate Poland, but in February 1945 the Yalta Conference consolidated the Soviet Union's influence on Poland. After the war the Division was set up as an occupying force in Germany for two years. By the time it was dissolved, about three hundred soldiers had married Flemish women.² Most of them settled in the Flemish cities they had

helped to liberate. They became known as 'Polish liberators', a term former Division soldiers also used to refer to themselves.

The second group consisted of young women who were deported to Nazi Germany to do forced labour after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.³ These *Ostarbeiterinnen* were mainly Ukrainian, although some were Russian and Belarusian young women. They were the largest group amongst the total of 2.5 million Soviet workers and stood nearly at the bottom rung of the Nazi racial ladder.⁴ While at work, the young women met Western European deported workers, volunteers and Prisoners of War. Off duty any contact between the groups was forbidden, but at work there were numerous love affairs. After the end of the war, about 4,000 *Ostarbeiterinnen* chose to travel with their Belgian partners to Belgium rather than be repatriated to the Soviet Union where they could be suspected of collaboration. A few couples married in Germany, but most married in Belgium, and all settled there.⁵

NATION, GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP

The mixed marriages these immigrant men and women contracted with Belgian citizens could change their legal position. Belgian citizenship law was based on the concept of derivative citizenship: the citizenship of the men determined the citizenship of all family members and dual citizenship was not allowed (this was also a common practice in many other countries).⁶ When people intermarried, the law required the women to exchange their original citizenship for that of their husbands. It is generally assumed that derivative citizenship in cases of intermarriage worked to immigrant women's advantage, because they were granted the citizenship of their husbands' country. I argue that when researching the different advantages and disadvantages for intermarried immigrant men and women with regard to citizenship, one has to look at the context in which people lived. A context specific approach needs to focus on gendered citizenship, the arrival and settlement of immigrant men and women, the dual nature of citizenship and the geopolitical situation.

For decades, scholars have neglected the influence of gender relations on the construction and functioning of nation states. Nira Yuval-Davis has analysed how gender and nation are intertwined. She argues that the construction of nation states at the end of the eighteenth century, in which an imagined 'state of nature' transformed into a nation state, was designed in the image of the male individual and left women outside that political project.⁷ Scholars, who do not pay attention to gender issues in their studies of the history of nation states, do exactly the same.⁸ Carole Pateman showed how marriage played a key role in maintaining the nation state. Women and men were free to consent to marriage, but marriage limited the opportunities of women because they signed a contract in which their



Figure 4.1 Ostarbeiterinnen pose for a portrait in the German city Hagen in 1943 (Nauchno-Informatsionnyĭ i prosvietitel'skii tseŋtr' Memorial, Fond 21, 43411 Sitnik Mariia Frankowa: 'Foto v gorodi Gageni-Vest', 5.6.1943).

rights were subordinate to those of their husbands.⁹ In Belgium for example, the Civil Code considered men responsible for their wives, whom they had to 'protect', whereas the wives had to 'obey' their husbands, and were obliged to 'live with their husbands and to follow them'. The husbands were also supposed to take the lead economically. For instance, the marital law of property assigned responsibility to the husbands, and not the wives, for administering the family's goods.¹⁰

The concern about the unity of citizenship in the family led to the application of derivative citizenship.¹¹ It reified the concept of citizenship as a masculine attribute and assumed women's citizenship as secondary to male citizenship.¹² The women's citizenship was revocable and a nation state could use it as a prime marker of inclusion or exclusion. Loss of citizenship was a disincentive for women to intermarry, as was the fact that children would receive their father's citizenship rather than their mother's.¹³

Research usually concentrates on the consequences of migration policy for men and women, but ignores naturalisation policy.¹⁴ Policy on nationality seems to be advantageous to immigrant women because they obtained the host society's nationality when they married and immigrant men could only receive it after naturalisation.¹⁵ But policies on migration differ from policies for granting citizenship, as do the consequences for men and women.¹⁶ Only when a study focuses on both migration and naturalisation policies can the advantages and disadvantages of gendered citizenship upon arrival and during the settlement process be explored.

In the analyses of migration (and sometimes naturalisation) policies, the focus usually falls on the political status a nation state assigns to individuals, and not on the impact of this assignment on the daily lives of immigrants.¹⁷ With one exception, the studies that have so far been published on Polish liberators and *Ostarbeiterinnen* follow this trend.¹⁸ Individuals can simply follow the prescribed rules on migration and naturalisation policies, but may also deviate from them in their practices which can lead to other (dis)advantages for immigrant men and women.¹⁹ Researching migration and naturalisation policies from a bottom-up perspective allows us to understand the meaning of gendered citizenship in social practices.²⁰ Acknowledging the dual nature of citizenship, as both a political status and a set of social practices, enables us to examine the correlation between gender differences in migration and naturalisation policies and the differences intrinsic to these policies.²¹

Research on gendered citizenship is usually limited to the host country.²² It generally presumes that migrants want to obtain citizenship of the host country (whether or not combined with their original citizenship). However, the citizenship acquisition for individuals depends on the geopolitical situation. The Cold War context shaped specific legal opportunities for Slavic immigrants in the Atlantic World, which sometimes led to individuals wanting to give up a certain citizenship. Not only the possibility of attaining citizenship, but also of renouncing it, determines the different

opportunities of immigrant men and women (see also De Hart's chapter in this volume).

This chapter shows how gender presuppositions in migration and naturalisation policies influenced the social practices of immigrant men and women. It examines the dual nature of citizenship in a specific historical context. The study indicates how different situations at different times were advantageous to intermarried immigrant men and women.

METHOD AND SOURCES

In the source material I looked for names of individuals belonging to the two migration groups and consulted their files in Belgian government archives.²³ This enabled me to determine firstly, what criteria the Belgian state used to permit foreigners to settle on Belgian territory and to receive Belgian citizenship, and secondly, how individual migrants dealt with these possibilities. Additional information on the influence of state policy on the social practices of individuals came from interviews with Polish liberators and *Ostarbeiterinnen*.

