

Drinking the Sea Water: Franklin Roosevelt, Polish-Americans, Yalta, and the Downfall of a Civic Elite

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Abstract

In the early twentieth century, leaders of the Polish-American community, institutionally known as Polonia, sought to focus their compatriots' energies toward the Old World. These civic elites promoted pro-Poland patriotism as the best means to overcome racial marginalization experienced in the United States governmental system. Poles felt themselves divorced from American political discourse, and sought patrons to whom they could express their aspirations, grievances, and policy choices. Following the achievement of Polish statehood at Versailles (1917), Polish-American leaders increasingly attempted to cast themselves as spokesmen for an entire community; during the interwar period, they fomented a broad sense of ethnic inferiority in immigrant communities to further this political strategy. Their failure in 1945 to affect Franklin Roosevelt's decision to abandon Poland to Soviet influence at Yalta became the pivotal moment in their civic identity. It was this immense trauma that shattered the rarified group's self-constructed fantasy of power, divorcing Polonia's leadership from its pretensions to influence in Washington and helped solidify their alienation from American political and social affairs.

I. Introduction

On 14 November 1944, a letter from Charles Rozmarek of the Polish American Congress (PAC) in Chicago arrived at the estate of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in New York. In it, the passionate leader of the most influential Polish union in the United States and key representative of the ethnic community's civic elite — institutionally known as Polonia — reminded the President that “Americans of Polish descent voted for you...because in this crucial period of history, they regard you as not only the preeminent pilot of the ship of state but likewise as a friend.” Finishing with a prayer for Roosevelt's “moral courage, strength and health,” he voiced the desire of six million Polish-Americans that the Atlantic Charter's guarantees not be abandoned once the war was won.^[1] The Charter's promise of self-determination echoed Wilsonian rhetoric from the last peace, and hopes were high among prominent Polish leaders that the United States, their champion in 1919, would again protect their White Eagle.

Woodrow Wilson's support for an independent Poland after the First World War had shaped subsequent self-perception across Polonia's establishment. In his 22 January 1917 “Peace Without Victory” speech, Wilson had declared that “Statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, indepen-

dent, autonomous Poland.”^[2] His remarks marked the first time any American leader had engaged the “Polish problem” on the international stage. Emphasizing the role played by Polish musician and statesman, Jan Ignacy Paderewski, in shaping Wilson's 1917 speech, Polish-American historians concluded that political friendships between American powerbrokers and Polish lobbyists were the best — and only — means to push American policy in favorable directions. Authors like Louis Gerson and Rom Landau thus pointed to the part Paderewski played in laying the foundations for Wilson's support; Landau went so far as to argue that Paderewski was “directly and solely” responsible for the mention of an “independent and autonomous Poland” in the “Peace Without Victory” speech.^[3]

Perhaps self-servingly, elite Polish organizations funded many of these studies, and Polish-American leaders took their supposed lessons to heart throughout the interwar period. Wilson, who had never expressed any affection for Poland or the Polish people, had been brought to the “righteous cause” by “tireless efforts of great men and a friendship between equals.”^[4] Although the American political system might not regard Polish-American aspirations favorably, the post-1917 victory convinced Polish civic elite that they could, by directly pursuing patronage rather than systematic lobbying efforts, guide Washington's decisionmaking process. Such friendships, articulated in relation to underlying racial and social insecurities, would foster optimism among Polonia's leadership that they might ensure their homeland's future. They misread history.

In February 1945 these soaring hopes were grounded. At the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt abandoned Poland to the Soviet Union. It soon became clear that the shattered nation was resigned to become a Russian colony on the European borderlands. This “damming spot” for which the “US must be held accountable” would redefine more than just Poland's sovereignty.^[5] At the conference, Roosevelt assented to Stalin's desire for a referendum in Poland to decide the country's future political alignment. Although the Allied powers had agreed to hold elections in postwar Poland, it was clear to observers that the affair would be neither “free” nor “fair,” as declared. The results were heavily shaped by the Soviet Union's desire to construct a buffer zone of puppet and quasi-puppet states along its border in Eastern Europe. Stalin sought to institutionalize the current, pro-Soviet leadership in Warsaw. While Poland maintained nominal independence, the postwar government was tied at once to Moscow by bonds of ideological similarity, economic dependency, and fear. As Soviet forces pushed into Eastern Europe in 1944-1945, Stalin resurrected indigenous Polish communism that had been

suppressed under Nazi occupation. In 1944 these efforts culminated in the creation of the “Lublin Government,” born from surviving factions of the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Worker’s Party. This entity, which administered liberated Polish territory, had by February 1945 purged remaining political agencies of their western elements — those most likely to voice the desires of the western-backed exiled Polish government in London, which also enjoyed support from the PAC and other Polish-American organizations.

Debates at Yalta regarding Poland’s future essentially revolved around which of these two competing governments should ultimately prevail — a conversation that wound intricately with other concerns regarding European reconstruction, security, and appropriate divisions of the War’s territorial spoils among increasingly suspicious allies. For the Americans and British, Poland seemed an acceptable sacrifice to maintain a broader geopolitical power balance across a fragile postwar continent. The results from Crimea made clear that the Lublin Poles would maintain their prominence after 1945: western powers voiced little protest to the skewed results from the subsequent 1946 Polish referendum, which put full political control into the country’s pro-Moscow hands.

Roosevelt’s silence on communist accession in 1945-1946 insulted the Polish-American civic elite. For these leaders, geopolitical considerations were far less important than what Rozmarek described as “[Roosevelt’s] spiritual responsibility to do everything he could to help Poland be free.”^[6] Yalta’s significance thus quickly grew immediately following the conference’s conclusion as Polish-American civic elites grappled with the implications of their relative impotence to secure Poland’s autonomy. Republican politicians, capitalizing on a sense of abandonment for electoral gain among key Polish-American constituencies, emphasized Poland’s tragic fate at Soviet hands. Likewise, the Polish-American leadership — headed by Rozmarek and the PAC — sought to rally sentiment around this anti-Democratic rhetoric.

The elite’s inability to persuade a majority of Polish voters to switch political allegiance after 1945 — in fact, more “ordinary Poles” voted Democrat than turned against the Party — evinced a fundamental deficiency in communal leadership strategy hitherto practiced by elite Polish individuals, organizations, and press in the United States. It pointed to a fundamental paradox in the Polish-American process of ethnic identity construction that elites had promoted throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The pursuit of political friendships represented a coping mechanism by which Poles could overcome their experiences of marginalization and prejudice within the racialized American political system. Yet a closer examination of Polonia’s efforts in the 1930s-1940s to construct Polish-American identity indicates a more complex relationship between complex ethnic group formation and political strategy that relied on, rather than simply responded to, feelings of Polish inferiority in America. At the problem’s core lay a disaffected and bitter Polish-American community, which had been told repeatedly throughout the years preceding Yalta that its sole source of political representation were elites who could foster intimate relationships with American powerbrokers. These

figures implied through their publications, public statements, and correspondences that ordinary Poles, as a marginalized racial group, could not express their Polish nationalism within a hostile American system — but that such Old World patriotism was crucial for maintaining cohesion between Poles in America.^[7]

The civic elite’s strategy was premised on two assumptions that the Yalta results ultimately proved incompatible. Figures like Rozmarek insisted that American politics were inherently anti-Polish and the only way to clear this obstacle was to bypass the political system as a whole and operate through individual policymakers. Although Polish leaders applied it at a national level in 1944-1945, this strategy incubated within the milieu of 1930s urban politics, from which Polish-Americans had traditionally been excluded. The insecurity on which this policy was premised appeared equally as a construct of elite rhetoric as an experienced reality for the broader Polish-American community. Polonia fostered the sense of self-doubt that it subsequently used to justify its role as representatives of a disenfranchised population through myth and narrative construction during the interwar period — a process largely funded by organizations in Poland.

These efforts drew inspiration from the racial prejudice encountered in the United States. By focusing their responses to political marginalization on the issue of Poland’s fate — rather than the unique social or political situation of Poles in America — the Polish-American civic elite unwittingly created the conditions for its own downfall. At Yalta, Roosevelt acted in the interests of the United States as he interpreted them; Polonia’s leaders had promised their communities that he would protect Poland’s future. The US “abandonment of Poland” in 1945 thus inflicted a remarkable trauma on Polish perceptions of belonging in the United States, as it became clear that the elites had misjudged their influence. Their racialization of political representation among immigrant populations worsened the blow dealt to Polish self-perception: the sense of insecurity Polonia promulgated remained, while the civic elite’s promise to overcome this challenge went unfulfilled. The Polish-American community retreated into itself, and operated under a pre-existing national “racial inferiority complex.”^[8] According to Polish social commentator Karol Wachtl, the Pole, by 1945-1946, “was proud but subservient....[He was] defeated.”^[9] The Polish-American community’s heritage in the New World would encourage this withdrawal of Polonia’s interest from larger American society.^[10] It subsequently became by 1962 a “dysreference group” that channeled its interests only towards the old country.^[11]

Historiographical debate about the Polish-American lobby has centered on two broad questions: what factors characterized Polish-American communities in the interwar and World War II period, and how did the Polish diaspora leadership exert influence in Washington? James Pula’s *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (1995) and Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann’s *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956* (2004), along with Irwin Sanders’ and Ewa Morawska’s research on “Polish-American Community Life” (1975), addressed the latter question; Donald Pienkos’ *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish American Efforts on Poland’s Behalf, 1863-1991*

(1991) began to link the two, but is essentially a summary of the numerous primary documents included in the appendices.^[12] Harold Abramson provided an important analysis of interracial tensions among immigrant communities in American cities during the mid-twentieth century.^[13] Eugene Kusielewicz deepened Abramson's study by providing a cultural analysis of Polish senses of "Americanness" in the twentieth century, particularly following Polish independence in 1919. He argued that Poles reacted with particular vigor against a sense of alienation from American politics by emphasizing shared ideals of freedom and democracy between Poland and the United States.^[14] Sanders and Morawska supported Kusielewicz's argument, noting American democracy had long been "attractive" to Polish immigrants arriving from the authoritarian Eastern European landscape with its "rigidly structured peasant villages." Yet this heritage, combined with Polonia's "institutional completeness," encouraged the withdrawal of Polish interest from the larger society.^[15] Many of these scholars have referred to this withdrawal as the product of an "inferiority complex."^[16] Jiri Kolaja concluded that Polonia responded to this insecurity by singularly focusing on old country developments.^[17] Sociologist Arthur E. Wood introduced the impact of class and level of education on Polonia's political efforts. He offered evidence of "viable, if not obsessive activity of Polish leaders in local politics." This activity represented the stratification of the immigrant Polish community.^[18] Although the situation engendered apathy among many working-class Poles towards American politics, the responsibilities of those with the most political leverage were magnified. The elites were seen as the "true" Polish-American representative body in local political affairs.^[19]

These two strands of argument passed each other in relative silence, yet neither provided an answer to the coincidence presented between Polonia's removal from mainstream American political discourse — a process known as "ethnic distancing" — and Yalta. Nor did they adequately address the complicating variables of representation and community leadership. Who, really, was at the center of Polonia's 1945 failure? By linking these two strands, a more coherent narrative of a socially stratified alienation from American politics is possible.

Leaders of the Chicago Polish community felt themselves a bellwether for the broader national population. At the headquarters of the Polish American Congress, these notables worked in Polonia's thought capital, and the PAC's letters, bulletins, and numerous affiliated and semi-affiliated newspapers represented a broad cross-section of Chicago's elite Polish opinion. Indeed, the PAC represented a conglomeration of representatives from Polish fraternal societies and professional organizations across the United States, and from its headquarters in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood, it managed offices in 26 states. Most Polish-language newspapers across the country received copy from the PAC, and almost every publication reprinted editorials penned by PAC President, Charles Rozmarek. Yet these papers and editors represented the civic elite of the Polish-American community, and this fact complicated claims about whether they truly represented "six million Poles."

Ultimately, Polish ethnic identity in the US was closely intertwined with Poland's fate. Through a complete study of PAC

Bulletins and representative canvassing of Polish newspapers from Chicago, the story of Polonia's humbled elite emerges. Following Versailles, Polish-American leaders increasingly attempted to cast themselves as spokesmen for an entire community, and their failure to affect Roosevelt at Yalta became the pivotal moment in their civic identity. It was this immense trauma that shattered the rarified group's self-constructed fantasy of power, divorcing Polonia's leadership from its pretensions to influence in Washington and helped solidify their alienation from American political and social affairs.

