

# ROCZNIK PRZEMYSKI

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*“For Your Freedom and Ours”:  
Polonia and the Struggle  
for Polish Independence*

edited by Tomasz Pudłocki  
and Andrew Kier Wise

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## Foreword

As I pen this entry in October of 2019, we are in the midst of celebrating Polish American Heritage Month in the United States. We remember not only the social contributions of the Polish diaspora, but also those Poles who trained alongside their American comrades to fight for Poland's independence on all fronts of World War I. Over 20,000 Polish soldiers trained in cities throughout the U.S., such as in Buffalo, New York – where the influence of Polish culture permeates the city to this day – and many of them gave their lives serving in General Haller's Blue Army in France in the name of Polish independence. As inheritors of their legacy, we are called to cherish the freedom we enjoy and to continue promoting the feelings of goodwill shared between Poles and Americans.

As the first nation to recognize newly-independent Poland in 1919, the United States understood the importance of supporting the Polish state's efforts to reclaim its sovereignty after 123 years of partitions. Famously noted in his Fourteen Points, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson argued that Poland's freedom would be vital in maintaining the stability of Central and Eastern Europe, and his guidance was honored in 1922 when Poland conferred upon him its highest state distinction - the Order of the White Eagle. American advocacy for a strong Polish state continued well after we restored our independence, as the first U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Hugh S. Gibson, continued to promote a Polish state that could defend itself from its volatile eastern neighbors. As evidenced by our recent agreements with the United States to increase its military presence in Poland, our nation continues to fortify itself to defend the borders of NATO and our Allies in the region.

In particular, I am proud of the academic cooperation spearheaded by the Society of Friends of Learning in Przemyśl and Daemen College in this project; their contributions to the growing literature on Polish-American relations have helped to bring the heroic sacrifices of our Polish compatriots to the fore. I am confident that as Polish-American ties become increasingly significant, a new generation of scholars will discover our history and build upon its robust narrative.

Our commitment to shared democratic ideals and our history of cooperation on countless fronts continues to bring the people of our two countries closer.

Having witnessed the excitement surrounding recent military and trade agreements between Poland and the U.S., and having interacted with many proud Polish Americans, I am optimistic that the first 100 years of our bilateral relations are only the beginning of our efforts to promote the ties of friendship that bind our two countries together.

Our relationship is enduring not because of any political climate or geopolitical interest, but because the people of our two nations have forged a bond through decades of strife and success - we have stood shoulder-to-shoulder on the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East, and have worked hand-in-hand to develop each other's economies. I wish Poland and the United States another fruitful 100 years, and may our bilateral relations grow into a model for other nations to follow.

Congratulations on the publication of your inspiring work, and I hope that other academics will honor our shared history just as respectably as you have.

Piotr Wilczek  
Ambassador of Poland to the United States

# I. ARTICLES

*ROCZNIK PRZEMYSKI* vol. 55

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*TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI (Kraków – Przemyśl)*

*ANDREW KIER WISE (Amherst, NY)*

## INTRODUCTION

The years 1914-1921 represent a crucial period in shaping Poland's international status. When in April 1917 the United States of America entered the war, Poland did not have a unified legal identity, since it was still partitioned among the Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian empires. As it turned out, the hard-won independence that was attained in November 1918 was not so easy to maintain. Poland's international position was not strong, since it was weakened by many months of fighting its neighbors over borders. This led to destruction of the infrastructure, displacement of populations, economic destabilization, and political fragmentation that posed challenges to the new state. Diplomatic support from the United States (President Woodrow Wilson and his adviser Col. Edward House) and economic aid (through the American Relief Administration, or ARA, led by Herbert Hoover) was vitally important to the emerging Polish state. Poland was one of the most important issues raised in Washington salons, and also during the peace conference in Paris. This was due in large part to the efforts of the enormously popular pianist and composer, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who became Prime Minister of the new Polish government in 1919. In addition, the extraordinary efforts of Poles living in America made the Polish question a major issue in international affairs during the war years.