The three hundred Polish liberators knew each other well since they lived concentrated in the liberated cities and frequently attended memorial ceremonies.²⁴ I was able to find information in membership rolls of migrant organisations, in articles in the migration press and through networks of survivors.²⁵ My search resulted in sixty-two names of Polish liberators, for whom I found fifty-one files in the Archive of the Belgian Aliens Police and fifty-two naturalisation dossiers in the Archive of the Belgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The files from the Aliens Police gave information on the permission to individuals to stay temporarily and on their legal situation. The naturalisation dossiers contained personal applications, tax declaration forms, a copy of the police record and a screening report from the public prosecutor. The later the liberator applied for naturalisation, the more information was in the dossier. I also interviewed twelve liberators between July 2005 and February 2006. The liberators told me how they dealt with their changing legal situation in Belgium and in Poland.

The *Ostarbeiterinnen* were more numerous and lived scattered throughout Belgium. Despite their higher number, their dispersal made them less visible than the liberators. The largest migrant organisation, the Association for Soviet Citizens (*Soiuz Sovetskikh Grazhdan*), did not keep their membership rolls. I therefore decided to make a case study of Antwerp.²⁶ In the city's marriage register I discovered the names of seventy-nine Russian, Ukrainian or Belarusian young women who married Belgians in 1945. Only sixty-five individual files could be found in the Archive of the Aliens Police. Since the *Ostarbeiterinnen* became Belgians after marriage, the data in the files are limited to arrival and later possible departure from Belgian territory. Derivative citizenship in Belgium made the settlement process

of Slavic women in mixed marriages invisible in government archives. I collected additional information in twelve interviews between September 2005 and February 2007.

ARRIVING: POLISH LIBERATORS

When the First Polish Armoured Division operated as an occupying force in Germany, its soldiers could easily come on leave to Belgium or the Netherlands.²⁷ It was therefore not unusual that soldiers in 1945 or 1946 married while still holding their pre-war Polish passports and that the wives stayed with their Belgian parents awaiting demobilisation, as did this couple:

Husband: I was already married in 1946. My wife was Polish for six weeks, because then she had to choose.

Wife: And then I wanted Belgian citizenship back.

Husband: But our son became Belgian when I became Belgian because he did his military service.²⁸

The wife initially received Polish citizenship, but shortly after her marriage asked for her Belgian citizenship back. This was what all Belgian women married to Polish liberators did. From 1922, Belgium allowed brides to re-obtain their original citizenship and to renounce the newly gained citizenship in the first six months after the wedding.²⁹ As the Belgian citizenship law still underlined the importance of unity of citizenship in a family, women only made use of this addendum when their husbands were refugees and thus did not have citizenship. The fact that the wives of Polish citizens asked for their original citizenship back was exceptional.³⁰ It can, however, easily be explained by the situation the Polish soldiers faced on the eve of the Cold War.

At the end of 1946, the British government decided to dissolve the First Polish Armoured Division. The soldiers were encouraged to return to Poland, but as they felt betrayed by the Yalta Conference and feared prosecution by the Polish communist regime, only a few accepted that offer.³¹ The British government then established a Polish Resettlement Corps as part of the British army that offered training programs to prepare the soldiers for civilian life. However, signing up for the corps had a serious consequence. A Polish decree stated that Polish soldiers who joined a foreign army would lose their citizenship. The British government made clear to the soldiers that joining the corps was the only way to stay in the West, and that the International Refugee Organisation would exchange their Polish passport for a Displaced Person's status.³² The Belgian women were already married by the time their husbands received Displaced Person's status. It is however understandable that even before this change they preferred their original Belgian citizenship to the uncertainty of Polish citizenship. If the Belgian

women had decided to keep their Polish citizenship, their status would have been downgraded to that of a Displaced Person, since the time period following the marriage in which they could ask for citizenship change had already expired by the time their husbands became Displaced Persons. The Cold War context thus created a situation in which the husbands with their Displaced Person's status enjoyed fewer rights than their wives.

The Displaced Person status prevented the repatriation of Polish liberators. The Belgian state could only expel a Displaced Person when he or she had found legal admission into a country other than the home country.³³ The fact that the Polish liberators were married to Belgian citizens further complicated expulsion: the Belgian state would be expelling its own citizens. The mixed marriage granted Polish liberators an advantage other immigrants did not have. But marriage did not guarantee liberators the right to stay in Belgium. Only when a Belgian employer could provide employment for at least two years, could the liberator receive a temporary work and residence permit.³⁴ The criterion for staying was not his marriage, but his usefulness to the Belgian economy. This corresponds with the idea of male economic responsibility for the family.³⁵ Theoretically liberators could receive permission to stay in Belgium without marriage, but in practice all liberators who could fulfil this criterion were married to Belgian women.

The liberators had spent their adolescent years in the army and most did not hold any degree, apart from their training as soldiers. Moreover, they did not speak Dutch and the modest demobilisation premium they received did not guarantee any financial independence. To find a job, they relied on the family networks of their wives.³⁶ Most liberators were employed in the business of their family-in-law or their acquaintances. Wives were not allowed to employ their husbands in their businesses and needed to transfer at least half of their assets to their husbands.³⁷ Although the law created a legal dependency of wives on their Polish liberator husbands, the economic responsibility of the men was in practice guaranteed by the family networks of the women.

Some Polish liberators, but not as many as in other countries of settlement, signed up for a training program at the Polish Resettlement Corps in Great Britain, planning to join their wives in Belgium afterwards.³⁸ But the return to Belgium went less smoothly than they had expected.³⁹ Those who possessed a valid Belgian work permit before they left for Great Britain could easily join their wives. Those who did not were sent to the Belgian mines. The Belgian coal industry was highly profitable in the first years after the war and there was a shortage of labour. Belgian migration policy was directed towards employing migrants as miners.⁴⁰ Belgian wives, whose family networks had not been able to provide their husbands with work permits, followed them to the mining regions.⁴¹ It was the wives who secured their husbands' role as family providers. The women took this responsibility seriously because their own welfare was also at stake.