II. Little Kosciusko and Jesus: Racialization of Poles in America, Polish-American Political Participation, and Ethnic Distancing

The betrayal at Yalta cut particularly deep in a community that had not yet fully discerned a role within the American political or social context commensurate with its sense of influence. Polonia's "personal politics" was born from the fragile racial self-perception that defined Polish identity during the interwar period. Polonia's leading figures pointed to Polish immigrants' separateness from American society, employing rhetoric that emphasized the inferior racial strata Poles occupied. They impelled Polish-Americans to focus on their homeland's fate: according to the civic elite, support for Polish nationalism was the most effective expression of the immigrant community's political will within the United States' political milieu. This developing narrative was critical in 1945, as Polish elites asserted their ability to again protect Polish homelands from European machinations. Poles in the United States premised their ethnic identity on advocacy for Poland's statehood rather than an incipient sense of citizenship that penetrated beneath superficial Americanization. "It would be a mortal sin," Rozmarek declared in a 1945 PAC editorial reprinted on the front page of Polish language newspapers in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, "to go out of our way, carrying the heart of America on our banners only to return with an admission of failure and frustration." Clearly explicating the civic elite's role in this "moment of judgment," he concluded: "We are in a position to defend the queen or to become a queen and decide the outcome of the game." In other words, Polish-American leaders could either serve as pawns for strictly American interests and political groups, or they could themselves pursue a political agenda focused on Poland's liberation. In Rozmarek's view, Polonia's leadership must "assert and protect Polish claims in America for the benefit of the Polish people."^[20]

Conceptions of race and loyalty that emerged during the first half of the twentieth century weighed heavily on Polonia's consciousness, and in turn guided its strategy through 1945. During the hectic months before Yalta, Polish language newspapers conjured a rich legacy of Polish heroism in the New World.^[21] A PAC editorial reprinted across Illinois and New York described the "psychology and condition of the Polish people in America: We shall stand guard over our heritage of democracy...and establish moral leadership in the United States, never forgetting our heroes Pulaski, Kosciuszko, Krzyzanowski, Karge, and Pa-

derewski.”^[22] For historians of Polish-American history writing in the mid-twentieth century, this legacy assumed near-mythical significance. Polish-American scholars described the immigrants’ connection to the United States’ independence struggle — and “a shared passion for self-determination between the two peoples.” This “deeper narrative of unrequited Polish heroism,” as the PAC would note in 1945, “made Poland’s case a criterion of international morality, of our aims and achievements in this war and all those in which Poles have proven themselves amongst America’s greatest patriots.”^[23]

According to these authors, Poland’s and the United States’ fates had been intertwined since the late eighteenth century. It was with “few perfunctory tears” that the “materialistic [eighteenth] century greeted the fall of Poland” in 1795, on the eve of the country’s fateful partition amongst Prussia, Austria, and Russia.^[24] As Walpole wrote, “...whichever gets the better, the people will still remain slaves; I am pretty indifferent to which side (King or noble) the power of tyranny falls.”^[25] Thinkers in the United States, however, fostered a different view from the outset of Poland’s fate. The traditional narrative of Polish-American identity — premised on the similarities between Polish and American nationalist causes — was born from this emergent relationship. For example, partition, and especially the failure of Thaddeus Kosciuszko’s 1794 revolution the year before, deeply affected Thomas Jefferson, who denounced the division as a “crime and an atrocity.”^[26] Jefferson’s attachment to Poland was born during the American Revolution, when Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski served with distinction for the American cause. Kosciuszko’s career, more so than Pulaski’s, left an enduring impression on United States society. He was “both the military associate and personal friend of George Washington [and] his liberal ideas won him the lifelong friendship of Jefferson.”^[27] His illustrious service in America helped spark a singular friendship between the revolutionary leaders in the young United States and those seeking independence in Poland. As Abbé Venceslas de Tworkowski recognized, the “friendship between Washington and Kosciuszko was stronger than historical alliances.... Their parent was spiritual. Both dedicated their lives to the consecration of liberty.”^[28] This passage illustrates how, for both Washington and Kosciuszko, whose nations existed on the imperial arena’s periphery, the definition of liberty centered on national independence from great power politics.

This “spiritual relationship” would be strained as Poles immigrated in increasing numbers to American shores during the mid-to-late nineteenth century.^[29] By 1914, Poles had become an integral part of the American social landscape, particularly across the US northeast and midwest. The connection of which Tworkowski spoke had created a unique Polish-American identity at the turn of the twentieth century, one composed of “pre-eminent Americans.”^[30] As the Polish leader Michael Kruska declared in Milwaukee, “I am an ardent Pole and at the same time an American. I do not see where one contradicts the other — and I do not see why one must negate the other.”^[31]

Despite their sense of ideological or spiritual connection to American history, Polish-Americans in the early 1900s immediately confronted hostility from better assimilated or long-es-

tablished groups. For example, Germans — arguably the largest immigrant community in post-World War I America and a dominant group in Chicago — had for at least two decades accepted “an invitation to become old stock Americans” on the basis of belonging to one of the two northern white races of Europe (British and Teutonic). As Russell Kazal described, this tactic allowed German-American communities to differentiate themselves from the waves of new immigrants from Eastern Europe. Starting in the interwar years and accelerating in the post-World War II period, Germans assumed an identity as “white ethnics” to express their solidarity with fellow Italians, and to a lesser degree, Irish — in turn solidifying their opposition to the growing presence of African Americans in their neighborhoods.^[32] Describing Italian immigration, Thomas Guglielmo noted that this assimilation process was characterized by a bifurcated system of racial categorization: “color race” comprised social constructions of blackness and whiteness, while “race,” according to which Germans and Italians were measured, included “acceptable” groups like Mediterranean, Nordic, Hebrew, and Celt.^[33]

Critically, Poles were not considered within the latter classification. Descriptions of Polish immigrants often emphasized the “darkened masses” and “dark peoples” arriving from Eastern Europe — rhetoric that served to categorize Polish-Americans within the much more divisive “color race” framework. Germans and Italians successfully integrated into American society and politics because they could assert whiteness. While both communities certainly experienced prejudice, they were spared the crushing marginalization to which Poles were subjected. The hybrid identity Kruska described thus emerged as emigres sought to reconcile experienced prejudice with the “American and Polish values of liberty, expression, and control of destiny” they ardently shared.

As immigrant communities grew, Polonia’s thought-leaders turned this schizoid identity into a political trope. Their efforts were tied closely to the debates raging throughout the United States regarding the proper lens through which to view foreign peoples at home, and their “fitness” or “unfitness” for democratic governance in “civilized society.” There was a prevailing notion that “alien peoples” were, as Prescott Hall argued to the United States Immigration Commission in 1909, from races and countries that “had been relatively useless for centuries.” He further used heredity as justification for the superiority of certain races over others.^[34] Eugenics as a scientific avenue of inquiry had become overwhelmingly popular in the early twentieth century Atlantic world, and a distinct cadre of researchers devoted their energy to finding the genetic basis for democratic ability, amongst other qualities defined as critical to “civilized man.” As Harvard professor Nathaniel Southgate remarked in a nativist publication, *America*, “The truth is that a man is what his ancestral experience has made him.”^[35] Even Woodrow Wilson, who would later champion Polish independence, wrote in *A History of the American People* that,

men of the sturdy stocks of the North of Europe had made up the main stream of foreign blood which was every year added to the vital working force of the coun-

try....But now there came multitudes of men of the lowest class, men of meaner sort from Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if [their] countries were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population.^[36]

These hereditary conceptions of a person's inherent ability remained potent throughout the early twentieth century. They were best expressed in the racial policies adopted by groups like the Immigration Restriction League, which used literacy as its preferred tool to measure civic acceptability amongst immigrants.^[37]

An unsuccessful series of immigration restriction bills were proposed to Congress (1897, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1907, 1909, 1913, and 1915) that would have limited immigration only to those who could read and write in their native tongues.^[38] Each was voted down or defeated by veto. Presidents Cleveland, Taft, and Wilson invoked rhetoric along the lines of Cleveland's statement, that "within recent memory...the same [derogatory] thing was said of immigrants who, with their descendants...now number among our best citizens." The decision finally agreed upon — quotas based on a percentage of any given group's US population in the 1890 census — did not "exclude all foreigners from years to come," but "it did nearly exclude all those who, according to the racial doctrines of the time, were most problematic in terms of their fitness for self-government and their promise for the general level of civilization in the republic." This policy worked well for its progenitors; the immigration commissioner noted "with satisfaction after the National Origins Act (NOA) had become law [in 1924 that] the immigrants daily disembarking at Ellis Island now all 'looked exactly like Americans.'"^[39] It was this environment of racialization that, ten years before the NOA was codified, allowed Mary Antin to write, "the average immigrant of today, like the immigrant of 1620, comes to build...a civilized home under a civilized government, which diminishes the amount of barbarity in the world."^[40]

It had taken years of experimentation to reach such a "satisfactory conclusion." Polish immigrants bore the heavy burden of xenophobic tendencies. The Poles were among the last ethnic groups to arrive in large numbers before World War I and NOA choked immigration, and thus felt the heaviest brunt of the new laws' restrictions. While "old immigrants" in the mid-nineteenth century had come mostly from northwestern Europe — where, according to one unnamed Washington legislator, traditions of political democracy echoed American values — rising political upheaval along the continent's eastern and southeastern periphery in the late nineteenth century had brought new waves of emigrants from Russia, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Poland. On the eve of the United States's entrance into the First World War, policymakers were scrambling to find "a list of causes for exclusion" that included physical and mental health, work ethic, industriousness, and ability to perform contract labor. They focused specifically on the unstable Eastern European regions, where by

1917-1918 it was clear that traditional imperial systems would eventually dissolve. The expected influx of "unfit peoples" would stress existing modes of exclusion, precipitating new criteria to screen "the darkened Eastern masses."^[41]

Stopgap measures designed to "curtail the flood of immigrants" culminated in the failed 1921 Quota Act. As the first law to put numerical limitations on immigration, the Quota Act laid groundwork for framing American immigration in terms of national origin. According to the 1921 law, immigrants needed to meet two criteria for admission. First, they had to pass a "certain standard of admissibility [comprising] the most inclusive list of human frailties to be found anywhere in the English language."^[42] Second, they must have adhered to the specified number of the proper national origin to be admitted per year.^[43] An annual quota of 357,803 was allotted to countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia; only 3 percent of immigrants from a given foreign-born nationality could achieve citizenship, according to the 1910 census. During the three year period for which the law was designed, only 155,956 Eastern Europeans were admitted, many of them Poles.^[44]

While initially effective at curbing immigration, the Quota Act was by 1924 due to expire. In its stead policymakers drafted even more restrictive measures to cope with the "omnipresent deluge."^[45] That year Congress passed the NOA; by basing its admission rates on the 1890 census, the new law allotted 86 percent of the quota to countries in Northwestern Europe, leaving only 14 percent for all other regions. While significant for its effect on Eastern European intake rates, the Act's reliance on national origins quotas pointed to deeper shift in immigrant-state relations in the United States. Policymakers claimed that national origins plans allowed for "the automatic selection of new citizens in a nondiscriminatory manner, as all nationalities are treated equally." Yet for affected foreign-born communities, restrictions represented a clear effort to limit the immigrant's voice within American politics.

The process by which legislators set admission percentages struck particularly deep within a Polish community that had tried to assert its integral role in American political development since the Revolutionary Era. Acting along partisan lines, policymakers repudiated Woodrow Wilson's attempts to introduce the United States into the global community. The 1924 Act created a Presidential Commission of six experts to determine "the number of inhabitants in continental United States in 1920 whose origin by birth or ancestry is attributable to the geographic areas covered by Congressional quotas."^[46] It took five years for the group to develop an acceptable system. For Poles, who had long revered Pulaski and Kosciuzko, the result negated their contributions to the "ideals of freedom shared between the Polish and American people."^[47] After deducting non-white races from the overall figure, there remained a population of 94,820,915, which was then divided into "colonial — those whose ancestors were enumerated in the 1790 census — and immigrant stock." At final count, postcolonial estimates numbered approximately 53.5 million persons, out of which only 27 percent were of Eastern or Southeastern European origin.^[48] The total estimates for postcolonial stock were used to establish national origins of the white

immigrant population. Poles appeared relegated to the bottom rungs of an unofficial socio-economic immigrant hierarchy that placed greater value on even other marginalized white ethnicities — Germans and Italians most importantly — against which Poles were often compared.^[49]

Polish leaders were particularly quick to note this system's thinly-veiled attempt to preserve United States ethnic composition by "selecting foreigners whose tradition, languages, and political systems were only superficially akin to those in the New World."^[50] As Polish historian Joseph Parot concluded, "they seemed to be subjected to far more than their share of prejudice and discrimination, bred mainly by fear — chiefly economic insecurity."^[51] Polish-Americans reacted against prejudice by emphasizing both aspects of their hyphenated character. The American and Polish war hero, Kosciuszko, who fought in the American Revolution, embodied this dichotomy, and his likeness was captured by figurines kept on the altars in many Polish homes next to paintings of Jesus. Another popular poster, casting the general against a backdrop of Polish and American flags, declared: "Poles! Kosciuszko and Pulaski fought for the liberty of Poland and other nations. Follow their example. Enlist in the Polish Army!" (see appendix).^[52] This sense of a double-belonging sparked nationalistic sentiment amongst the immigrant Polish community, tying them at once to the United States and the Old World. Polish émigré Agaton Giller first described this oddity in 1879 when he theorized that the average Polish immigrant "feels foreign and misunderstood here [in the US]...and so he looks for people who would be able to understand him."^[53] These immigrants were "particularly ripe for enlistment in nationalist causes because their experience abroad sharpened for them...the sense of distinct ethnic or national peoplehood."^[54] Ultimately, as Giller described, "if [the immigrant] is found by one who is able to...make him recognize the obligations which go along with his character — then this simple man, hitherto passive and dim to the national cause, changes into an individual consciously serving [these] ideas."^[55]

The "idea of independent Poland" increasingly became the bulwark against racial suppression for Poles in America. Poles were at once Americans and Polish, identifying strongly with both their homeland and, to a lesser degree, their adopted nation. This mood appeared in a particularly revealing 1920 exchange between a newly-arrived immigrant and Polonia's representatives welcoming him. When the former, who was seeking housing assistance, declared, "We fall into the category of being white, but we do not reap the benefits of being white," the Polish organizer present replied: "Our duty as Americans, our duty to our forefathers — as we helped America be America — is to help Poland be Poland."^[56] At once Polish immigrants understood their marginalization from white American society, and sought amelioration from their communal leadership. The Polish-American civic elite actively fostered this ethnic insecurity by emphasizing transatlantic linkages through which disenfranchised and dislocated Poles could find comfort. Polonia's leadership never pushed emigres to seek full assimilation or "Americanization." Instead they established a connection between immigration and pro-Polish patriotism, thus encouraging Poles in America to re-



Appendix: 1917 recruitment poster for the Polish Army, printed in Polish-language newspapers across the United States (Library of Congress).

main separate from their host society in both political interests and expression.