Indeed, the contributions of Haller's Army (consisting of thousands of well-equipped volunteers from the Polish diaspora), along with the tons of food, medicine, and clothing sent by the ARA and Polish organizations abroad were vital to the survival of the new Polish state. The United States also set the international example by recognizing the establishment of the Polish state on 30 January 1919, and recognition by France, Great Britain, and Italy soon followed. Clearly, the Polish-American and broader American communities played a key role in the formation of the Polish state at the end of World War I. The fate of

the war itself, of course, was transformed by the entry of the United States into the war on the side of the Allies in April 1917. For those Polish-Americans who joined the military effort, the war presented an opportunity for them to get to know their ancestral country and define their Polish identity within the complex multicultural society in their new homeland in America. For Poles living in Poland, the presence of so many Polish Americans and others from the United States energized their aspirations for independence and confirmed their belief that the new Second Republic would represent a turning point in world history and international relations.

The story of Polish-American friendship from this period has been discussed in many Polish- and English-language studies. Our purpose in this volume is to present some new perspectives and new research on the role of Polonia<sup>1</sup> – especially American Polonia – in the struggle for Polish independence during World War I. The 100th anniversary of the rebirth of an independent Polish state presented an opportunity for scholars around the world to take a fresh look at this transformative period in history. This volume includes several papers that were first presented at the symposium „*For Your Freedom and Ours*”: *Polonia and the Struggle for Polish Independence*, which was held at Daemen College (Amherst, NY) on 21-22 September 2018. The conference was sponsored by the Center for Polish Studies and the History & Political Science Department at Daemen College, the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Przemyślu (Society of Friends of Learning in Przemyśl, or TPN), the Polish Cultural Institute New York, and the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo. His Excellency the Ambassador of Poland to the United States Piotr Wilczek was Honorary Patron of the Symposium.

The historical journal published by the TPN, *Rocznik Przemyski. Historia*, kindly agreed to dedicate a special issue to the theme of the symposium. This volume thus includes select papers that were delivered at the 2018 symposium. Additional support was provided by Dr. Dariusz Iwaneczko (Director of the Rzeszów branch of the Institute of National Remembrance – IPN). His colleagues and researchers at this institute have produced many volumes dealing with Polish military actions in the 20th century. The current volume thus fits well within the Institute's range of interests.

This volume is divided into three parts. Part I contains papers and commentaries, part II includes previously unpublished primary sources, and part III contains book reviews. Contributors to the volume are from Poland and the United States, and their works deal with many aspects of Polish-American relations and other topics, primarily during the period from 1914-1921. James Pula provided an excellent keynote address at the symposium in 2018, and his article on the „Fourth

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the book, the term “Polonia” is used to mean Polish diaspora: Polish people or people of Polish descent living outside the borders of Poland.

Partition” likewise provides the foundation for the volume. His overview of the actions of Poles in America during the war – through economic aid, diplomacy, and military action – underscores the significant contribution of American Polonia to Polish independence in 1918. Several scholars – Carl Bucki, Andrew Wise, Penny Messinger, and Wanda Slawinska – examine the Polish-American community in Buffalo, NY. The responses by the Polish-American community in Buffalo to the war – and their struggle to accentuate their loyalty to both the United States and their ancestral homeland – constitute an important shared theme in the contributions by these scholars.