At the beginning of the 1950s, these miners benefited from an important policy liberalisation. Following the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Belgian government offered a permanent work and residence permit to all Displaced Persons who had already lived in Belgium for three years and allowed them to search for employment in sectors other than the mines. As such, Displaced Persons were privileged over other immigrants.⁴²

The wives of Polish liberators did not permanently change citizenship and were thus not excluded from the Belgian nation state. Interestingly, they also did not experience feelings of exclusion because of their mixed marriages in their local environments. Contrary to the commonly held view in research, the out-marriage of these women was not seen as problematic.⁴³ Surprisingly, almost all their fathers had been Belgian combatants in the First World War and had voluntarily offered the Polish liberators lodging and they had sometimes even actively encouraged their daughters to meet Polish liberators. A Polish liberator told me that he had slept in his future father-in-law's home:

We moved on, but her father was also a soldier, in the First World War, and when we moved on again . . . yeah, [we] couldn't say much but it was obvious to me and he said: 'if one of you come on holiday to Belgium please come here'.⁴⁴

The Polish liberator liked the man's daughter and accepted that invitation several times. During his visits he could easily spend time with her. They fell in love and married two years later. As ex-combatants, the Polish liberators had something in common with their fathers-in-law. It made the mixed marriages of Polish liberators acceptable and even desirable.⁴⁵

ARRIVING: OSTARBEITERINNEN

In January 1945, the first *Ostarbeiterinnen* arrived in Belgium with their partners and went to live with them, as they did in other Western European countries such as France and the Netherlands.⁴⁶ Later, *Ostarbeiterinnen* with Belgian partners joined the convoys organised by the Belgian Committee for Repatriation to bring Belgian workers back from Germany.⁴⁷ Upon arrival, the women and their partners were interrogated. Only the women who could show a German marriage certificate and whose husbands were not suspected of collaboration, could stay with their husbands. Thanks to their married status, they acquired Belgian citizenship.

The unmarried women were put in a repatriation centre. The Yalta Treaty stipulated that all Soviet citizens who found themselves outside the borders of the Soviet Union due to war circumstances had to be repatriated.⁴⁸ The Belgian government informed the Military Soviet Mission in

Belgium about the women and selected candidates for repatriation. The American Allied forces in Belgium were authorised to effectuate the repatriations.⁴⁹ Similar arrangements existed in the Netherlands and France.⁵⁰

A man could only collect his Slavic fiancée from a repatriation centre if he had a temporary residence permit for her. He could obtain this from his municipal administration if he declared that he could support her financially.⁵¹ This placed the fiancées in a very dependent position. With a residence permit, an *Ostarbeiterin* could marry. It was assumed that she would be safe from repatriation due to her new citizenship.⁵² But Soviet citizenship law was not based on the concept of derivative citizenship. The Soviet Union underlined the equality of men and women and did not allow a mixed marriage to make a Soviet woman dependent on her husband with regard to citizenship. The Soviet system simply forbade all mixed marriages and did not recognise the Belgian citizenship of *Ostarbeiterinnen* married to Belgians. According to Soviet citizenship law, these women remained Soviet citizens and were not considered married. Nor could they renounce their original citizenship.⁵³ Women born in the Soviet Union were lifelong Soviet citizens, and their foreign husbands could never receive Soviet citizenship. Although international law stated that in cases of dual citizenship a Belgian in Belgium had to be seen as a Belgian, the Soviet authorities did not accept this. They had never joined the Hague Convention of 1930 which resolved internationally contradictory citizenship laws.⁵⁴ The Military Soviet Mission therefore demanded the repatriation of all *Ostarbeiterinnen* from Belgium, married or not.

As *Ostarbeiterinnen* could not renounce their Soviet citizenship, they feared repatriation unless their presence in Belgium was safeguarded by the Belgian state. In June 1945, Belgian authorities reported to the Soviet Mission that they were willing to pass on the names of Slavic fiancées. However, they required a guarantee against repatriation of married women, and also of women who were at least five months pregnant, whose children were under eighteen months old or who were in a poor state of health.⁵⁵ The main criterion for a woman to stay was a mixed marriage. The exceptions could have been motivated by humanitarian, but also by national considerations. Women who had given birth to Belgian citizens or were going to could stay. They had proven their usefulness with regard to the reproduction of the Belgian nation.⁵⁶

The Belgian approach was more liberal than the Dutch. This may have resulted from the fact that Belgium had been liberated earlier, its administration had been restored earlier and the Belgium government could therefore react more quickly.⁵⁷ In the Netherlands, immediately after the war, all mixed marriages contracted in Germany after May 1940 were simply declared invalid. In August 1945 this measure was however annulled.⁵⁸ Other migrant women in Belgium had the possibility of staying on Belgian territory independently, for example, as domestic servants, whereas the Cold War context shut this door to *Ostarbeiterinnen*.⁵⁹

It is not known how many names the Belgian government sent to the Military Soviet Mission.⁶⁰ In the Archive of the Aliens Police I found one list with the names of one hundred *Ostarbeiterinnen*.⁶¹ I analysed the profiles of the women and discovered who the Belgian state allowed to stay, to whom it closed its borders and how *Ostarbeiterinnen* dealt with these decisions.

Among the one hundred women, I found fifty-five women who were able to stay in Belgium because they married shortly after their names had been passed on to the Military Soviet Mission. Notably, seven of them did not marry the man they met in Germany, but a partner they met in Belgium through—according to the Aliens Police—debauchery and prostitution.⁶² The number of women who switched partners several times until they found a husband was small, but their behaviour influenced the reputation of *Ostarbeiterinnen*. They were called war whores and prostitutes.⁶³ This categorisation left its mark in the testimonies of the *Ostarbeiterinnen* I interviewed. They explicitly defended their decency:

We did not have any prostitutes. We were always accompanied by someone. I married immediately, as did others. So that wasn't true for any of us.⁶⁴

Among the hundred women, there were thirty-six who did not find a husband. No marriage automatically meant repatriation. Fifteen of them arrived with a Belgian partner, who could not obtain a residence permit for his girlfriend or no longer wanted to share his life with her. Twenty-one of them had no chance of staying because they had migrated independently to Belgium. There were nine women whose destiny was unknown.