The process by which Polish-American communities experienced political distancing was primarily racial. It was defined by a combination of political and ethnically based factors, and informed the Polish perception of their role in American government. This framework was further nuanced by class and level of education; wealthier American Poles (educated in England, France, and the United States), and especially men, played a highly active role in governmental affairs. Several studies conducted on attitudes in the late 1920s and early 1930s offered evidence of "viable, if not obsessive activity of Polish leaders in local politics." This activity represented the stratification of the immigrant Polish community, and the concentration of communal sentiment at the highest levels of Polonia's socioeconomic spectrum. As sociologist Arthur Wood concluded, "The furthering of political ambitions was one of the chief functions of numerous social clubs from which the laboring people were excluded because of the expense."^[57]

Although the separation engendered disinterest among many working-class Poles toward American politics, the responsibilities of those with the most perceived political leverage were magnified. The elites were seen as the “true” Polish-American representative body in local political affairs, a role that eventually was broadened to the national stage. Many ordinary Polish immigrants could not read English, and relied on their better-educated peers to translate, distribute, and filter national news and commentary. The rapid expansion of the Polish-language press in the interwar period — often funded by Polish organizations — fueled this sense of dependency. The organizations these elites led were presented in sweeping terms, tying the Polish-American community to the ethnic homeland. The Polish American Congress, which would in 1944 gather most of Polonia’s disparate community groups under a single political umbrella, was thus described: “We, representing six million Americans of Polish extraction, the only truly free community of Poles today, [should] be invited to act as Consultant and Trustee of the rights and interests of the Polish nation.”^[58] Polish leaders not only asserted their prominence over Polish communities in the United States, but established transatlantic linkages that bound them to Old World leaders as well. Central to these groups’ lobbying efforts was the “intense interest amongst all Poles in America in the affairs of Poland which were constantly played up in the local Polish newspapers.”^[59] By 1940, male students in Polish-American Student clubs at high schools in Chicago were eager to “follow the career[s] of ethnic politicians who focused on Poland’s fate” while avoiding the “influence of corrupt [non-Polish] political leaders in the community.”^[60]

Polonia’s elite exalted itself as the group with ability to exert influence in Washington. Certainly by 1945 it had constructed itself into a political bloc, standing above but ostensibly representing the broader Polish-American community. Its influence was twofold. By virtue of its intellectual and financial prowess it saw itself as both the representative of “enlightened Polish-American opinion” and as a powerbroker in the White House. The elites argued that they were “uniquely fitted to appreciate and enjoy American liberty....[Divided under] Russians, Prussians, and Austrians.”^[61] For these thought-leaders, the United States became a source of a dual identity. Polonia’s principal figures emphasized their nationalist fervor within the framework of patriotism, evoking emotions that “American people could understand and to which they might relate.”^[62]

The community’s attempts to reconcile disparate pressures would by 1939-1944 — through the perceived victory of Woodrow Wilson’s successful creation of independent Poland at Versailles — shape the way in which Polonia’s leadership framed its advocacy and sense of American identity. The “moral relationship” between the United States and Poland was founded on personalized sentiment. Speaking retrospectively, PAC writers filtered their interwar experience through the lens of pre-Versailles Polish leadership. Their claims built on narrative promulgated throughout the 1930s; in print, their editorials often reprinted or quoted sizable portions of literature produced during the interwar growth of Polish-language periodicals in the United States. For example, one PAC commentator quoted an article

from the interwar University of Warsaw journal, *Kwartalnik Instytutu do Badań Emigracji i Kolonizacji*: “We do not want to see the Poles turn away from America, where their heroes Pulaski, Kosciuszko, Krzysanowski, Karge, and countless others have for more than a century ago laid the foundation of a most ideal friendship between Poland and America.”^[63] As highly educated and wealthy individuals, these leaders felt privileged to the ear — and expected at least the respect — of the American government. They framed their advocacy with near-constant allusions to “friendship” and “amicability” between individuals rather than ethnic groups. The racialization of democratic participation, and Polonia’s subsequent search for “people in government” who understood its unique dual identity, was manifest in a focus on individual politicians, not political party. Interviews conducted with Polish youth in Chicago during the 1930s revealed that second-generation American Poles, mirroring their parents’ voting patterns, tended to support “the man” rather than a party.^[64] For example, Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak advanced Polish political fortunes with representation on the Democratic Party’s slated ticket in 1931: of Cook County’s top political positions, 6 percent were given to Poles, earning Cermak 85-90 percent of the Polish-American vote among both first- and second-generation immigrants. Yet, when asked whether this support translated into affinity for the city’s Democratic machine, only 20 percent of Polish voters responded affirmatively.^[65]

Other contemporary studies confirmed this trend. Although Polish Americans were “rabidly democratic,” they had been “more interested in men than in parties.”^[66] Analyses of voting patterns through the Polish-Catholic Church found that 70 percent of American Poles would vote for ethnically relatable candidates.^[67] Polonia’s politics was personal, and served as a framework on which its leaders maintained dominant positions at the expense of broader communal participation — a reflection of the highly stratified spheres in which they operated. Although Polish-Americans qualified as “typical Democrats” because of their low socio-economic and cultural status, surprisingly few outside the group’s rarified echelons engaged in political activities. Nearly 67 percent of Poles living in Buffalo did not belong to political clubs; this figure was mirrored even in Chicago, where Polonia’s activities were most intense. Nationally, 85 percent of surveyed Polish-Americans “never held nor showed any interest in holding political office,” and only 20 percent of registered voters could name more than “one or two” non-Polish politicians.^[68] These data indicated a fundamental split between civic elite and the populations they ostensibly represented. While “common” Poles maintained distance from United States political discourse through the end of the Second World War, individual ethnic figures emerged as both the voice and mind of Polish America. This small group filled Polish-American political horizons and narrowed avenues for political expression. The high non-participation rate among poorer American Poles indicated broad-based disenfranchisement tempered only by the frantic actions of a few socially-mobile and Europe-minded elites. To exert influence, these leaders sought companions within the American political apparatus who might appreciate their standing.^[69] This strategy resonated within the Polish-American community; after years of

imperial experience, it understood and respected political hierarchies. Poles thus invested their trust in a rarified faction.

Polonia's ethno-political character informed the other half of this story. Studies conducted in Chicago during the 1930s indicated that the magnified importance placed on the individual was born from the community's broader disenfranchisement in party politics. The search for an individual hero was a search for a twofold friend: one who would champion Poland's cause in the United States and allow Polonia to circumvent the hostile representative system in which "painful" and "discriminatory" experiences were commonplace.^[70] Polish-American leaders placed an incredible amount of trust in these individual politicians, although most were often ethnically Polish to begin with. The few instances in which the community identified a non-Pole were the hinges on which Polonia's identity truly revolved, and onto which the civic elite latched themselves.

Franklin Roosevelt in 1945 was such a figure.^[71] This sentiment fueled heartfelt appeals to the President's "humanity" throughout the War. Writing in the PAC Bulletin, under Rozmarek's close editorial eye, the Polish Roman Catholic Union's (PRCU) John J. Olejniczak and Stephen S. Grabowski could frame their advocacy with the President thus:

Above all, Mr. President, the executive council of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America resolves unanimously to continue strongly and loyally to support all the war efforts of *your government* [emphasis added] in the victorious fight against Japan for the establishment of a lasting and just peace on earth. We believe unshakingly [sic] that you, Mr. President, as a champion of freedom, security, and the rights of nations will not allow harm to befall Poland, and will not permit that enslavement be the reward of this brave and trustworthy ally of the United States. We remember Versailles. Therefore we place the fate of Poland in your able hands and august judgement.^[72]

At once PRCU notables connected Roosevelt's actions to his predecessor's in 1917-1919, appealing to the same "moral guide" that they believed had driven Wilsonian policy. These and similar editorials articulated American policy as the product of presidential magnanimity rather than systemic negotiation or political process. In an "Open Letter to the President," Alfreda Borucka echoed this sentiment: "I send to your hands a pleading request — to help our poor Polish brethren...who are not enjoying freedom. Dear Mr. President! — I ask you to take these few words of a Polish-American woman into consideration."^[73] Although many lobbyist groups used similarly personal letters during the Roosevelt presidency, the Polish leadership relied on such an intimate strategy to the near-exclusion of all others. Through such personal appeals, displayed in the elite-dominated press, the Polish-American leadership carefully excluded themselves from the political milieu. While Polish thought-leaders felt they could exert influence in the Oval Office, they made no effort to penetrate beyond the executive, especially in the lead-up to Yalta. Polonia felt excluded from the broader American political discussion: Washington housed "your [the President's] government," an entity to which they expressed little belonging. They were divorced, at least rhetorically, from broader American wartime strategy or goals, as well as the institutions driving these policies.

The individual political "friend" was thus a bandage over Polonia's wound of discrimination. He was the mechanism by which Poles in America attempted, during the 1920s and 1930s, to overcome the prejudices leveled against their ethnic group. Although evidence in Chicago to support the claims of political impotence leveled by Poles is not complete, "[t]he very feeling of discrimination, even if not caused by frustration of personal interest" may have resulted in what sociologists later described as a "lower Polish-American self image" in the 1930s and 1940s.^[74] Polish ethnographer Jozef Chalasinski found in his 1935 examination of Chicago-based Poles that many demonstrated "a keen oversensitivity about their relations with dominant society." These communities expected to be derogated, and thus avoided contact with "other ethnic or American groups."^[75] Their fears were not unfounded. Throughout the interwar period, scholars in Poland and the United States complained that the Polish contribution to American history and culture had been persistently neglected in public schools, textbooks, and university course catalogues. This absence led preeminent historian Eugene Kusielewicz to complain, "though Poles were among the first to arrive in America, though they helped to establish the first industries here...no mention of these facts appear in textbooks used in our schools, where things Polish are merely ignored or distorted."^[76]

The sense that Poles had been ignored in American society contributed to the group's unfavorable self-image and identity-distance, a feeling that persisted into second and third generations.^[77] Polonia's negative ethnocentrism led many Poles to foster a self-orientation that at once preserved basic loyalty while incorporating derogatory racial conceptions common across American society. This sentiment, while prevalent nationally, was most virulent among Chicago-based Poles, informing the area's demographic and political character.^[78] Polish-Americans expressed their insecurity through marked humility. According to data collected in the 1950s, a major form of reaction against negative Polish self-image was name-changing: Poles were the most likely of any ethnic group in interwar America to alter surnames upon arrival.^[79] As early as 1919 sociologists noted this "humility of American Poles toward the dominant culture and society."^[80] While Polonia's leadership extolled the virtues of nationalist fervor, they also encouraged superficial Americanization, driven by high status consciousness. The proclivity toward outside reference group formation interacted with feelings of low ethnic status to reinforce a generationally-transmutable Polish inferiority complex.^[81] Stanley Krajewski thus concluded his 1971 paper on the Polish-American condition by linking Polonia's experience with the cross-period appeal, "We want to be heard!"^[82]

Community insecurities translated into Polish-American political participation. Chalasinski's data indicated that Poles felt discrimination most in the "unspecified area of public offices," leading to feelings of transparency in American politics. While many ethnic leaders — like, for example, the Irish political bosses in Chicago — gained entry into political discourse at the municipal level, Poles never achieved legitimacy as viable political actors in that arena. The issue of political recognition remained pertinent in the lead-up to Yalta, particularly among the most active figures in American Polonia.^[83] The rare push in the 1940s

to find a non-Polish champion in the White House represented an incredible gambit by Polonia's leadership. The strength of the lobbying effort at FDR was significant, and represented more than simply the necessity of approaching the President to affect change in US diplomatic affairs. The avenues and language Polish-American leaders used revealed a community whose desperation was masked by confidence. This confidence was partly born from the successful "use" of Woodrow Wilson to achieve Polish statehood in 1919. Although subsequent historiography suggested that Wilson's decision was made long before Polish delegates arrived at the White House, interwar Polonia regarded Versailles as its greatest achievement.^[84] These views shaped its actions in 1945, when it expected an equally momentous victory for Polish statehood.^[85] The strange interplay of ethnic prejudice on a national scale, lowered self-image within the United States, and the apparent discovery of a friend of Poland in FDR gave rise to a complex relationship between Polonia and its American home in 1945. Polish-American leaders at once felt alienated from it as a whole, but also sought, and felt confident they could win, a friend in the highest circle of power. The vast majority of Polonia's letters and petitions were addressed directly to Roosevelt, and more importantly, almost no attention was paid to influencing Congressmen or other Cabinet and State Department officials.^[86]

It is through this lens that the Polish-American effort in 1944-1945 Washington should be viewed. Polonia's efforts during those two years represented a meteoric rise in Polish self-image, and then an equally cataclysmic collapse of that confidence after the "betrayal in the Crimea."^[87] This sentiment can be followed indirectly through language used in Polish newspapers and American media reporting on Polish affairs. Whereas grandiose claims to "international morality," "justice," and "America the light" were commonplace in 1944, terms like "beseeched," "begged," "pleaded," "pained," and "lost" characterized Polish-American descriptions of Polonia after Yalta. The civic community's retreat into itself can thus be tracked through its loss in 1945. It faced the truth of its impotence in Washington, a realization it had tried to avoid since 1917-1919 and before. Yalta was the great trauma that forced this conclusion.

III. "Help Poland be Poland": Polonia's National Ethos, Historical Narrative, and the Polish-American Congress

The PAC's comments point to the construction of an immigrant ethos — according to its progenitors among Polish elite organizations — that at once protected Poles from hostile American race-culture and valorized a mythic conception of independent Poland. This distinct national consciousness developed according to split Polish-American identity. Polish immigration to the New World peaked during a period in which the Poland as a nation-state did not exist. Yet Poles were not stateless in the same way that, for instance, Roma or Basques either never have had or had not yet succeeded in forming a state of their own: Rather, "as a conquered and colonized nation-in-the-making... the Poles have shared a longing for a national homeland, united, sovereign, and puissant." Like other oppressed groups, Polish

emigres looked to history for the means of sustaining their aspirations. By 1900, Polish thought leaders believed that, although subjugated and partitioned by its neighbors, "Poland possessed an existence as a nation and as a state that anteceded, and might as easily succeed, contemporary international political arrangements and exigencies."^[88] Historical myth and memory was the foundation for Polish nationalism before 1914, and following Poland's defeat in 1939 through to Yalta. The near-myopic focus on Poland's fate was thus summarized in the masthead of the Polish immigrant newspaper, *Echo z Polski*: "First, you should know your ancestral history — both its defeats and its glories." The paper, like many others across the country, focused exclusively on "Old World affairs."^[89]

Polonia's leadership fostered a national ethos without a nation, pushing the average Polish emigre to feel a more profound sense of displacement and loss than his contemporaries.^[90] Such sentiment was cultivated purposefully. The elite network leading the nascent Polish-American community recognized the power of historical narrative as an ideological and political tool to achieve their goal of Polish independence. "Whatever the immigrant and ethnic experience," Polish historian John Bukowczyk concluded, "it is through the social constructions and ideological formations of that experience that Polish immigrants have developed connections: To God, Country, and Polonia."^[91] Polish history writing in the United States was born at the junction of mass migration and late nineteenth century nationalistic fervor. Polish emigration in the early 1900s posed a serious challenge for independence leaders across divided Poland, and Old World scholars like Leopold Caro, Franciszek Bujak, and Józef Okołowicz monitored the volume and causes of their co-nationals' mass exodus.^[92] Many Polish nationalists condemned this "peasant exodus" as a political and economic ill, as it "reduced the rural labor supply, raised the price of agricultural labor, and drained away potential recruits to the Polish nationalist cause, the very lifeblood of the shackled Polish Nation." Others took a different approach to the diaspora, including *Endek* leader Roman Dmowski, who conceded that by sending money from abroad, emigrant Poles provided invaluable capital for infrastructure and economic development. This latter view shaped Polonia's efforts in the New World. Dmowski outlined the subsequent strategy in a treatise directed at Polish leaders in America: by bombarding emigres with images of their homeland's suffering — both historical and contemporary — the Polish civic elite must offer Poles a chance to both "improve their tenuous material circumstances and become part of the political Nation."^[93] By 1914 Polish thought leaders in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Philadelphia had accepted the emigrants' "political and economic utility."^[94] By 1917-1919, at the height of Polish lobbying efforts in Washington, vast community contributions to a new nationalist organization, the Polish National Alliance, earned it the nickname, the "Fourth Partition."