Buffalo was an important way station for many Poles who travelled to training camps in the nearby Canadian town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, where they served as volunteers for „Haller’s Army.” Three scholars – Joseph Hapak, Rafał Sierchuła, and Krzysztof Kaczmarek – provide insights into the political and diplomatic dynamics that shaped the recruitment, training, and mobilization of these troops. Two scholars provide case studies of women who were actively engaged in Poland as it struggled to recover from the devastation of World War I. Anitta Maksymowicz evokes the deeds of Agnes Wisla – probably the most notable Polish-American woman involved in helping Poland during the crucial years 1919-1921. Tomasz Pudłocki follows the fate of one woman (Edith B. Cullis-Williams) – an American Red Cross volunteer – through war-torn Poland. His analysis of her correspondence with her mother provides fascinating insights into one American’s perceptions of Polish society during this turbulent period. The key problems of setting the boundaries of a reborn Polish state and defining „Polishness” are also explored by Marcel Garboś. His exploration of the ideas of Kyiv’s Polish intellectual elite and the broader Right Bank Ukraine Polish community presents yet another perspective on the broad geographical and ideological span of Polonia during the wartime period.

The editors wish to thank all the institutions and individuals noted above that sponsored the symposium at Daemen College in September 2018. We would also like to express our appreciation to our colleagues who contributed articles and reviews to this volume, as well as to all institutions and individuals who generously granted us permission to include photos from their collections. In addition, we are very grateful for all the efforts and patience of the team of people who provided editorial and translating support for the volume. Our special thanks go to the peer reviewers – Prof. Maria Stinia of Kraków, Poland, and Prof. Sean Martin of Cleveland, OH, who devoted considerable time and effort to provide critiques of contributions to this volume. All of our colleagues at Daemen College and the Society of Friends of Learning (TPN) deserve our special thanks for their support and assistance over the years for the many collaborative projects between the two institutions. Finally, we would like to sincerely express our gratitude to the financial sponsor of our volume: the Ministry of Science and Higher Education without whose financial support this volume

would not have been published. We hope that „*For Your Freedom and Ours*”: *Polonia and the Struggle for Polish Independence* not only represents our modest contribution to the commemoration of the anniversaries of 1918-1919, but will also inspire further research and future transatlantic cooperation.

JAMES S. PULA (*Westville, IN*)

## THE “FOURTH PARTITION” AND THE RESTORATION OF POLISH INDEPENDENCE

### Abstract

The end of World War I brought independence to Poland for the first time in more than a century. One important element in this rebirth was the support — political, economic, and military — of the Polish diaspora abroad. This article provides an overview of the contributions to the restoration of Polish independence made by Poles residing in the United States through the political pressure they exerted in their adopted country, their financial contributions, and their willingness to bear arms in the fight for “the Polish cause.”

**Keywords:** Blue Army, Dmowski, Falcons, Fourth Partition, Grey Samaritans, Haller, National Department, Paderewski, Polish National Alliance, Russo-Polish War, Smulski, Starzyński, White Cross, Wilson

The year 1895 marked the 100th anniversary of the third partition of Poland that erased that independent nation from the map of Europe. Throughout that century, the Poles remained restive, discontent that foreign powers occupied their nation, its economic, social, and political future dependent on the whims of Austrians, Germans, and Russians. Thousands joined Napoleon’s armies in the vain hope that the French would help them resurrect their nation. Major rebellions broke out in 1830-31, 1846, and again in 1863. Toward the end of the century, when Poles began migrating to the United States in large numbers, they left their native soil but not their emotional attachment to the friends and relatives who remained behind.

Upon their arrival in the United States, Poles of the “Great Migration” immediately began forming religious and secular organizations based on their Old Country affiliations. In one form or another, all of these remained concerned with the fate of their partitioned homeland. The assistance the Polish diaspora rendered to the eventual recreation of an independent Polish state could begin almost anywhere, but for the purpose of this brief overview let us begin in 1905 when a series of worker strikes broke out in the Russian partition including a serious revolt in Łódź in June. These events brought forth support and attempted relief measures by Poland’s diaspora (Polonia) and its institutions. According to the

Polish historian Andrzej Brożek, these events “spurred the American Polonia to effective financial mobilization in favor of Poland . . . [and] led, above all perhaps, to a new way of thinking about Polonia’s place in the respective societies of the New World and the Old Country.”<sup>1</sup> The Polish National Alliance (Związek Narodowy Polski or PNA), for example, adopted the following resolution: “We, Polish men and women, born in the territories of the old Polish republic, Lithuania and Ruthenia, and sons and daughters of immigrants from those territories, born in or naturalized citizens of this country . . . unite spiritually with the fighting and suffering Polish nation in the territories of the Polish Kingdom and pay our highest respects to our compatriots.”<sup>2</sup> Aside from being a clear statement of concern and support for the Polish cause, it is also interesting to note the inclusiveness of the statement which incorporates immigrants from other ethnic groups in the “old Polish republic.”