The Belgian authorities tried to prevent mixed marriages between *Ostarbeiterinnen* and men suspected of collaboration, but interestingly enough, they did not invalidate the marriages of later-convicted men. The list included two women whose husbands had been convicted of collaboration, but that did not harm the legal status of their marriages or their Belgian citizenship.⁶⁵ This was also the case for wives of men who had voluntarily worked in Nazi Germany and had temporarily lost their civil rights as a punishment.⁶⁶

Eight women on the list were pregnant and eight had already given birth to a child in Germany. Although the Belgian state made it possible for all to stay, only the married ones did.⁶⁷ There was, for example, a woman who arrived in Belgium with her baby. Her partner was married to another woman and started divorce proceedings. The woman placed her baby with a carer and, in order to support herself, went to live with a family as a domestic servant. In the end, she did not marry and opted for repatriation. She had the right to stay, but perhaps the lack of a supportive family network or simply homesickness made her want to leave.⁶⁸

In July 1945 the American Allied forces in Belgium transferred their repatriation authority to the Military Soviet Mission, but stressed the

implementation of orders had to be supervised by the Belgian authorities.⁶⁹ This also happened in the neighbouring countries.⁷⁰ The Belgians only cooperated by handing over the names of unmarried *Ostarbeiterinnen*. Soon, the rumour circulated that a Russian captain had used the excuse of registering married *Ostarbeiterinnen* at the Soviet Mission as a pretext to forcibly take them away to repatriation centres.⁷¹ These centres turned into mini Soviet islands which only in theory stood under Belgian supervision. Belgian authorities expressed their disapproval, but the Military Soviet Mission did not change its policy. The heavy-handed action of the Soviets motivated the Belgian authorities to protect engaged *Ostarbeiterinnen* against repatriation by letting them sign a declaration of intent to marry.⁷² This was a brave move, since diplomatic relations had to be maintained in order to ensure the safe return of Belgian Prisoners of War from the Soviet Union.⁷³ French and Dutch authorities took similar action in September 1945.⁷⁴

Fighting the conduct of the Military Soviet Mission only became possible when the persistent international protest of Soviet citizens was given a hearing by the United States. In autumn 1945, the US government decided that repatriation could only take place when Soviet citizens voluntarily agreed to it. Belgium followed this principle at the end of 1945—one month later than the Netherlands, but one earlier than France.⁷⁵ The case study of Antwerp gives an idea of the consequences the policy had on the lives of *Ostarbeiterinnen*. Although roughly the same number of *Ostarbeiterinnen* married each month between May and October 1945, from September onwards, the use of declarations of intent to marry increased and the number of children that were acknowledged and pregnancies registered at marriage was high.⁷⁶

One might assume that couples with children born during the war had already decided to marry when they were still in Germany and were not helped by the Belgian protection measure, but this was not what the case study showed. Among the seven couples who married in Germany, there was only one with a child.⁷⁷ The Belgian measure gave young families some time to marry and hence protected *Ostarbeiterinnen* against deportation. Once an *Ostarbeiterin* arrived at a deportation centre, there was no way back. The women must have known this, since those who were called up preferred to go into hiding.⁷⁸

The switch to voluntary repatriation did not solve all problems. Due to the different legal positions of *Ostarbeiterinnen* and their husbands, the couples could be torn apart. The husbands could not leave Belgium for the Soviet Union with their wives, since the Soviet Union did not recognise mixed marriages and refused the husbands entry. When *Ostarbeiterinnen* wanted to return independently, the Soviet embassy asked them to renounce their Belgian citizenship, which they, according to the Belgian law, could only do with the approval of their husbands. In a Soviet documentary from 1990 about *Ostarbeiterinnen* in Belgium made by Mikhail Kizilov, an *Ostarbeiterin* described her predicament:

I had, so to speak, problems. I wanted to go home, but I couldn't. I didn't have any money, nothing and Homère (her husband—MV) said: 'here's some money. Go home if you want, but you're not taking the children with you'. And I said: 'Oh no! These are my children!' But then . . . we made up with each other and everything was all right.⁷⁹

Not only Homère, but most husbands refused their wives (and children) permission to leave. However, a refusal did not make a departure impossible. The Soviet embassy offered the *Ostarbeiterinnen* assistance to escape from Belgian territory. When an *Ostarbeiterin* simply showed her Soviet passport at the border, nobody could suspect she was also Belgian.⁸⁰ This situation was later resolved in a pragmatic way. When in 1949 a Belgian became the director of a repatriation centre for Soviet citizens, he simply refused the further internment of Belgian citizens.⁸¹

SETTLING: POLISH LIBERATORS

In due course, all Polish liberators exchanged their Displaced Persons' status for Belgian citizenship. An analysis of their naturalisations reveals with which criteria the liberators had to comply. A liberator was only qualified for naturalisation when he had lived in Belgium for at least five years.⁸² This was a common requirement for all people who wanted to acquire citizenship through naturalisation. The naturalisation procedure took two to three years for all liberators. The first of the fifty-two naturalisations I studied, was assigned in 1954 and the last one in 1984. The largest number took place between the years 1958 and 1963. These five years contained half of the naturalisations.

At first individual liberators applied for naturalisation, but in 1957 the Belgian Patriotic Committee of the liberated city Saint Nicolas, a Belgian ex-combatant organisation, sent in a group application for twenty liberators.⁸³ Their involvement showed that for many liberators applying individually was too difficult. Following the group application, individual liberators from the region of Saint Nicolas also applied. They probably received support from their compatriots who had already gone through the procedure. From the mid-1960s onwards the number of applications declined, but requests now came from all over Flanders.