Following Poland's resurrection at Versailles, the new state and its academic establishment developed a special interest in the Polish-American diaspora. New journals were published at the universities in Warsaw, Poznan, and Krakow, and the government funded several studies to decipher the causes and na-

ture of Polish emigration.^[95] While these efforts were “cognizant of emigration as a demographic and economic hemorrhage,” the official line remained confident that Poland would receive considerable economic aid from Poles in the New World. These emigres were labeled *Polonia zagraniczna*, a collective noun that “reinforced the notion that Poles must remain bound to each other and to their homeland, the *ojczyzna*.”^[96] In the United States a concurrent strand of scholarship emerged to describe the new Polish arrivals, and delineate their “otherness” from that of separate diasporic groups. American social observers, including Emily Greene Balch, Peter Roberts, and Robert E. Park, looked charitably on these immigrants; yet their writing was politicized, attempting to ameliorate the Polish social condition through “Americanization.” William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki penetrated the issue of “dysfunctional immigrants and adjustment” in their monumental work on *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. This volume, the cornerstone of sociology’s so-called Chicago School, remains among the most influential books dealing with Polish immigration in the early twentieth century.^[97]

Although important when drawing later narratives on assimilation, these early academic efforts failed to illuminate the national ethos that Polish leaders sought to foster inside their own immigrant community. Because many Poles could not read English (if they could read or write at all), they remained heavily dependent on Polish-language periodicals — particularly the constructed mythology they promulgated. Many Polish immigrants would likely not have recognized themselves in the versions of their past offered by American universities and research organizations. Rather, peasant historical tales — which often recalled epidemics, wars, suffering, and displacement, couched in magical incidents and phenomena — represented the oral tradition common across Partitions, and were circulated widely in the Polish press to foster a sense of national cohesiveness. In the United States, this mythology helped “ease the pain of separation, reinforced ties to loved ones, village, and Nation, and helped make sense of the decision to emigrate.”^[98] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, prominent figures among the Polonia leadership founded book publishing houses to propagate Polish national myths and sentimentalism. Chicago’s Dyniewicz Publishing Company printed historical novels from renowned authors, including Henryk Sienkiewicz and Władysław Reymont.^[99] The firm, as well as its successor, Smulski Publishing, also produced companion Polish-language textbooks and elementary school primers for children in Chicago’s public and religious schools. In Toledo, Antoni Paryski built “what has been called a publishing empire, reprinting virtually every work of Polish historical fiction he could find.”^[100] These works vocalized Polish nationalist aspirations abroad, commanding the historical legitimacy only officially funded and distributed accounts could convey.

This publishing machine allowed Polish elite to coordinate details of their nationalist message, creating a properly-tuned narrative that faced few dissenting voices. Yet at their core was a more fundamental question that underscored the “spirit of separateness” Polonia’s leadership fostered: what constituted a “true” Pole? The enduring answer, defended by leaders of preeminent

community organizations, focused exclusively on Polish Catholic individuals. One letter-writer to a Polish newspaper in Chicago, which was later quoted in the *PAC Bulletin*, hinted at this theme in a melange of symbolism: “Poland’s Christianity and Justice must form the bulwark to protect Europe as the refuge of Christian, Catholic, and Greco-Roman heritage.”^[101] Non-Catholics — including agnostics, atheists, the immigrant left, Protestants, and most importantly, Polish Jews — were systematically excluded from Polonia’s ethnic history. These groups did not fit the homogenous story of Polish oppression: many of their members had integrated well into both Partition and American societies.

In the United States, Poland’s 1919 independence posed a fundamental challenge to Polonia’s leadership. Reunification undermined Polonia’s prewar *raison d’être*; those who had professed that their love for Poland superseded all else faced the difficult choice of whether to return. Yet few Poles left American shores. The reasons for their reluctance were rooted in the exclusivity of Polish identity and Polonia’s relatively powerful influence. Polish-American leaders quickly grew disillusioned with the new Poland’s political trajectory toward an inclusive “neo-imperial” model that recognized parity between various Eastern European ethnic groups. Although these political debates would, by 1930, compromise Warsaw’s fragile political establishment, the early sentiment alarmed Polonia’s leadership, which had advocated a populist “Poland for Poles” policy. In response, civic elite maintained their support for independent Poland, but introduced a new notion summarized by the slogan, “*Wychodźstwo dla wychodźstwa*” (Emigrants for themselves).^[102] This hybridized ethos emerged against the backdrop of Polonia’s success in 1917-1919, and subsequent interest among American scholars in Polish-American dynamics. The interwar period witnessed the birth of Slavic and Polish Studies as a distinct discipline within US academia, helping Polish-Americans transition from “an ethnic problem to a topic of scholarly interest.” The Polish-American lobby had seemingly proven itself a powerful force in American politics, deserving of attention. Polish immigrant publicists, politicians, editors, and intellectuals recognized in this shift the potential for assimilation among second-generation Polish youth. While Polonia’s elders celebrated their influence over Wilson, few interpreted the Versailles moment as heralding a new period of Polish “disappearance into American society.” Rather, 1919 provided ample proof for many leaders that Poles in America were best served by maintaining their exclusivity, and in turn, their ability to exert political force in Washington.^[103]

Polonia’s elite, confronted by both a disappointing independence in Poland and the threat of diminishing influence over Poles in the United States, reacted strongly against assimilationist tendencies within the community. Prominent community leaders spearheaded a reinvigorated Polish-American historical project in the late interwar period. Most importantly, the effort allowed Polonia to maintain and strengthen its ties with upper echelon families in the Old World. Scholarship emphasized Polonia’s ability to affect policy in the United States through personal friendships, and assured Polish-Americans of their leaders’ sagacity. Rather than focus on integrating into American society, elites

encouraged Polish immigrants to maintain distance from their host country's political discussion. Accordingly, only around 30 percent of Polish immigrants had achieved US citizenship by 1930. Jewish immigrants from Poland present a counterexample to the Polish reluctance to integrate into US society. Questionnaires filled out in 1922 by subscribers to the Jewish-Yiddish newspaper *Forverts* indicated that well over 80 percent were either naturalized or had filed applications to become citizens. The paper commended the efforts of special Jewish-Polish bureaus established to assist in the citizenship process, and urged Jews to "utilize every possible opportunity to urge their readers to become American citizens." That year, the editors ran a series of advertisements for a Yiddish translation of the US Constitution, labeling it the "little Torah...the high road to citizenship, employment, and success."^[104]

By contrast, efforts to institutionalize Polish studies in the United States earned middle-class Poles some approbation from America's cultural elite, although the existing status hierarchy within Polonia experienced little alteration. In 1926, wealthy Chicago Poles organized the Polish Arts Club, first in a series of high culture organizations that would emerge throughout the 1930s-1940s. These groups, which showcased work that comprised Poland's *belles lettres*, bolstered the social status of Polonia's social elite from the "hybrid kiszka-beer-and-polka culture of their working class co-nationals."^[105] Through sponsored discussions and speakers series about Polish literature, politics, and language, elites within the Polish-American community enjoyed a point of contact with their "native-born social betters, access to the bottom rung of a longer and higher social status mobility ladder, and thus a possible escape from the 'ethnic mobility gap.'"^[106] When these salons fostered historical debate, it always centered around Polish — definitively not Polish-American — narratives and values.^[107]

The Second World War's outbreak in September 1939, and Poland's defeat the following month, abruptly pushed Polonia back to their original cause of Polish statehood. The scholarly tradition that emerged throughout the interwar period shaped the process by which Polish elites re-engaged with Poland's uncertain fate. The influx of Polish refugees in the early 1940s, which included a number of renowned Polish scientists and historians, reinvigorated Polonia's direct ties with the Old World. On 15 May 1942 exiled Polish scholars and members of the Polish Academy of Sciences founded the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America (PIASA). Their stated mission was to "assemble, preserve, and harness for posterity the values of a nation and to represent Polish thought in the world." Within a year of its foundation, PIASA President Jan Kucharzewski launched a special Commission for Research on Polish Immigration, ordered to examine the "dynamics of departure and arrival for Polish people in the New World." The group, headed by the famous historian Mieczyslaw Haiman — who administered the Polish Roman Catholic Union Museum and Archives — held its first meeting in Chicago on 29-30 December 1943, and soon established its headquarters there.^[108] In 1944 the Commission launched its flagship journal, *Polish-American Studies (PAS)*, and rechristened itself the Polish-American Historical Association (PAHA).

^[109] Though initially designed as an "independent scholarly society," PAHA strengthened its ties with the Polish Institute; two prominent Polonian organizations, the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America and the Polish Women's Alliance, paid for *PAS*' first issues. The journal's emigre editors seized the opportunity to, as Stefan Włoszewski wrote, "represent an alternative to the cultural vacuity of America" — a theme founded on "ethnic cultural uniqueness" that existing figures in Polonia's leadership heartily supported.^[110]

These interwar trends would culminate in 1944, as Polish-American civic elite began intensifying their lobbying efforts on Poland's behalf toward Roosevelt. That year PAHA convened a meeting in Buffalo — the third largest city in the United States in terms of Polish-American population — to establish an "umbrella political lobby under which Poland's historical right to statehood" could develop. Several days of discussion eventually produced the Polish-American Congress, Polonia's most powerful political tool in the late wartime period. Charles Rozmarek, who had attended as a Delegate at Large from Pennsylvania, was appointed the PAC's first president. Immediately the organization declared its interpretation of Polish history, building on interwar ethnic exclusivity and insecurity:

The psychology and condition of the Polish people in America has been damaged by constant slogans and declarations of disloyalty....All this is a travesty of historical justice, but it thrusts deeply into the heart of American Polonia.^[111]

By employing psychological terminology, civic elite revealed that they ascribed wholeheartedly to the notion of immigrant inferiority. Polish-Americans were tied to their ethnic homeland, effectively denied a place as American citizens in favor of one as Polish patriots. Poles were placed into the European milieu, as defenders of the continent's liberty in the twentieth century. These statements ignored the reality experienced by many Polish-American immigrant communities, which by this time were in their second generation, had little practical memory of Poland, and no lived connection to the post-1919 Polish state. Yet, by linking the "psychology and condition of the Polish people in America" with the "moral strength" exhibited across the Atlantic, Polish elite reinforced their connections to the Old World. Rozmarek, a Pennsylvania native and Harvard-educated lawyer, exemplified this dynamic. His efforts on Poland's behalf, to the exclusion of fostering a real Polish-American identity, ingratiated him into the Polish state's hierarchy. The interwar period demonstrated that Polonia's leadership had emerged as essentially a self-congratulatory construct, potent when its ethos was reinforced by actual politics. The 1919-1944 period was such a time, during which Versailles' afterglow colored historical narrative and mythology.

Speaking in this climate, Rozmarek declared in his inaugural PAC editorial that "Polish blood drenches the battlefields of the world." Addressing Roosevelt directly, he continued:

The fate of the democracies is tied up with the fate of Poland....Only a peace based upon the foundation stone of the Atlantic Charter can be enduring. In 1919 Poles earned the right to live as free men in free Poland, and it is up to you to protect that privilege.

The new PAC effectively mobilized the Polish-American elite's ties with their homeland, fostered throughout the interwar period by *belles lettres* societies and nationalist historical organizations. Against the backdrop of Polish-American national unity, PAC leaders situated their organization as the primary thought leader in a repressed ethnic community. Poles, who had watched their "spiritual homeland steamrolled by German steel, felt displaced in a country to which they had not fully integrated, and which had never truly encouraged their integration."^[112] Constant references to insecurity and psychological pain helped reinforced ethnic solidarity and subordinate assimilatory tendencies.

While the PAC also sought to address concerns that its ethos negated Polish-American contributions in the United States, it did so through the lens of personal friendship that had defined its post-1919 self-conception.^[113] Polish-American historical narratives in the interwar period had reinforced this notion of elite diplomacy between equals. The increasingly stratified atmosphere in which Polonia's leadership operated throughout the 1920s and 1930s denied American Poles the opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of Polish identity in the United States. Instead, focused exclusively on Old World power hierarchies, Polonia's principle figures were ill-equipped to maneuver through the many-layered American political system, preferring to distance themselves from all but the most powerful individuals.

Interestingly, throughout the development of Polish historical scholarship in the United States, little real attention was paid to the 1917-1919 moment; Polish-American writers preferred "stories of national myth." This dearth of self-examination points to an underlying dynamic of self-negation within Polonia's political heart. The civic elite accepted the success of Polish elite lobbying efforts after the First World War at face value, preferring not to interrogate the moment too intensely. Traditional explanations promulgated in the Polish-American press throughout the 1930s and 1940s emphasized that Paderewski won Wilson to the Polish cause by promising him Polonia's vote in 1916. Thus, Polish-American leaders were "catapulted to the acme of political influence" — a position, however self-conceived, they were reluctant to lose.^[114] Between the World Wars these individuals worried that by analyzing the roots of Polonia's political influence, they might uncover unsavory realities: although Paderewski was the subject of countless celebrations, Polish-American elites knew that it was he, and not they, who had determined Polish interests in Washington and after the War. To maintain the crucial facade of friendship between Polish civic elite and powerbrokers in Washington, it was imperative to avoid this conclusion lest Polonia lose its command over the Polish-American community. By 1944-1945 this effort was under intense strain.