Five years later, in 1910, representatives of the major Polonia organizations met in Washington, DC, on the 500th anniversary of the defeat of the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald by a Polish-Lithuanian army led by Władysław II Jagiełło and Vytautas the Great. In addition to dedicating commemorative statues of Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski, the leaders also endorsed a resolution declaring: “We Poles have the right to existence as an independent nation and we believe it is our sacred duty to strive for the political independence of our fatherland, Poland.”<sup>3</sup> With this, despite the numerous divisions within Polonia, some of which caused bitter rivalries between groups, they would all in one form or another conduct activities in support of Polish independence.

### Organizing to Assist the Homeland

During the years between 1905 and the outbreak of World War I, Polish American journalists increasingly referred to the diaspora as Poland’s “Fourth Partition” (Czwarta Dzielnicą). As the editor of *Kurier Polski* explained in January 1914, “The Polish nation does not have an independent country, but it has freedom for political activity in the emigration . . . Since the American emigration has the greatest freedom, it can therefore do the most. It can only realize fully this duty to lead the national political struggle if it is conscious of the need of a special political organization.”<sup>4</sup>

Among the earliest efforts to form a Polonia umbrella group was the creation of the National Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Narodowej, or KON) formed in Pittsburgh in December 1912 under the leadership of Kazimierz Zychliń-

<sup>1</sup> Andrzej Brożek, *Polish Americans 1854-1939* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1985), 134.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in William J. Galush, *For More Than Bread: Community and Identity in American Polonia, 1880-1940* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2006), 134.

ski, the first president of the Polish Falcons Alliance (Związek Sokołów Polskich or PFA) and an officer in the Polish National Alliance. It was an attempt to bring together the PNA, Catholic, and socialist factions into a single umbrella organization. Anti-Russian in outlook and committed to direct military action, the KON supported the Polish Legions formed by Józef Piłsudski, a former leader in the Polish Socialist Party. Piłsudski favored alliance with the Austro-Hungarian Empire against Russia in the hope of recreating, with Austrian assistance, a large, multi-ethnic Polish state. Although the attraction of aiding the homeland initially gained the attention of the larger Polish American groups, these soon left over disagreements regarding the KON's support for Piłsudski and, for Catholic groups, KON's association with socialism. By the end of 1915, KON's influence had diminished to only about fifteen percent of American Polonia.<sup>5</sup>

Led by Stanisław Adamkiewicz, president of the Polish Roman Catholic Union (PRCU), and Bishop Paweł Rhode, the Catholics left the KON in June 1913 to establish the Polish National Council (Polska Rada Narodowa, or PRN) which aligned itself with Roman Dmowski's National Democracy ("Endecja," or ND). This European faction, which included the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish Alma Mater, and the Union of Polish Priests in America, differed from that of Piłsudski in that it viewed aggressive Germanization as the most serious threat to Polish aspirations, preferred an accommodation with Russia, and sought the independence of a homogenous Catholic Poland. The PNA also left the KON a year later, in June 1914, leaving the greatly reduced KON to rival the Catholic and PNA factions for leadership of the Polonia diaspora. The PRN established a National Fund (Skarb Narodowy) to raise money for the homeland and, in September 1914, began publishing the English-language *Free Poland* to promote the Polish cause among non-Poles in the United States. Free copies were sent to the editors of major newspapers and other outlets throughout the country.<sup>6</sup>