In the fifty-two dossiers, I found no liberator who experienced difficulties in receiving Belgian citizenship once his application was submitted. Only in two cases was naturalisation postponed, but not rejected, because the applicants had committed serious crimes.⁸⁴ During the procedure the economic and financial situation of the liberator was checked, but the criteria to allow naturalisation were apparently not difficult to meet. A dubious wage estimate made by a father-in-law who employed a liberator, but

had never paid him, was accepted.⁸⁵ A few liberators were exempted from paying registration costs because their salaries were too low.⁸⁶

An exemption from registration costs could also be granted when one had made oneself useful to the Belgian nation. That privilege was awarded to ethnic Germans, brought up in Poland, who had first served in the German army, but later deserted. Having fled to Belgium, they were active in the Belgian resistance movement until they joined the First Polish Armoured Division.⁸⁷ From the interviews I learned that these Polish liberators nowadays do not consider their involvement in the resistance important.⁸⁸ But Belgians did, since Belgian soldiers had hardly fought on Belgian territory and the resistance movement was therefore the only source of collective national pride.⁸⁹

Thanks to the group application from the Belgian Patriotic Committee in 1960, the participation of the First Polish Armoured Division in the liberation of Flanders became an argument to apply for exemption from registration costs.⁹⁰ However, former membership of the Division was not automatically equated with useful service to the Belgian nation. The authorities meticulously checked what a liberator had done during the liberation. Those who were, for example, assigned to the reserve troops were not granted exemption.⁹¹ At the same time, one ethnic German-Polish liberator had to pay registration costs. The man had deserted the German army in Northern Africa and thus, in contrast to other ethnic German-Polish liberators, had not participated in the Belgian resistance movement before assisting in the liberation of Flanders. His dossier did not explicitly mention why the man was not exempted from registration costs, but since exemptions on the basis of a modest salary were always justified and naturalisation officials in those years got to the bottom of liberators' war activities, one may assume that his enrolment in the German army formed an obstacle, while it did not for his colleagues with a short Belgian resistance movement history.⁹² Earlier, the Belgian lawyer Michel Verwilghen already criticised the subjective judgments in naturalisation dossiers in the 1960s.⁹³ When in the mid-1960s the number of applications fell, the war activities of the liberators were no longer checked. Every Polish liberator who had been assigned to the First Polish Armoured Division was exempted from registration costs. The focus on registration costs during the naturalisation procedure of Polish liberators showed the importance of military value to the Belgian nation. By granting exemption, the Belgian state recognised that the liberators had done their duty and therefore enjoyed the privilege of becoming Belgians for free.

When I analysed the reasons why Polish liberators applied for Belgian citizenship, I got different results from the application forms and from the interviews. In the applications Polish liberators mentioned they wanted to enjoy the same rights as Belgian citizens, who could, for example, work without having to pay for an expensive work permit or could receive subsidies for alterations of their houses.⁹⁴ The interviews revealed two other

reasons. I discovered the first reason when I asked the interviewees: 'When did you travel to Poland for the first time?' most automatically answered with the question: 'When did I become Belgian?' The interviewees said they needed the Belgian citizenship to make a trip to Poland possible:

[In] those years as long as we were not Belgian, we were afraid to travel to Poland. They could keep us. We were against [the communist regime—MV]. But when I became Belgian I relaxed [laughs].⁹⁵

Was the real reason for becoming Belgian to facilitate travel to Poland? Was this something they did not want to mention on their application forms for naturalisation during the Cold War? Or do Polish liberators nowadays use the argument that it was dangerous to go to Poland so as to romanticise their change of citizenship, while their real reasons at the time they applied were more pragmatic?

The interviewees had heard persistent rumours about the fate of repatriated Polish liberators. They said they only dared to visit Poland when they were sure their Belgian citizenship would offer them protection while on Polish territory. Displaced Persons were not allowed to visit their homeland. If they did, they lost their privileged status.⁹⁶

Belgian citizenship offered Polish liberators protection not only in Poland, but also on Belgian territory. There is no difference in the naturalisation data of members from anti-communist organisations and organisations that were in contact with the communist Polish Consulate in Belgium, but those Polish liberators who became active in communist associations only did so after they had received Belgian citizenship. In reports to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the communist Polish Consulate pretended it cooperated with Polish DPs, but in reality it mainly cooperated with Belgians.⁹⁷

A second reason for becoming a Belgian citizen, revealed during the interviews, was to make a career in the Belgian army possible for their sons. Children automatically received Belgian citizenship when the father was naturalised. They could also apply independently for naturalisation when they were sixteen, but the interviewees did not know this.⁹⁸ A Polish liberator indicated he had applied for naturalisation after visiting a Belgian army air show with his son. He wanted to enable his son to apply for a job in the army.⁹⁹ Also the husband in the first interview fragment of this chapter made a causal link between his son's acquisition of Belgian citizenship and his military service. These interviewees considered it important that when one became a citizen, one was willing to do one's duty for the nation.

After the naturalisation procedure Polish liberators could vote in local, but not in national elections and they were not allowed to run for political office. Until 1984 Belgium had two naturalisation procedures. Most immigrants, including the Polish liberators, opted for the cheapest, the 'common' naturalisation. When they wanted to have the same political rights as Belgian citizens, they had to apply for the more expensive and less common



Figure 4.2 Former soldiers of the First Polish Armoured Division during the annual commemoration service at the Polish military cemetery of Lommel on 30 October 2005 (Photo by the author).

‘state’ naturalisation.¹⁰⁰ Polish liberators only started to take the more expensive route in anticipation of the first European direct election in 1979 because they wanted European voting rights.¹⁰¹ A Belgian law of 1976 had already granted these rights to people who had become Belgian through the common naturalisation procedure, but the interviewees did not know this.¹⁰² The citizenship law of 1984 erased the differences between common and state naturalisation and granted people who naturalised the same political rights as people who were Belgians by birth.¹⁰³

SETTLING: *OSTARBEITERINNEN*

The citizenship status of some *Ostarbeiterinnen* and their husbands changed during their settlement process because they visited or returned to the Soviet Union. The repatriation of *Ostarbeiterinnen* stopped when contacts between East and West were frozen at the peak of Stalinism in 1950. Five years later, a Soviet decree permitted emigrated Soviet citizens to come on holiday.¹⁰⁴ The cultural agreement of 1956 between Belgium and the USSR made this possible for Belgian *Ostarbeiterinnen*.¹⁰⁵

Ostarbeiterinnen retained Belgian citizenship when they visited their families, but lost it when they wanted to settle in the Soviet Union. At the end of the 1940s for instance, they could leave if their husbands gave permission and if they resigned their Belgian citizenship. If their husbands refused, they could leave after a divorce. The case study showed that in Antwerp ten out of seventy-nine couples divorced during the settlement process, and half of them did so in the mid-1950s. The majority of the forty women who left Belgium were divorced.¹⁰⁶ The husbands also decided whether their children could leave, but as in the 1940s the Soviet embassy acted so secretly, that the Aliens Police could not always prevent their departure.¹⁰⁷