With the PAC's formation Polonia had finally created a true political lobby — but had failed to transform the ethos of Polish political participation accordingly. Feelings of protective paternalism toward the Old Country, and a perceived threat to Polonia's status within American society, motivated the new organization's first declarations in its "About Us" editorial, which served essentially as an assertion of Poland's right to independence, the PAC's commitment to this goal, and American Poles' responsibility to

follow suit.^[115] Yet the interwar period's focus on national myth at the exclusion of true self-examination handicapped the organization. The community, although consulted by Roosevelt for domestic political reasons, lacked effective political pressure to influence either the administration's actions or those of Congress. Whereas Polish-Americans formed large constituencies within the Democratic Party and labor unions, they were practically absent from these organizations' leadership; the ten or twelve Poles in Congress rarely spoke together, "settling for politically valueless patriotic declamations for the *Congressional Record*."^[116] These shortcomings would become painfully clear in the months preceding Yalta, highlighting both the centrality and limitations of interwar Polish-American historical efforts to define Polonia's self-identity.

IV. Roosevelt's Betrayal: The Failure of Political Friendship and the Collapse of Poland's Civic Leadership

The Yalta Conference brought processes of racial distancing and historical myth-construction to a head, pushing the Polish civic elite to realize the limits to its influence — if not fully understand their roots. For Charles Rozmarek, the failure to influence Roosevelt in 1945 highlighted the boundary conditions for Political legitimacy in Polish life. Polonia's legitimacy was inextricably bound to developing international affairs. At Yalta Joseph Stalin imposed his will upon Poland. Winston Churchill, during secret talks in Moscow, agreed to recognize the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and to Stalin's unilateral demand that Poland's boundaries be moved west.^[117] The Polish nation was thus "picked up like a carpetbag and set down a few hundred miles to the West,"^[118] "satisfying Russia's appetite, penalizing Germany, and sacrificing Poland in the same process."^[119] From the Polish-American perspective, Roosevelt did nothing to stop these unilateral actions.

Upon hearing news of the "betrayal in the Crimea," Rozmarek waxed derisive, calling Roosevelt's actions an "injustice...committed not just against Poland but also against the United States." In fiery invective, he charged: "[at] Yalta the United States behaved more in the manner of Poland's historic European partitioners." The Conference had, in the PAC's official opinion, "ratified the country's fifth partition." In a rhetorical turn, attending organizers expressed their belief that America, demonstrating similar behavior to Germany and Russia (as well as Britain and France), had become a traitor to the Polish State. Polish-Americans were stunned: how could the British and Russians, thoroughly shattered by war, wield such power over the relatively untouched Americans?^[120] They concluded that conspiracy had robbed them of attaining their goal. Roosevelt had abandoned the grand promises outlined in the Atlantic Charter to which Poles held so tightly in favor of playing into Moscow's, and to a lesser degree, London's hands. This disgust led the Polish poet Adam Wazyk to recall in 1955:

Our leaders drank the sea water,
And they shouted: "It tastes like Lemonade."
Then quietly they crept to their homes
To retch and vomit.^[121]

Summing up the terror of the postwar decade in Poland, he condemned the international community for accepting Stalin's lie. Roosevelt in 1945 drank freely of this deception. Yet ten years before Wazyk poeticized his elegant accusation, Rozmarek and the PAC were echoing this language: "The President had a thirst for Russian lies."^[122]

As news emerged of the decisions reached at Yalta, the PAC reacted by retreating into the racial framework it understood. In that month's *Bulletin* the editors defended passionately their identity as Americans:

Nobody can accuse us of being hyphenated or disloyal because of our interest and love for Poland, just as nobody can accuse a child of being hyphenated or disloyal because it loves its mother as well as its father. Love does not diminish when shared. It grows the more it is shared.^[123]

In an accompanying article, Rozmarek cited "Our American instinct for justice and equity" that "cannot permit us to sanction the division of Europe into masters and slaves."^[124] Yet behind these bold statements lay uncertainty. Even as they professed love for the United States, the PAC leadership feared the community into which they were committing. Notions of ethnic distancing began to peek through the group's rhetoric before the complete story had been formed of what happened at Yalta. Rozmarek thus needed little prodding to launch an offensive against the "bigoted" society in which he and "six million other Americans of Polish extraction" were "constantly" prejudiced: "We have been fed by slogans these many long years, slogans emanating from vicious or innocent propaganda sources. These slogans were designed to break us psychologically and force us to accept what is unacceptable."^[125] Ultimately, he placed his true confidence in Poland, not the United States, concluding that "it was Poland's moral strength, the example of unreserved sacrifices that saved Europe...while she stemmed the deluge of German might with the blood of her manhood and the ruins of her land." He had, most importantly "lost confidence" in "Roosevelt's willingness or ability" to leverage US support for Poland.^[126]

It was thus the declared policy of the Polish American Congress after Yalta to pursue an international network rather than a single benefactor to protect their homeland.^[127] "Morality," and lack thereof, was the basis on which the PAC founded its anger. The Congress was so angry that Roosevelt was failing in this regard that it sought to replace the President as the United States' moral compass: "[speaking of the] psychology and condition of the Polish people in America... We shall stand guard over our heritage of democracy...and establish moral leadership in the United States."^[128] Rozmarek personally took this argument one step further in the *Chicago Herald American*, referring openly to America's slave past in his most colorful remonstrance: "America cannot again become a partner to any conspiracy aimed at selling free people into slavery and giving away their lands..."^[129] These remonstrances also demonstrated the underlying nature of betrayal. Roosevelt had not only abandoned Poland, but had forsaken the ideals of shared destiny, self-determination, and individual friendship on which

Polish-American friendship had been founded since the First World War. One letter-writer to the Toledo-based *Ameryka-Echo* concluded: "Perhaps someone will tell, did Poland — apart from former President Wilson — have any defenders? Yes. There was one who said: 'Poland is the inspiration of nations!' And then he gave Poland over into communist slavery."^[130] Roosevelt had mimicked Wilson's speech, but failed to demonstrate worthy intentions. Yalta was tied to Versailles, forming the bookends for Polish experience in mid-twentieth century American politics.

February 1945 was a moment of disorientation for the entire Polish-American community in Chicago, and the city's Polish newspaper editors shared Rozmarek's shock at Roosevelt's actions. These publishers were willing to invoke ethnic and inflammatory language that even the PAC was reluctant to conjure itself, but nevertheless condoned. The editors of the Roman Catholic *Narod Polski* declared that "the indomitable slavic spirit of the Poles will never acknowledge defeat." Poland, they concluded, "was the litmus test of America's wartime rhetoric, war aims in Europe, and moral foundation."^[131] An op-ed in the secular *Polish Morning World* voiced this anger in even more explicit terms. Speaking directly to American policymakers — and, even though he was not named, Roosevelt ("Churchill's best friend in the United States") — Polish-American soldier Richard Chesner promised that, although the "fifth partition...meant another eclipse for Poland," like the "ever-living Christ, she shall have her day of Resurrection while her enemy smothers in Hell."^[132] In a subsequent letter to *Ameryka-Echo*, Józef Anusz declared "I take as a model for myself the lives of the Great Men of Poland...I will not drown in a foreign mass, and remain a Pole always and everywhere!"^[133] And for readers of *Dziennik Zwiakzkowy*, the "abandonment of Poland was the clearest stab in the back yet dealt to us by the United States." A cartoon alongside this editorial depicted the "Big Three" seated around a poker table, with Churchill and Roosevelt gazing admiringly at Stalin. "Doesn't he play wonderfully?!" Roosevelt mused; "Quite right!" was Churchill's reply as the Soviet leader collected chips labeled "dignity," "freedom," "morality," "loyalty," and on top of the heap, "Poland."^[134]

The sense of betrayal exhibited in these and other newspapers was deeply personal. No longer did Polonia comprise "Americans of Polish Extraction" alone. Hyphenated labels increasingly appeared in print, a sharp and noticeable departure from Rozmarek's claim that no such identities existed in the community. Polish-Americans were becoming Poles of American extraction rather than the opposite. Hyphenation reinforced the community's "Polishness" as a qualification for American citizenship and belonging. A poem in the *Polish Morning World* three months after Yalta summed up the prevailing sentiment shared by editors across the city:

Poland, my mother brave
She gave me courage, freedom
She gave me heart undaunted
To face the Foe, his hate
To fight for her alone.^[135]

The United States was no longer the perceived environment of liberty it had been for Poles in the late 1910s through the 1930s, nor was it the environment in which the “blessings of liberty” had meaning.^[136] The Polish press ran articles defending the “fruits of a rich Polish heritage” with increasing regularity, while pieces advocating for total loyalty to Polonia’s adopted nation all but disappeared in Chicago.^[137] One year after Yalta, Polish-American readers of *Narod Polski* (not, anymore, “American Poles” or “Americans of Polish extraction”) were “melancholy...guilty only of the crime of loving [their] country. Yet in America [they are] called despicable ‘nationalist[s].’” A symbolic cartoon entitled, “Our Great America,” printed next to this depressed commentary depicted only a foldable raincoat with the caption, “protecting themselves.”^[138] Polonia’s efforts on Poland’s behalf had become to Americans as annoying as rain. One writer poignantly summarized this personal feeling of loss in a powerful lament to *Ameryka-Echo*:

I ask all Poles to join forces to defend and save Poland. Our friends have disappointed us, and in this the President. We gave him our children who are dying in such numbers on the war fronts, we give our money, and so many Polish fighters have already died and despite everything our Poland is dying. Where is the loudly shouted justice of the President? Now please excuse me for this ineptly written letter, because I have rheumatism in my hands.^[139]

The author, a member of the interwar generation who remembered triumph at Versailles, was nevertheless consumed by anger at the President’s actions. His words drew energy from Polish interwar concerns regarding assimilation, concentrating on the human sacrifice Polish-Americans made to the United States war effort. Polish children, the source of great anxiety among Polonia’s leadership for their tendency to “Americanize,” were lost in a twofold battle against European fascism and American disregard. Polish leaders portrayed the Second World War as a crusade for Poland’s independence in the face of a new German, and then Bolshevik, threat. Polonia was confident that Roosevelt had understood and honored this struggle. Focus thus shifted away from an espousal of American principles to an obsession with Roosevelt’s failure to adhere to “moral” obligations and promises after 1945.^[140]

The emotion exhibited in the newspapers masked the deeper sense of FDR’s personal duplicity that infuriated Polish leaders like Rozmarek. Appeals to Roosevelt after February struck at his character and dedication to the Atlantic Charter’s “moral” ideals even as the broader American public favored the President’s policies.^[141] The language of morality would reemerge throughout Polish-American discourse after Yalta, and highlight the sharp break between cordial pre-1945 letter-writing and the angry invective common after. In late 1944, Rozmarek was optimistic about American support for Poland, seeing it not as a probability but a certainty based on Roosevelt’s promises in the Atlantic Charter. Before news of Yalta agreements reached American shores in February, the PAC asserted that the Polish question “thrust[ed] deeply into the heart of America.”^[142] In November 1944, just after Roosevelt’s reelection, Rozmarek personally congratulated the President by reassuring himself that “the age old friendship with Poland will not allow the principles of the Atlantic Charter to be violated by puppet regimes forced again onto Poland.”^[143] Importantly, he made sure to point out that “as the election returns from the localities in which

they [Poles] reside conclusively prove, they cast their ballots for your reelection....They regard you as a sincere friend.” By believing in the “noble ideals of the Atlantic Charter initiated by you [FDR], and in keeping with the principles of ‘fair play’ of which you are an ardent believer and follower,” Poles in America were willing to “put their faith” wholly in Roosevelt’s presidency. Linking the President’s responsibility to Poland back to Kosciuszko in the eighteenth century, he asserted the President’s support for the “God-given right to freedom.” Indeed, Rozmarek was confident that “from the assurances given, we have every reason to believe that the Atlantic Charter will not be abandoned.”^[144]

As Rozmarek reminded Roosevelt, during the 1944 elections this trust had translated into Democratic votes. According to newspaper accounts in the 1940s, labor organizers believed that “Poles and other Slavs occupied 50 percent of industrial jobs in the United States,” and constituted huge segments of the Democratic Party.^[145] After 1941, particularly in coal mining, rubber, auto, electrical equipment, and steel industries, Poles constituted a sizable segment of workers in most wartime factories.^[146] While these reports may have cited exaggerated figures, the emphasis on Polish contributions to heavy industry nevertheless indicated Polish-American prominence in critical economic sectors. Rozmarek and the PAC represented a breath of fresh air for this population, as it had traditionally relied on non-Polish officials to represent its interests. Although Roosevelt had appointed M.S. Szymczak to the Federal Reserve Board, and a bloc of 10 or 12 Polish congressmen won seats in the 1940s, Poles lacked any Senate representation. Non-Polish figures like Michigan Sen. Arthur Vandenberg carried Polonia’s banner, but did so ostensibly to ensure electoral support. With the PAC’s friendship in Washington, Polonia thought its cause was finally reaching beyond their ethnic enclaves. Comparisons to Woodrow Wilson in 1919 were common. Thirty Congressmen spoke of Polish bravery on Constitution Day in 1943, a number which tripled in 1944.^[147] In the elections that year, Rozmarek urged his fellow Poles to vote for Roosevelt as the “true friend of our homeland.” His efforts were successful; in Chicago’s Polish wards, the President won by a three to one margin.