After Stalin died, the Soviet Union accepted that spouses of Soviet citizens could settle on its territory when they resigned their initial citizenship and became Soviet citizens.¹⁰⁸ At least ten couples decided to leave Belgium together. However, the majority of the husbands did not enjoy living in the Soviet Union. Already in 1957, five husbands asked the Belgian embassy in Moscow to help them return. They were astonished to hear they had given up their Belgian citizenship upon departure. Since the documents they had filled in at the Soviet embassy had been in Russian, they were not aware of this fact. As the husbands had not applied to a Belgian administration, the Belgian authorities decided to declare their change in citizenship invalid and to allow their return.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the Belgian citizenship law, the Soviet law did not require one partner's permission for the other to leave.¹¹⁰ The husbands in the Soviet Union could therefore decide independently to return home. The *Ostarbeiterinnen* who returned with them enjoyed the same rights because they were still considered married to a Belgian. Divorced *Ostarbeiterinnen* could also return, but they had to regain their Belgian citizenship through a procedure at a Belgian Court of First Instance.

CONCLUSION

Until 1984, Belgium applied the concept of derivative citizenship when people intermarried. Women exchanged their original citizenship for that of their husbands. This practice determined how men and women could make use of rights and be subject to legal exclusion in different ways.¹¹¹ As has been said at the beginning of this chapter, it is generally assumed that derivative citizenship was advantageous to immigrant women because they were easily granted the citizenship of the host country. I argue that one has to consider the context in which people lived to identify the advantages and disadvantages for immigrant men and women. This chapter has made clear that in most cases, *Ostarbeiterinnen* were in a less advantageous position than Polish liberators. Here I will highlight three points that challenge

the assumption that immigrant women gain advantage from taking their husband's nationality.

Firstly, the concept of derivative citizenship was not the only one used in the twentieth century. The Soviet Union proclaimed the equality of men and women and did not permit Soviet citizens to change their citizenship when they intermarried. The *Ostarbeiterinnen* wives in Belgium were still considered Soviet citizens by the Soviet Military Mission and in order to ensure good diplomatic relations, the Belgian state did not intervene when the Mission repatriated these *Ostarbeiterinnen*. Strangely enough, the combination of Soviet equal citizenship rights and the acquisition of Belgian citizenship could lead to the risk of being repatriated. The discrepancy between different national citizenship laws could turn advantages into disadvantages.

Secondly, Belgian women married to Polish liberators asked for their Belgian citizenship back right after the marriage. This was a practice generally reserved to wives whose husbands did not have any citizenship. The fact that the wives asked their original citizenship back illustrates the uncertain position of Polish citizenship in the West. That the Polish liberators ended up with Displaced Persons status, which offered them fewer political and social rights than their wives, might look like a disadvantage, but it also formed a safeguard against deportation which the *Ostarbeiterinnen* did not have. The marriage contract stated that wives had to follow their husbands, but the Belgian state would not expel its own citizens. The exceptional legal situation of Polish liberators and their wives resulted from a combination of derivative citizenship, the geopolitical situation and the marriage contract.

Thirdly, Polish liberators and *Ostarbeiterinnen* were permitted to stay in Belgium for different reasons. The immigrant men had to prove their economic usefulness, while the immigrant women had to marry or to give birth to Belgian citizens. This policy constructed the image of male independence and female dependence, but in practice Polish liberators were dependent on the family networks of their wives to guarantee this usefulness. *Ostarbeiterinnen*, however, were additionally dependent on their husbands because of the nature of the marriage contract. During the settlement process, Polish liberators received Belgian citizenship based on criteria they could fulfil without the help of their wives. *Ostarbeiterinnen* however, were in their social practices still more dependent on their husbands. The advantages and disadvantages of Polish liberators and *Ostarbeiterinnen* upon arrival differed from those during the settlement process.

The reason why *Ostarbeiterinnen* were in a less advantageous situation than Polish liberators lies in the context-specific situation in which both groups lived. Various factors—the marriage contract, concepts of gendered citizenship, migration and naturalisation policies, the dual nature of citizenship and the geopolitical situation—formed a framework of (sometimes) contradictory possibilities that shaped different advantages and disadvantages for immigrant men and women.