As the afterglow from November 1944 gave way to twilight in February 1945, PAC leaders grasped onto the disappearing vestiges of their pre-Yalta optimism. Rozmarek felt most betrayed, especially given the energy he expended for Roosevelt the previous year. In February his request for a meeting with the President was declined without explanation. Roosevelt refused to discuss Poland or Yalta with members of the Polish community.^[148] Ignoring Polonia’s platform, he declared to Congress in March 1945 that “there will be a more stable political Europe than ever before.... One outstanding example of joint action by the three major allied powers in the liberated areas was the solution reached in Poland.” Having essentially given Poland to the Soviet sphere of influence, he concluded vaguely, “the whole question of Poland was a potential source of trouble...as it has been sometimes before, and we came to the conference to find a common solution. We did — even though everybody does not agree with us, obviously.”^[149] The casual casting aside of Polonia’s entire platform in this single sentence bared to Rozmarek and other leaders the fragility of their position in the United States, and the feelings

towards their cause in Washington. They saw their “spiritual connection” cast aside as politically unpalatable sentimentality. In a “message to the great powers,” the PAC summed up this anger: “You are wrong! You have failed to be great! We want to be on record in claiming that America has lost her way, that you have again missed, miscalculated, squandered and frustrated and deeply hurt the heart and soul of America.”^[150] Rozmarek lamented most poignantly that “[w]e have been forced into a position of humiliating subservience in matters vital to the future of the world....”^[151]

This “humiliating subservience” gave way to the racial distancing that sociologists described as the “defining characteristic” of Polish-American communities by the 1950s.^[152] Polish leaders “placed the fate of Poland in [Roosevelt’s] able hands and august judgement,” and watched as it slipped through his fingers.^[153] There was hope that Truman could reverse the trend set by Roosevelt, but these sentiments were always lukewarm and came across in print as exhausted. By mid-to-late-1945, Polish leaders wondered why they had supported the United States through the war at all. Bemoaning the “amount of blood spilled by the “sons of immigrants and Americans of Polish descent,” Rozmarek and others wondered, “for what principles their sons had died?”^[154] American newspapers reinforced these doubts, describing the Polish-American community as “pleading,” “begging,” and “beseeching.”^[155] This frustration translated into disbelief. Polonia seemed unable to fully accept that Roosevelt had conspired against Polish independence. Instead, they sometimes argued, the Americans had been duped by British machinations and Churchillian rhetoric.^[156] These arguments were never central to the Polish-American response, but nevertheless illuminate the broad loss of faith in American principles and protection for Poland. As *Dziennik Zwiazkowy* noted, “the manner in which the Polish question is settled presents the truest test of the sincerity of the United States.” To Polonia, Roosevelt had shown his “truest” colors as a “sell-out,”^[157] leading prominent Poles to lament, even in victory, “how low American prestige has sunk in Europe.”^[158]

Polonia’s anger at Roosevelt complemented a shift in language used to describe Poles in the United States, and sentiments expressed in the Polish press. As early as late February 1945, the *Polish Morning World* published an excerpt from a “Diary of a Polish Soldier,” not Polish-American, describing the “soldiers of Narvik, the civilian fighter of Warsaw, [and] the defenders of the Westerplatte.”^[159] These selected passages glorified Polish national efforts, and were completely silent about the fact that the fighter was enlisted in the American army. This distancing at the front lines was shared on the home front in Chicago. In a letter to the editors of the *Polish Nation*, Anne Maria Zajal declared: “Next to parental love, I have known no greater love than for Poland.”^[160] Two months later, the editors of all three main Polish newspapers in Chicago each published commentaries derisively referring to the newly-declared “I am an American Day,” sarcastically urging American Poles to “celebrate it if they can bring themselves to the task.”^[161] A new organization called *Sarmatia*, advertised in the *Polish Morning World*, was founded to “defend Poland’s rights whenever and wherever she is unjustly attacked.”

This group exulted the “contribution of people of Polish blood [not Americans, although that was the target population] to human progress, culture, and the war efforts of the United Nations.”^[162]

By 1946, *Sarmatia* had shifted its focus almost exclusively to the Polish refugee crisis in Europe. After the illegitimate Polish elections in 1947, Yalta became mythology. As Polonia shifted its attention back to Europe, the Crimean tragedy was not forgotten, but rather mobilized as a political lever within the Polish-American community. “Yalta was the postwar Munich!” declared an anonymous editor of the *Polish Morning World*; the article concluded: “Freedom shrieked in the Crimea. Whom can we trust now?”^[163] The divisive language used in this and similar editorials was instructive. Separations between *us* and *them* were finally formalized as the civic leadership came to terms with its impotence.

The social studies conducted in the 1950s suggested that the sense of betrayal at Yalta pulled the entire Polish-American community into itself. Yet evidence offered by newspapers and PAC bulletins, when read against the sociologists, suggest a more complex dynamic at play in 1945. At the heart of this new interpretation was Polonia’s elite. There was an ethnic distancing after Yalta, but for which group? The civic leadership had much to lose after Roosevelt’s betrayal, and were thus the most vocal commentators on the Crimean tragedy. Polonia’s realization that it could not affect change at the White House compounded a forced acceptance of its diminished importance within the Polish community. Rozmarek’s claims in late 1944 of speaking for “six million Poles” were undermined by his failure a few months later to achieve what these Poles likely wanted. A letter published in *America-Echo* introduced this concept, admonishing the PAC for its tone-deaf efforts in the months before Yalta: “At various conventions and in the press it was explained that President Roosevelt will settle everything propitiously for Poland.... Nobody, however, told Polonia that President Roosevelt is before all the President of the United States and not Poland.”^[164] The limitations of Polonia’s political friendship were cast into sharp relief against Poland’s enslavement that year. While few could understand Roosevelt’s betrayal, the elite’s role in this tragic confusion was most damaging. Yalta, above all, represented a breakdown of the civic elite’s elevated position as thought leaders within the Polish-American community.

The conference became a trope of Polish-American dissatisfaction in the United States. In 1944 Rozmarek felt that he had mobilized Chicago Poles for Roosevelt. Determining whether this interpretation was true will require more extensive statistical research, but the sentiments at its heart were important. Rozmarek would never be able to achieve such electoral cohesion with the Polish community again, and he knew it. Especially after the widely-condemned 1946 elections in Poland, Yalta became a rhetorical device Republicans deployed in collaboration with PAC leaders against the Democratic Party.^[165] During the US elections that year, the Republican Party capitalized on the “Yalta betrayal” across dominantly Polish neighborhoods. In a nationally distributed handbook, the chairman of Cook County’s Republican Committee pressed his party’s precinct work-

ers to “intensify their campaign efforts in Polish districts.” He claimed that Polish-American resentment over Yalta provided the “opportunity to cut into what had been a solidly Democratic vote.”^[166] Wisconsin Congressman Alvin O’Konski echoed the Cook County memorandum, actively campaigning for Republican candidates in cities with large Polish populations by conjuring the “Democratic betrayal” in the Crimea. Local and Congressional elections were proving grounds for this new Republican rhetoric. In 1947, Senator Wayland Brooks and Congressman O’Konski urged Chicago Poles to support the Republican mayoral candidate, Russell Root, because of “the Democrats’ betrayal at Yalta.” The conservative *Chicago Tribune* argued that a Democratic victory would provide “encouragement to continue the policies of loot, starvation, and exile that have brought despair to the peoples of Poland.”^[167]

These early invocations met limited success. Republican Party leaders in Chicago were invited, purportedly for the first time, to meetings with leaders from the PAC and other Polish community organizations. Condemning the Democrats’ unwillingness to disavow the Yalta agreement, the War Veterans Committee for a Free Poland urged Chicago Poles to vote Republican. Rozmarek adopted the same line, alongside the former Polish-American president of the Wisconsin Young Democrats.^[168] In the 1948 presidential election, Republican nominees Thomas Dewey and Earl Warren expressed their disappointment with Democratic mistakes in judgement at Yalta. The pair appealed to Polish-Americans on the Yalta issue, attributing Poland’s “tragic fate” to the “Roosevelt Administration’s secret diplomacy.”^[169] In their reelection campaigns, Senator Wayne Brooks and Governor Dwight Green were even less restrained in their admonishments, “bitterly assailing the Democratic betrayal at Yalta.” All three platforms were defeated by Democratic candidates, with a healthy left-leaning margin in every Polish district. When Dwight D. Eisenhower used the rhetoric of abandonment four years later, the same Polish groups that had put their weight behind Roosevelt wholly shifted to the Republican platform. Rozmarek penned commentaries for the conservative *Chicago Tribune* and met with right-wing politicians to discuss the Crimean tragedy.^[170] By 1953 mentions of Yalta by Republican politicians had reached a high point, a theme which continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century among Polonia’s diminishing elite.^[171]

Election results indicated that only the Polish-American elite were convinced by Republican oratory. The shift in Polonia’s attention from Roosevelt’s Democratic Party to a slew of Republican politicians represented a deeper floundering of their position in the United States. Unlike in 1944, no significant number of Poles voted for Eisenhower in 1952 and Rozmarek was unable to influence the Polish-American community to participate in the election, let alone mobilize the vote for his preferred candidate.^[172] Ordinary Poles had recognized their civic leadership’s impotence, a revelation strengthened by a postwar desire to reverse the interwar period’s damaging racial separation.^[173] Perhaps in sympathy with New Deal domestic policies, many Polish-Americans rejected the overall Republican position on domestic economic, labor, and social issues: rather than show affection for

Poles or their community’s grievances, Republican politicians appeared obsessed solely with criticizing Roosevelt. Their rejections of Yalta were tempered by staunch opposition to the displaced persons immigration bill (later ratified in 1948), which disproportionately assisted Eastern European refugees. In fact, as Rozmarek’s efforts to bring Poles to the Republican platform intensified throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, average Polish voters tended to become *more* Democratic. By 1972 in Chicago, over 75 percent claimed Democratic affiliation, as opposed to 50-60 percent a decade earlier. Only Poles who were upwardly mobile, who looked to the elite for a social model, moved to the right. Yet this cohort was tiny compared to the mass working class population in cities like Chicago.^[174]

The emergent divide between the Polish-American community and their civic elite indicated the latter’s disappearance from a discernible leadership role. After Harry S. Truman’s surprise victory in 1948, Republican politicians, and not Polish-American elites, dominated the anti-Yalta lobby. Most damaging to Polonia’s credibility, Republican figures assumed the Polish nationalist mantle. For example, using Polish national observances — including Polish Constitution Day, the anniversary of Pulaski’s death, the 1939 German attack on Poland — Senators Homer Capehart, Joseph McCarthy, and Congressmen Joseph Martin, Jr., Hugh Scott, John Lodge, and Kenneth Keating “hammered incessantly at Yalta and Democratic foreign policy.”^[175] In 1950, Republican partisan focus on foreign policy had precipitated a refined effort to exploit Polish national sentiment for their domestic electoral gain — a policy closely tied to anti-Communist denunciation. For Polish-American civil elite, the effect was disastrous. While they had hitherto represented the necessary link between Polish national aspirations and the American political establishment, the ease with which Republican figures coopted this position effectively sidelined Polonia’s function in national politics. Tireless efforts during the interwar period to overcome racial legacies, find effective political friends, and assert the Polish-American voice in national discourse had resulted in naught. The Polish-American electorate’s divide, particularly after 1952, highlighted general disillusionment among Poles regarding both their elites’ ability to influence American politics, and their ownership of issues long considered undeniably Polish.

V. Conclusion: The Civic Elite, Humbled

By the mid-1950s Rozmarek and his colleagues were humbled men. For most Poles, apathy, even disgust, replaced anger at US abandonment. The causes which Polonia’s elite had championed in the 1940s were no longer pressing for Polish-Americans generally. One sociologist noted in 1968 a seeming absence of nationalist ties and “supra-territorial peoplehood” between Poles living across the United States, a development that ran against the grain of the PAC’s universalist rhetoric.^[176] Sociological studies conducted in mid-1950s Chicago were finding a community supportive of perceived American values — self-determination above all — but deeply hostile to the actual US society and population. Its inferiority complex, expressed in the 1930s and 1940s through misplaced notions

of friendship with Roosevelt, had been laid bare.

The issues unearthed by these studies raise a fascinating question of how scholars can expand the data to the broader community. Who are the sociologists really talking about? A new interpretation of the sociology emerges in which the social scientists themselves become constructors — through a myopic focus on the civic elite's position — of the widespread Polish ethnic inferiority complex. Polonia's elite were most estranged from American politics after 1945, yet remained highly vocal. Studies conducted in the late 1940s would have unknowingly tapped into this anger, for many were funded by Polish-American political organizations — and even by the PAC itself — and were conducted by members of the Polish-American intellectual elite. Ethnic distancing might well have been a top-down rather than a bottom-up process by which the civic elite reinforced their anger at dispossession through scholarship. Historians and sociologists may have construed this sentiment throughout the 1950s and 1960s, applying it to the broader Polish-American community.

Yet the evidence presented above also indicated that it may be too simple to merely attribute the notion of Polish-American inferiority to sociological models imposed decades later. Polonia's decline after Yalta evinced a critical reality: ethnicities have narratives. They are not static or enduring, but rather change — mutate, alter, metamorphose, and disappear. During the interwar period, the civic elite attempted to harness these historical processes, constructing and shaping a sense of Polish-American community in the New World. Their efforts were premised on conscious ethnic self-negation as a means to assert legitimacy over a marginalized population. Unlike other ethnic groups, Polish-America emphasized its alienation from the American governmental discourse as the defining characteristic of political participation. Subsequent scholarship reflected their unfulfilled aspirations, and may have let a fallen leadership to express their confusion, anger, and frustration. The dual forces — sociological studies and elite-imposed ethnic identity — are difficult to discern within the Polish-American narrative between 1919 and 1945. Slippage can occur between accepting sociological models at face value and divorcing pre-Yalta Polish experience from post-1945 developments — a result of describing racial frameworks that were at once constructed *in vivo* and *ex post facto*. However, it is crucial to understand the twin forces shaping Polish-America, and their roots in civic elite political machinations, before a more comprehensive understanding of Polish ethnic group formation and dissolution can emerge. Polonia's downfall illustrated the shortcomings of communal representation and construction through strategies of alienation: they unknowingly made certain that they could never overcome their political failure in 1945.