NOTES

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2. I. Goddeeris, *De Poolse Migratie in België 1945–1950. Politieke Mobilisatie en Sociale Differentiatie* (Amsterdam, 2005), 43–50.
3. F. Stamp, *Zwangsarbeit in der Metallindustrie 1939–1945. Das Beispiel Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* (Berlin, 2001), 6.
4. H. Ulrich, 'Zwangsarbeiter in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939–1945, ein Überblick', in *De Verplichte Tewerkstelling in Duitsland 1942–1945, Acta van het Symposium gehouden te Brussel op 6 en 7 oktober 1992*, edited by Navorsings- en Studiecentrum voor de Geschiedenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog (Brussels, 1993), 165–180, 168–171.
5. *Ibid.*, 175; L. Luyckx, 'De gedwongen Repatriëring van Sovjetburgers aan de Vooravond van de Koude Oorlog (1944–1949)' (Unpublished Master thesis, University of Ghent, 2005) 153–169; R. Tavenier, 'Russen in België na 1945', in *Russische Beer en de Belgische Leeuw: Drie Eeuwen Russische aanwezigheid in België*, edited by E. Waegemans, (Leuven, 2005), 129; M. Venken and I. Goddeeris, 'The Nationalization of Identities: Ukrainians in Belgium, 1920–1950', *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 31 (2006): 89–116, 98.
6. C.-L. Closset, *Traité Pratique de la Nationalité Belge* (Brussels, 1970), 93–94; G. Mak, 'Seksueel Vreemdelingenverkeer', *Gaan & Staàn, Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* 21 (2001): 101–122, 104; N. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London, 2003), 79; K. Augustine-Adams, 'Constructing Mexico: Marriage, Law and Women's Dependent Citizenship in the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries', *Gender and History* 18 (2006): 20–34, 21.
7. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 2.
8. For example: F. Caestecker and A. Rea, 'De Belgische Nationaliteitswetgeving in de Twintigste Eeuw. Een Terugkeer naar de Zelfbewuste Natie of het Koesteren van het Wantrouwen?', in *Naar de Belgische Nationaliteit. Een jaar Toepassing van het Nieuwe Wetboek van de Belgische Nationaliteit (wet van 1 maart 2000) / Devenir Belge. Un an d'Application du Nouveau Code de la Nationalité Belge (loi du 1 mars 2000)*, edited by M.-C. Foblets, R. Foqué, and M. Verwilghen (Brussels/Antwerp, 2001), 69–118; R. Hansen and P. Weil, 'Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe?', in *Towards a European Nationality: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality Law in the EU*, edited by R. Hansen and P. Weil (Basingstoke, 2001), 1–23, 1.
9. C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge, 1988), 155.
10. J. Van Houtte, *Burgerlijk Wetboek. Officieele Tekst* (Brussels, 1947), 4th ed., 41–42, 236.
11. Closset, 'Traité Pratique de la Nationalité Belge', 36; A. M. Nicolosi, "'We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners': Gender, Race, and American Citizenship", *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 13 (2001): 1–21, 8.
12. Nicolosi, 'We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners', 17.
13. B. de Hart, 'The Morality of Maria Toet. Gender, Citizenship and the Construction of the Nation-state', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32 (2006): 49–68, 49.
14. N. Piper, 'Gendering the Politics of Migration', *International Migration Review (IMR)* 40 (2006): 133–164, 135.
15. D. Hondius, *Gemengde Huwelijken, Gemengde Gevoelens: Hoe Nederland Omgaat met Etnisch en Religieus Verschil* (Den Haag, 2001), 2nd edn, 148.

16. B. de Hart, *Onbezonnen Vrouwen. Gemengde Relaties in het Nationaliteitsrecht en het Vreemdelingenrecht* (Amsterdam, 2003), 217–221.
17. K. Canning and S.O. Rose, 'Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivity: Some Historical and Theoretical Considerations', *Gender and History* 13 (2001): 427–443, 428.
18. K.R. Sword, "'Their Prospects Will Not Be Bright': British Responses to the Problem of the Polish 'Recalcitrants' 1946–49", *Journal of Contemporary History* 21 (1986); G. Coudry, 'Le Rapatriement des Ressortissants Soviétiques de 1945 à 1947, Avatars de la Réciprocité', *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 45 (1995): 119–140; M. Omtzigt, 'Belastende Bevrijding. Brabantse Vrouwen en Geallieerde Militairen in het Bevrijde Zuiden 1944–1945', *Klein Den Haag* 36 (1995): 41–47; G. Coudry, 'Le Regroupement des Ressortissants Soviétiques en France à la fin de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale: l'Accord de Moscou du 29 juin 1945', *Guerres Mondiales* 45 (1995): 105–131; F. H. Postma, *De Repatriëring van Sovjet-onderdanen uit Nederland 1944–1956. Mythe en Waarheid* (Amsterdam, 2003), 176; Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring'; Z. Mieczkowski, *The Soldiers of General Maczek in World War II* (Warschau, 2004), 153; 367–390; Tavenier, 'Russen in België'; C. van Wageningen and R. Żelichowski, 'Akcja Rekrutacyjna Wśród Polskich Żołnierzy i Dipisów do Pracy w Kopalniach Holenderskich w Latach 1945–1948', *Przegląd Polonijny* 32 (2006): 1–34. The exception is I. Harms, 'Russische Vrouwen in Nederland. Portret van de Verloren Dochters van Vader Stalin', *Vrij Nederland*, 1 March 1986: 2–36.
19. F. Caestecker, 'Historiografie van de Migratie, Mainstream Geschiedschrijving of Onderzoek in de Marge?', *Mededelingenblad van de Belgische Vereniging voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 25, no. 2 (2003): 12–16.
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21. Canning and Rose, 'Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivity', 430.
22. C.F. Stychin, "'A Stranger to Its Laws: Sovereign Bodies, Global Sexualities, and Transnational Citizens', *Journal of Law and Society* 27 (2000): 601–625, 602; P.B. Radcliff, 'Imagining Female Citizenship in the "New Spain": Gendering the Democratic Transition, 1975–1978', *Gender and History* 13 (2001): 498–523; R.A. Nye, 'Women, Work and Citizenship in France since 1789', *Gender and History* 19 (2007): 186–191.
23. State Archives in Belgium (further SAB), Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (further MIA), Naturalisation dossiers (further Nat. dos.); State Archives in Belgium, Archive of the Belgian Aliens Police (further BAP), individual files (further Aliens file) and files with general information.
24. There were yearly ceremonies on the Polish military cemetery in Lommel (Belgium): see M. Venken, 'Konstrukcja i Recepja Pamięci Zbiorowej Wśród Polskich Byłych żołnierzy Pierwszej Dywizji Pancerniej w Belgii. Zimna wojna w Praktyce', *Przegląd Polonijny* 33 (2007): 41–62.
25. Private Archive of the Belgian Association of Polish Ex-Combatants, members' file; Private Archive of the First Polish Armoured Division Circle Benelux, members' file; *Tygodnik Polski*, Parijs, 1957–1976; *Kombatant Polski*, Genk, 1964–1968; *Wolne Słowo*, Merelbeke-Oudenaarde, 1989–2004.
26. I researched eight of the nine districts in Antwerp (excluding Wilrijk).
27. Omtzigt, 'Belastende bevrijding', 43; C. Kajpus and O. Van Dam, *Non Omnis Moriar. Het Verhaal van Czesław Kajpus, Officier bij de Eerste Poolse Pantserdivisie en de Bevrijding van 1944* (Leuven, 1996), 64.
28. Interview with Polish liberator Damian (pseudonym) and his wife on 13 February 2006. All interviews have been done by the author. Locations are not given for privacy reasons.