If ethnic distancing did take place, the next step is determining from which direction. To begin an answer, it is useful to look at the developments inside Polish-American communities beginning in the post-Yalta period. New arrivals from communist Poland helped clarify the marginalization of Polonia's leadership, and its inability to adapt in response to postwar realities. Starting in the mid-1950s, a new wave of Polish emigres arrived in the United States, leaving what had, under Stalin's direction,

become a Soviet satellite along the East European borderlands. The environment into which they settled differed significantly from that to which earlier immigrant communities had adapted. Experiencing a rising climate of ethnic pluralism in the 1960s and 1970s, "new" Polish-Americans began to view their heritage as a source of pride — and access to public funds for restoring parishes and neighborhoods. The newcomers, who were better educated than their co-nationals before the Second World War, fit well into the period's anti-Communist hysteria. Owing to residual legal immigration restrictions, numbers of immigrants admitted remained constant, but incidence of "vacationers" (*wakacjusze*) traveling on tourist visas — and often working illegally in American industry — doubled to nearly 24,000 annually by 1970. These groups were later joined by those seeking economic and ideological refuge, following the Solidarity movement's rise in the 1980s. Of all newcomers, these refugees tended to be most politically active, serving as organizers for Polish national groups and working on behalf of Poland's liberation from Soviet influence: "It was they who maintained a concrete...connection to the opposition movement and who could, therefore, become the conduit through which resources could flow back to Poland."^[177] This new immigrant community had, by the 1980s, assumed roles similar to those played by Polish civic organizations in the pre-Versailles period.

Interestingly, existing Polish-American communities seemingly viewed these newcomers through the same self-negating lens that had defined Polish ethnic distancing in the interwar period. Older-generation Poles thought newcomers wanted handouts, and interpreted their behavior according to an ethnic framework that emphasized communal marginalization and political impotence. For the PAC, refugees from communist Poland represented a challenge to the group's already diminished leadership role in the Polish-American community. The older Polish cohort criticized newcomers for not joining existing civic organizations, blaming their reticence on communist suspicion. In turn, the arrivals excoriated the PAC and its affiliates for being too autocratic, formal, and centralized. As one emigre noted in 1971: "the do-nothing leadership was too reminiscent of the Soviet gerontocracy."^[178] Both sides considered themselves the superior, and emergent class distinctions emphasized educational, occupational, and cultural divergences between "Old World" and "modern" Poles. Existing communities tended to espouse a Poland that had disappeared at the end of the long nineteenth century; they spoke with outmoded colloquialisms and celebrated historical holidays like Constitution Day (3 May) that had no modern Polish resonance. Newcomers, on the contrary, embraced contemporary language and political symbolism. In many respects, these groups were not speaking the same language.^[179]

Although cooperation did eventually develop between existing civic elite and newly arrived Poles, the PAC was never able to mobilize existing communities to support these efforts. Second- and third-generation Polish-Americans were suspicious of their co-nationals' political and cultural leanings. While Rozmarek and subsequent PAC presidents emphasized ethnic fraternity, the broader Polish-American community grew increasingly

uninterested in their homeland's affairs. Following Yalta, many older Poles had asked: who leads Polonia? Challenges to the civic elite's status that were posed by new immigrant groups, as well as Polonia's post-1945 floundering, offered a bleak answer. By the mid-1980s, PAC influence had effectively disappeared. When, for instance, the media approached the Congress about events in Poland, secretaries referred callers to groups established by newly-arrived Poles — including most prominently organizations like *Pomost*, Freedom for Poland, Brotherhood of Dispersed Solidarity Members, or the Polish-American Economic Forum.^[180] And during the lead-up to Polish elections in 1989, PAC leaders were remarkably silent. While the newcomers remained outspoken in their support for Poland's liberation from Soviet influence, their lobbying efforts never revitalized existing Polish-American voices. Nor did they foster any Polish-American identity: following the collapse of Poland's communist government in 1989-1990, all but four percent of newly-arrived Poles interviewed in Chicago said they would return to their homeland.^[181]

The failure in 1945 had thus dealt a powerful blow to Polonia's leadership, such that a "temporary" diaspora in the 1970s-1980s could easily displace their residual political influence. While Polonia's elite had focused on the content of Polish identity — language, cuisine, historical mythology — their rhetoric ignored emergent processes of identity formation in the New World. The question of Polish ethnic distancing is ultimately a tantalizing one tangled in the binds of education, rhetoric, academic method, anger, and apathy. As another Polish nation fell in Europe, its diverse Diaspora in the United States was thrown into the dizzying whirlwind of international politics at the birth of the Cold War. As Poland became communist, her exiled elite experienced a humbling revolution of its own. Understanding the nature of their divorce from the broader Polish-American community after Yalta thus opens a window onto the complex social and political dynamics of a disorienting moment for a downtrodden elite watching their homeland, and status, destroyed again.

[1] Charles Rozmarek to Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Congratulatory Letter to FDR on his Reelection" (14 November 1944), reprinted in Donald Pienkos, *Polish American Efforts on Poland's Behalf* (East European Monographs, 1991), p. 273.

[2] John Bach McMaster, *The United States in the World War* (D. Appleton and Company, 1919), p. 310-311.

[3] Rom Landau, *Ignace Paderewski, Musician and Statesman* (New York: Crown, 1934), p. 118-119.

[4] Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 70-71.

[5] Charles Rozmarek, "Telegram to US Secretary of State George C. Marshall from President Rozmarek on Polish Election" (20 January 1947), reprinted in Pienkos, *Polish American Efforts*, Ibid., p. 288.

[6] Rozmarek, "Telegram to US Secretary of State George C. Marshall," Ibid.

[7] Anna D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), p. 1-2.

[8] Harold J. Abramson, "Ethnic Pluralism in Central City," in *Ethnic Groups in the City*, ed. Otto Feinsein (Lexington, Mass.: Heath Lexington Books, 1971), pp. 17-28; Eugene Kusielewicz, "Reflections on the Cultural Condition of the Polish-American Community" (Lecture delivered at Convention of Polish-American

scholars at Alliance College, 1969).

[9] Karol Wachtl, *Polonia w Ameryce: Dzieje i Dorobek* ("Polonia in America: History and Realizations." Philadelphia: Polish Star Publishing Co., 1945), p. 290.

[10] Irwin T. Sanders and Ewa T. Morawska, *Polish-American Community Life: A Survey of Research* (The Community Sociology Monograph Series, Vol. II, 1975), p. 62.

[11] Jiri Kolaja, "Dysreference Group of Polish-American Laundry Workers" (*Polish Review*, pp. 37-47, Winter 1962), pp. 37-38.

[12] James Pula, *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (Twayne Publishers, 1995); Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission*, Ibid.; Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid.; Pienkos, *Polish American Efforts*, Ibid.

[13] Abramson, "Ethnic Pluralism," Ibid.

[14] Kusielewicz, "Reflections," Ibid.

[15] Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid., p. 62.

[16] For example: T.W. Krychowski, ed., *Polish Canadians, Profile and Image* (Polish Alliance Press, 1969); Kusielewicz, *Reflections*, Ibid.; Wiktor Turek, "Emigracja Polska w Kanadzie," in *Rocznik Polonii Zagranicznej* (1960), pp. 51-95.

[17] Jiri Kolaja, "Dysreference Group of Polish-American Laundry Workers" (*Polish Review*, pp. 37-47, Winter 1962), pp. 37-38.

[18] Arthur E. Wood, *Hamtramck, Then and Now: A Sociological Study of a Polish-American Community* (New Haven: College and University Press, 1955), p. 219.

[19] Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[20] "Editorial: Poland on the Chessboard" in *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (February 1945), pp. 1-3, retrieved at the Polish Museum of America (hitherto referred to as PMA).

[21] Henryk Frankel, *Poland: The Struggle for Power, 1772-1939* (London: L. Drummond, 1946), p. 30-31.

[22] Declaration of Policy of the Polish American Congress," in *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1945), p. 6, retrieved at PMA.

[23] "An Open Letter to the Newspapermen of America," in the *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, and reprinted across the United Polish Press of America, Vol. 1, No. 2 (18 February 1945), pp. 5-7, retrieved at PMA.

[24] Ibid., p. 1.

[25] D.B. Horn, *British Public Opinion and the First Partition of Poland* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1915), p. 13-14.

[26] Frankel, *Poland*, Ibid., p. 2.

[27] Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson*, Ibid., p. 38-30.

[28] Abbé Venceslas de Tworowski, *Wilson et la Question Polonaise* (Saint Moritz, St. Augustine, 1919), p. 10.

[29] Fisher and Brooks, p. 47-48: According to a curious legend in the Polish-American historical memory that became popular during World War I, the Poles had come to America 16 years before Columbus landed in the West Indies. In 1476 John of Kolno reputedly commanded a flotilla of Danish ships which sighted the coast of Labrador. Somewhat later, and more authentic, reports claim that the Dutch colonists hired a Polish schoolmaster in Manhattan. Others, including Albert Soborowski, filled roles as interpreters with Native Americans, frontiersmen, and Protestant settlers in the Passaic and Raritan Valleys at the turn of the eighteenth century; Poles may even have served as indentured laborers in Virginia.

[30] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), p. 202.

[31] Victor Greene, *American Immigrant Leaders, 1800-1910: Marginality and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 119.

[32] Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 109-151, 197-213.

[33] Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 7, 13-14: Italians "did

not need to become white because they were perceived as such upon arrival.”

[34] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, Ibid., p. 199. The United States Immigration Commission was established in 1907 to respond to growing concern about immigration to the United States. The body had concluded by 1911 that immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe posed a serious threat to American society and culture. Its overall findings provided the rationale for immigration restriction acts in the 1920s, including the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which favored immigration from northern and western Europe.

[35] Quoted in: Barbara Miller Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 93.

[36] Woodrow Wilson, *A History of the American People* (New York City, 1901), vol. 5, pp. 212-213. Perhaps horrified by the level of violence precipitated in Europe, Wilson would by 1917 change at least his public countenance.

[37] Literacy tests were essentially a useful proxy to measure class and assimilation into “true Americanism.”

[38] Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*, Ibid., pp. 93-95: Since the early 1880s a strengthening cohort in Congress had advocated including a literacy test as “the surest way to curb immigration from southeastern Europe.” In 1917 these voices triumphed, leading to a rapid and haphazard strengthening of restrictive immigration policy. Yet between 1918 and 1920, only 6,142 aliens were excluded due to reading deficiency — a figure comprised mostly of Mexican, French-Canadian, and Italian individuals. By 1921 less than 0.5 percent of arrivals were turned away because of their inability to read.

[39] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, Ibid., 200-201

[40] Mary Antin, *They Who Knock at our Gates* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), p. 56-57.

[41] Helen F. Eckerson, “Immigration and National Origins,” in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 367 (September 1966), pp. 5-6.

[42] Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Immigration* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 390.

[43] Eckerson, “National Origins,” Ibid., p. 7.

[44] Ibid.: Northwestern European immigration numbered slightly less, at 155,787, and immigrants from other quota countries totaled only 615.

[45] Fairchild, *Immigration*, Ibid., p. 396.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Quoted in: Mary Patrice Erdmans, *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnicities in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 15.

[48] Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland were considered principal sources of postcolonial immigration.

[49] Mae M. Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (June, 1999), pp. 67-92.

[50] Eckerson, “National Origins,” Ibid., p. 7; Erdmans, *Opposite Poles*, Ibid., p. 17.

[51] Joseph Parot, *The American Faith and the Persistence of Chicago Polonia, 1870-1920* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1971), pp. 206-207.

[52] Władysław T. Benda, “Poles! Kosciuszko and Pulaski fought for the liberty of Poland and other nations — Follow their example — Enlist in the Polish Army!” Lithograph in Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, POS-US. B45, no. 9 (1917).

[53] Quoted in: Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imaginations of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 18.

[54] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, Ibid., p. 215.

[55] Quoted in: Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, Ibid., p. 18.

[56] Quoted in: Erdmans, *Opposite Poles*, p. 17.

[57] Wood, *A Sociological Study*, Ibid., p. 219.

[58] Polish American Congress and Charles Rozmarek, “Byrnes Warned that Yalta Carries War Seed,” *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (February 1947), retrieved at PMA.

[59] Wood, *A Sociological Study*, Ibid., pp. 219-220.

[60] Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[61] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, Ibid., p. 202.

[62] Wood, *A Sociological Study*, Ibid., p. 201

[63] “Editorial: Our Delegation in Europe,” *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (February 1947), pp. 1-2, retrieved at PMA.

[64] Charles F. Emmons, *Economic and Political Leadership in Chicago's Polonia* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1971), p. 227.

[65] Tomasz Inglot and John P. Pelissero, “Ethnic Political Power in a Machine City: Chicago's Poles at Rainbow's End,” *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (June 1993), pp. 526-543.

[66] Arthur E. Wood, *Hamtramck: A Sociological Study of a Polish-American Community* (College and University Press, 1955), p. 220; Benjamin Brody, *Relationship between Slavic Ethnicity and Psychological Characteristics of Psychiatric Patients* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1949), pp. 188-191.

[67] Theresa Polzin, *The Polish-Americans; Whence and Whither* (Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers, 1973), p. 214.

[68] Eugene Obidinski, *Ethnic to status Group: A Study of Polish-Americans in Buffalo* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1968), pp. 76. 125-127, 129; Danuta Mostwin, *The Transplanted Family: A Study of the Social Adjustment of the Polish Immigrant Family to the United States after the Second World War* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1969), pp. 5-19.

[69] Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid., p. 66.

[70] A hero like the mythical eighteenth century revolutionary, Kosciuszko, of whom nearly every Catholic Polish-American family kept a figurine next to their portrait of Jesus.

[71] Emmons, *Economic and Political Leadership*, Ibid., p. 23; Floyd Hunter, “Persons of Lesser Influence” in Floyd Hunter, *Community Organization, Action and Inaction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), pp. 53-69.

[72] John J. Olejniczak and Stephen S. Grabowski, “A Petition to the President by the Polish Roman Catholic Union,” *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1945), retrieved at PMA.

[73] Alfreda Borucka, “An Open Letter to the President,” *Ameryka-Echo* (6 August 1944), in Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, ed., *Letters from Readers in the Polish American Press, 1902-1969: A Corner for Everybody* (Lexington Books, 2014).

[74] Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[75] Jozef Chalasiniski, “Parafia i szkola parafialna wrode emigracji polskiej w Ameryce,” in *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, Vol. 3, no. 3-4 (Warsaw, 1935), pp. 633-771.

[76] Kusielewicz, “Reflections,” Ibid.

[77] Helena Lopata-Znanięcki, “The Polish American Family,” in Charles H. Mindel, Robert Wesley Habenstein, eds., *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations* (Prentice Hall, 2nd ed., 1981), pp. 17-42. Many scholars have referred to this phenomenon simply as an “inferiority complex.” For example: T.W. Krychowski, ed., *Polish Canadians, Profile and Image* (Polish Alliance Press, 1969); Kusielewicz, *Reflections*, Ibid.; Wiktor Turek, “Emigracja Polska w Kanadzie,” in *Rocznik Polonii Zagranicznej* (1960), pp. 51-95.

[78] Emmons, *Economic and Political Leadership*, Ibid., p. 97-99.

^[79] Thomas Borkowski, "Some Patterns in Polish Surname Changing," in *Polish American Studies* (January-June, 1963), pp. 14-16; Robert J. Kodarz, "Writings about the Changing of Polish Names in America," in *Polish American Studies* (January-June 1963), pp. 1-4; Stanley A. Magiera, "Some Reasons for First Name Changes," in *Polish American Studies* (January-June, 1963), pp. 8-9; Lopata-Znanięcki, "Polish Family," *Ibid.*, p. 12; Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

^[80] Mieczysław Szawleski, *Wychodźstwo Polskie w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki* (Biblioteka Ossolinskich, 1924), p. 220.

^[81] Abramson, "Ethnic Pluralism," *Ibid.*, p. 21; Chalasinski, *Parafia*, *Ibid.*, p. 290.

^[82] Stanley Krajewski, "The Polish-American Condition," in Otto Feinstein, ed., *Ethnic Groups in the City: Culture, Institutions, and Power* (Heath Lexington Books, 1971), pp. 335-337.

^[83] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

^[84] Pienkos, *Polish American Efforts*, *Ibid.*, p. 71-72.

^[85] Joseph A. Wyrwal, *Behold! The Polish-Americans* (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1977), pp. 362-363, 399.

^[86] "About Ourselves," *Polish American Congress Bulletin* (Vol. 1, No. 1. February 1945), pp. 3-4, retrieved at the PMA.

^[87] Charles Rozmarek, "When Poland was Not Invited to San Francisco" in *Polish American Congress Bulletin* (Vol. 1, No. 2, March-April 1945), pp. 8-9, retrieved at the PMA.

^[88] John J. Bukowczyk, "Polish Americans, History Writing, and the Organization of Memory," in John J. Bukowczyk, ed., *Polish Americans and their History: Community, Culture, and Politics* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), pp. 1-2.

^[89] Quoted in: Waclaw Kruzka, *A History of Poles in America to 1908, Part I*, trans. Krystyna Jankowski (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1993), p. 258.

^[90] Wyrwal, *Behold!* *Ibid.*, p. 360.

^[91] Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, p. 2.

^[92] For example: Leopold Caro, "Die Statistik der österreichisch-ungarischen und polnischen Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten von Nordamerika," *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik, und Verwaltung*, no. 16 (1907), pp. 68-113; Franciszek Bujak, *Wież zachodnio-galicyska u schyłka XIX w. Więż polska* (Lwów, 1905), pp. 53-111; Józef Okołowicz, *Wychodźstwo i osadnictwo polskie przed wojną światową* (Warsaw, 1920).

^[93] Roman Dmowski, *Wychodźstwo i osadnictwo* (Lwów, 1900): When Poles abroad helped themselves, they helped Poland. See also: Benjamin P. Murdzek, "Emigration in Polish Social-Political Thought, 1870-1914" *East European Monographs*, vol. 33 (East European Quarterly, 1977).

^[94] Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, p. 3.

^[95] Journals included: *Kwartalnik Instytutu do Badań Emigracji i Kolonizacji* (Warsaw); *Przegląd Emigracyjny* (Warsaw); and *Annales Missiologicae* (Poznan).

^[96] Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6; Edward R. Kantowicz, *Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1888-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 104.

^[97] W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America: Monograph of an Immigrant Group*, 5 vols. (Boston, 1918-1919): This work came at the tail-end of the First World War, during which the issue of Polish immigration touched on national security concerns. As citizens, respectively, of Austrian and German partitions, many Polish emigres were considered "enemy aliens." When considering Thomas and Znaniecki's work, it is important to remember that their studies were colored by both racial conceptions of Poles in America, but also the

exigencies of conflict.

^[98] Jan Słomka, *From Serfdom to Self-Government: Memoirs of a Polish Village Mayor, 1842-1927*, trans. William John Rose (Minerva Publishing, 1941), p. 28; Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, p. 5.

^[99] Sienkiewicz, who was born (1846) into an impoverished noble family in Russian-Congress Poland, won the 1905 Nobel Prize in Literature for "outstanding merits as an epic writer." His most famous works focused on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, linking it to the Roman Empire's achievements — a glorious history that featured prominently in Polish-American historical "propaganda" throughout the pre- and post-1914 period.

^[100] Helena Chrzanowska, "Polish Book Publishing in Chicago" in *Polish American Studies*, vol. 4 (1947), pp. 37-39; Bernard Pacyniak, "An Historical Outline of the Polish Press in America" in Frank Mocha, ed., *Poles in America: Bicentennial Essays* (Worzalla Publishing, 1978), p. 518.

^[101] Quoted in: "About Us," *Bulletin of the Polish-American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (March-April 1945).

^[102] Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

^[103] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

^[104] Susan Cotts Watkins, ed., *After Ellis Island: Newcomers and Natives in the census* (New York, 1990), pp. 99-100.

^[105] Piotr Taras, Angela T. Pienkos, and Thaddeus Radzialowski, "Paul Wrobel's *Our Way* — Three Views," in *Polish American Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Spring 1980), pp. 42-51.

^[106] Bukowczyk, "History, Writing, and the Organization of Memory," *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

^[107] Mieczysław Haiman, "Polish Scholarship in the United States, 1929-1947," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 3-4 (July-December 1947), pp. 65-78: It is important to note that Haiman, a Polish scholar, was writing in Yalta's aftermath, and his views of interwar Polish history construction were colored by this event.

^[108] *Polish American Historical Association, 1942-1951, Including Program of the Eighth Annual Meeting* (Polish American Historical Association, 1951); Frank Mocha, "The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, Its Contributions to the Study of Polonia," in Mocha, ed., *Poles in America*, *Ibid.*, p. 709.

^[109] Mocha, "The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America," *Ibid.*, pp. 709-711.

^[110] Stefan Włoszewski, "The Polish Sociological Group in America," in *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 4, Nos. 8-9 (1945), pp. 156-157; Rev. Francis Bolek, "Integration of the Polish American Group" (address delivered at the PAHA annual conference, 29 December 1944).

^[111] "About Us," *Polish American Congress Bulletin*, *Ibid.*, p. 1, retrieved at the PMA.

^[112] Charles Rozmarek, "Poland and the Atlantic Charter," in *Chicago Herald American* (20 November 1944), pp. 9-13, reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1945), p. 14, retrieved at PMA.

^[113] "Declaration of Policy of the Polish American Congress," *Bulletin of the Polish American Congress*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1945), pp. 5-6, retrieved at PMA.

^[114] Stanislaus A. Blejwas, "Polonia and Politics," in Bukowczyk, ed., *Polish Americans and their History*, *Ibid.*, p. 129.

^[115] "About Us," *Polish American Congress Bulletin*, *Ibid.*, p. 1, retrieved at the PMA.

^[116] Blejwas, "Polonia and Politics," *Ibid.*, p. 143.

^[117] S.M. Plokhly, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (Viking, 2010), pp. 190-215; Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), pp. 524-525. See also: "Historical Note. Joking at the Summit," *Time* (20 August 1973), p. 33; "Churchill's Secrets Bared," *Detroit Free Press* (2 August

1973), p. 12-F.

^[118] Charles Rozmarek, "A Memorandum on the Crimea Decisions Concerning Poland," *Polish American Congress Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (March 1945), pp. 10-18, retrieved at the PMA.

^[119] Wyrwal, *Behold!* Ibid., p. 404.

^[120] Wyrwal, *Behold!* Ibid., pp. 400: Surprisingly, polls conducted in the late 1940s suggested that Americans were most weary of the war, even though their territory had remained unsullied by conflict.

^[121] Adam Wazyk, *A Poem For Adults* (1955).

^[122] "Polish American Congress on San Francisco," *Polish American Congress Bulletin* (Vol. 1, No. 2, March-April 1945), pp. 1-4, retrieved at the PMA.

^[123] "About Us," *Polish American Congress Bulletin*, Ibid., p. 3, retrieved at the PMA.

^[124] Charles Rozmarek, "Death of Free Poland Foreseen Under Rule of Soviet," Ibid., p. 15, retrieved at PMA.

^[125] "About Us," Ibid.

^[126] Ibid., p. 4

^[127] "Declaration of Policy of the Polish American Congress," *Polish American Congress Bulletin* (Vol. 1, No. 1, February 1945), pp. 5-6, retrieved at PMA.

^[128] Ibid., p. 6.

^[129] Charles Rozmarek, "US Polish Chief Demands America Halt Red Grab" (*Chicago Herald American*, 17 December 1944).

^[130] S. Damiński, "From Such Defenders, God Protect Us," in Anna D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *Letters*, Ibid.: This paper (1902-1971), although published in Toledo, was also distributed across Cook County, Illinois, under first the Polish Roman Catholic Union, and then PAC, aegis.

^[131] "Yalta," *Narod Polski* (Vol. 1, No. 59, 23 February 1945), p. 4, retrieved at the Center for Research Libraries (hitherto referred to as CRL).

^[132] "Food For Thought," *Polish Morning World* (13 May 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[133] Józef Anusz, "Why and How I Love Poland," in *Ameryka-Echo* (16 October 1945), in Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *Letters*, Ibid.

^[134] "In Defense of Rights of Poland," *Dziennik Związkowy* (February 1945), p. 4, retrieved at the CRL.

^[135] Lee Sobanski, "Poland, My Mother," *Polish Morning World* (Chicago: May 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[136] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, Ibid., p. 202.

^[137] "The Fruits of a Rich Heritage," *Polish Morning World* (8 April 1945), p. 22, retrieved at the CRL.

^[138] "The Melancholy Poles," *Narod Polski* (10 January 1946, Vol. 60, No. 2), retrieved at the CRL.

^[139] K. Kruzel, "When will the Wolves Finally be Sated," in *Ameryka-Echo* (18 February 1945), in Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *Letters*, Ibid.

^[140] Ibid.

^[141] Pienkos, *Polish-American Efforts*, Ibid., p. 118-119.

^[142] "About Us," Ibid., p. 4.

^[143] "Congratulatory Letter to FDR on his Reelection," Ibid., pp. 273-274.

^[144] Ibid., p. 273

^[145] *The New York Times* (22 June 1942), p. 6.

^[146] Eric Estovik, "Polish-American Politics," in *The Nation* (20 May 1944).

^[147] Peter H. Irons, "The Test is Poland: Polish Americans and the Birth of the Cold War," *Polish-American Studies* Vol. 30, no. 2 (Autumn 1973), p. 9.

^[148] Ibid., p. 37.

^[149] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address to Congress on Results of Yalta" (15 March 1945).

^[150] "Polish American Congress on San Francisco," Ibid.

^[151] Charles Rozmarek, "An Open Letter to the Newspapermen of America," in *Polish American Congress Bulletin* Vol. 1, No. 2, edited, endorsed, and distributed by the United Polish Press of America, Chicago (March 1945), pp. 5-7.

^[152] Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid., p. 78.

^[153] John J. Olejniczak and Stephen S. Grabowski, "A Petition to President Truman by the Polish Roman Catholic Union," *Polish American Congress Bulletin* (Vol. 1, No. 3, June/July 1945).

^[154] *Polish American Congress Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (June/July 1945).

^[155] Ibid.

^[156] Dr. Melchior Palyi, "Year End Defeats," *Polish Morning World* (9 January 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[157] "In Defense of Rights of Poland," Ibid., p. 4.

^[158] Palyi, "Year End Defeats," Ibid.

^[159] "The Diary of a Polish Soldier," *Polish Morning World* (18 February 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[160] Anne Maria Zajal, "Letter to the Editor," *Polish Nation* (11 March 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[161] Editorial, *Polish Morning World* (20 May 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[162] *Polish Morning World* (11 February 1945), retrieved at the CRL.

^[163] "Thrown to the Wolves?" *Polish Morning World* (April 8, 1946), retrieved at the CRL.

^[164] S. Smietana, "The Bitter Truth," in *Ameryka-Echo* (25 March 1945).

^[165] Irons, "Test is Poland," Ibid.

^[166] John Leonard East, *Republican Precinct Workers Handbook* (National Precinct Workers, Inc., 1946), p. 76.

^[167] *Chicago Tribune*, 24 March 1947, p. 1; Athan Theoharis, "The Republican Party and Yalta: Partisan Exploitation of the Polish American Concern over the Conference, 1945-1960," in *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (Spring 1971), p. 8: It is important to note that Democratic Congressmen from Polish-American districts often invoked the same bitter anti-Yalta rhetoric as their Republican counterparts, albeit without the partisan emphasis.

^[168] Athan Theoharis, *The Yalta Myths: An Issue in US Politics, 1946-1955* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1970), p. 34; *Chicago Tribune*, 25 April 1946, p. 18; 14 October 1946, p. 5; 27 October 1946, p. 8; 28 October 1946, p. 1; 31 October 1946, p. 8.

^[169] "Dewey in '48: He Gets Things Done," in the *Chicago Tribune* (31 May 1948), p. 13.

^[170] Theoharis, "The Republican Party and Yalta," Ibid., p. 9.

^[171] Pienkos, Ibid., p. 384: In his speech on the anniversary of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, Ronald Reagan centered his commentary on a repudiation of Democratic foreign policy at Yalta, and the PAC continued to hammer home their betrayal to the Bush Administration in 1990.

^[172] Pienkos, Ibid., p. 189.

^[173] Sanders and Morawska, *Community Life*, Ibid., p. 79.

^[174] Emmons, *Economic and Political Leadership*, Ibid., p. 232.

^[175] Theoharis, "The Republican Party and Yalta," Ibid., p. 10-11.

^[176] Obidinski, *Ethnic to Status Group*, Ibid., p. 129: Although conducted in New York, this study had implications for the US national Polish-American community, which it addressed explicitly.

^[177] Patricia A. Gajda, "Review of *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnicities in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990*," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 97-103.

^[178] Erdmans, *Opposite Poles*, Ibid., p. 89.

^[179] Ibid.

^[180] Erdmans, *Opposite Poles*, Ibid., p. 91; Gajda, "Review," Ibid., p. 101.

^[181] Erdmans, *Opposite Poles*, Ibid., p. 93.