29. C.-L. Closset, *Traité de la Nationalité en Droit Belge* (Brussels, 2004), 2nd ed., 338; J. Maeckelberghe, 'Nationalité. Code de la Nationalité', working paper for the symposium *L'Officier de L'Etat Civil Face aux Nouvelles Législations Engendrées par l'évolution du Droit Familial* on 14 September 1988 in Marcinielle-Charleroi, 3; Mak, 'Seksueel Vreemdelingenverkeer', 104; Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 79, 104.
30. Closset, 'Traité Pratique de la Nationalité Belge', 36.
31. Mieczkowski, 'The Soldiers of General Maczek', 153.
32. Sword, 'Their Prospects Will Not Be Bright', 372.
33. Article 32 and 33 of the *Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950.
34. F. Caestecker, *Vluchtelingenbeleid in de Naoorlogse Periode* (Brussel, 1992), 109.
35. C. Creighton, 'The Rise of the Male Breadwinner Family: A Reappraisal', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38 (1996): 310–337, 310.
36. Compare: I. Bertaux-Wiame, 'The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration', *Oral History* 7 (1979): 26–32, 27.
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38. J. Zubrycki, 'Polish Emigration to British Commonwealth Countries: A Demographic Survey', *IMR* 13 (1979): 649–672, 655, 664; SAB, BAP, Aliens files 2096475, 2194008, and 2293440.
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41. SAB, BAP, Aliens file 2097894 and 2293440; Interview with Robert on 13 February 2006.
42. Caestecker, 'Vluchtelingenbeleid in de Naoorlogse Periode', 32–33, 109.
43. Hondius, 'Gemengde Huwelijken, Gemengde Gevoelens', 305–307; Rose, 'Sex, Citizenship and the Nation in World War II Britain', *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 1147–1176, 1148, 1175.
44. Interview with Waldek on 25 November 2005.
45. Interviews with Jacek on 6 December 2005 and with Damian on 13 February 2006.
46. Archive of the BAP, file 373, 28 May 1945.
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49. Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring', 100–101.
50. Coudry, 'Le Regroupement des Ressortissants Soviétiques', 116–118; Postma, 'De Repatriëring van Sovjetonderdanen', 331.
51. Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring', 153–154.
52. Interview with Kelly on 7 February 2006.
53. G. Ginsburgs, *The Citizenship Law of the USSR* (Den Haag, 1983), 52.
54. Archive of the BAP, file 1040, 11 April 1949.
55. Ibid. file 373, 13 June 1945 and 21 June 1945; Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, Archive of the Commissioner's Office for Repatriation, AA 690 20 (2), 21 June 1945.
56. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 26–38.
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59. F. Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium, 1840–1940. The Creation of Guest Workers, Refugees and Illegal Aliens* (New York and Oxford, 2000), 232, 237.
60. Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring', 155.
61. Archive of the BAP, file 373, the list of 15 June 1945 contains 231 names. Most were Russian Prisoners of War.
62. SAB, BAP, Alien files 2025069, 2028168, and 2029566.
63. 'Een Zeer Actueel Vraagstuk. Duizenden Oekraïnsche Meisjes Kwamen naar België, Duizenden Katholieke Jongens Willen met hen Trouwen', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 11 September 1945; Interviews with Amanda on 18 July 2006 and Kelly on 7 February 2007.
64. Interview with Peggy on 10 November 2006.
65. SAB, BAP, Alien files 2029624 and 2029890; Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, 'Index of the Belgian Law Gazette on Judgements of Processes against Belgians who Collaborated with the German Occupier during World War II'.
66. L. Huyse and S. Dhondt, *Onverwerkt Verleden. Collaboratie en Repressie in België 1942–1952* (Leuven, 1991), 25–28; Interview with Cindy on 6 February 2006.
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71. Harms, 'Russische Vrouwen in Nederland', 18–20; Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring', 162–163; Postma, 'De Repatriëring van Sovjetonderdanen', 329.
72. Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, Archive of the Commissioner's Office for Repatriation, AA 105, 27 August 1945.
73. Luyckx, 'De Gedwongen Repatriëring', 170.
74. Coudry, 'Le Rapatriement des Ressortissants Soviétiques', 131–132; Postma, 'De Repatriëring van Sovjetonderdanen', 331.
75. Postma, 'De Repatriëring van Sovjetonderdanen', 332.
76. For example marriage 1740 on 23 September 1945 in Antwerp and marriage 259 on 2 September 1945 in Deurne (district Antwerp).
77. Marriage 138 on 14 May 1945 in Antwerp.
78. The wife from marriage 280 on 4 October 1945 in Borgerhout (Antwerp).
79. Woman interviewed in the Russian documentary *Alyonushka iz Bryussela*, ed. Studia Dokumental'nykh Filmov (Moscow, 1990).
80. SAB, BAP, Alien files 2027856 and 2028415.
81. Archive of the BAP, file 1040, 13 April 1949.
82. *Belgian Law Gazette*, 17 December 1932.
83. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 25186.
84. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 26719 and 25186.
85. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 23401.
86. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 22221 and 25175.
87. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 24464 and 23495.
88. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 23495 and 25552; Interviews with Rafał on 6 December 2005 and with Dominik on 26 December 2005.
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92. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 27883.
93. M. Verwilghen, *Le Code de la Nationalité Belge* (Brussels, 1985), 178.
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99. Interview with Tomasz on 8 December 2005.
100. Closset, 'Traité de la Nationalité en Droit Belge', 308.
101. SAB, MIA, Nat. dos. 65763, 67441 and 71260; 'Poolse Oud-strijders in Ons Land nog niet aan de Bak', *De Nieuwe Gazet*, 19 March 1981.
102. *Belgian Law Gazette*, 29 July 1976.
103. *Ibid.*, 12 July 1984.
104. Ginsburgs, 'The Citizenship Law of the USSR', 63.
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106. Archive of the BAP, file 1040, 'Rapatriement Russes'.
107. SAB, MIA, Alien file 2041765.
108. SAB, MIA, Alien file A345960.
109. SAB, MIA, Alien file 2048604, 14 June 1956.
110. Closset, 'Traité de la Nationalité en Droit Belge', 308; Ginsburgs, 'The Citizenship Law of the USSR', 334.
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