World War I began on July 28, 1914. It would prove to be an especially grievous tragedy for Poles. It has been estimated that there were then some three million ethnic Poles living in the German-occupied partition of Poland, five million in the Austrian partition, and twelve million in Russian-occupied territory. This made Poles subject to military service in three separate armies with allegiance to three different governments. "Look at my family," wrote Count Józef Potocki. "I am a Russian subject; my brother Roman is an Austrian subject; one of my brothers-in-law is a German subject; all of my cousins and nephews, because of

<sup>5</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 136; Louis J. Zake, "The National Department and the Polish American Community 1916-1923," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Autumn, 1981), 16; Donald E. Pienkos, *PNA: A Centennial History of the Polish National Alliance of the United States of North America* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1984), 101; John Radzilowski, *The Eagle and the Cross: A History of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, 1873-2000* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2003), 151.

<sup>6</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 136; Zake, "The National Department," 16; Radzilowski, *Eagle and Cross*, 154.

circumstances of inheritance, are likewise divided among the three nations. In the bosom of the same race we are condemned to kill each other.”<sup>7</sup> When one adds another estimated three million Poles in the diaspora, one could also list the nations whose armed forces they served in, especially the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and France. To use just one example of Polish distress caused by a war that it had done nothing to cause, Arthur May estimated that fully fifteen percent of the Austro-Hungarian army was comprised of Poles who suffered approximately 200,000 deaths and over 300,000 serious injuries during the conflict.<sup>8</sup>

Nor were civilians unaffected by the ravages of war. If anything, they were even more vulnerable than those in the army. Fighting took place throughout the length of Polish territory, destroying farms, burning crops, razing villages, and leaving death and disability in its wake. This rapidly emerging humanitarian crisis called forth widespread efforts among the diaspora to offer relief to its suffering countrymen in Europe. To support these, the groups who left the KON began their own activities.

In October 1914 several groups came together under the chairmanship of Kazimierz Zychliński, president of the Polish National Alliance, in an effort to coordinate relief. Named the Polish Central Relief Committee (Polski Centralny Komitet Ratunkowy, or PCKR), it aligned with Dmowski’s National Democrats and the General Assistance Committee established in Lausanne, Switzerland, by the novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz and pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Coordinated initially by Bishop Paul Rhode, it included representatives of most of the larger Polonia organizations including the Polish National Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Falcons Alliance, and the Polish Women’s Alliance of America. Most of its efforts prior to American entry into the war in 1917 were concentrated on raising money, food, clothing, and other articles for the relief of those suffering in Poland. In July 1916 John Smulski, a Chicago banker and Polonia activist, appealed directly to President Woodrow Wilson to use his influence to persuade European nations to cooperate in the distribution of the relief supplies.<sup>9</sup>

While Polish relief efforts were escalating in the United States, Henryk Sienkiewicz established the Vevey Committee named for the town in Switzerland where its headquarters was located. Although a European organization, its appeal for assistance to suffering Poles, titled “To the Civilized Nations,” appeared in the March 29, 1915, issue of the Chicago-based *Dziennik Związkowy* (Polish Daily

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Arthur J. May, *The Passing of the Hapsburg Monarchy 1914-1918* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1966), I, 366. Polish estimates on the number of Poles in the different partitions were larger: 17,702,200 in the Russian partition, 5,417,000 in the Austrian partition, and 4,751,000 in the German partition. However, these include people of Polish ethnicity living outside traditional Polish lands. See Paul S. Valasek, *Haller’s Polish Army in France* (Naples, FL: Whitehall Printing, 2006), 390-91.

<sup>8</sup> May, *Passing of the Hapsburg Monarchy*, I, 366.

<sup>9</sup> Zake, “The National Department”, 18; Pienkos, *PNA*, 108; Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 143.

News) and in several English-language American publications. Working through the Red Cross, some \$2.5 million of the \$4 million that the Vevey organization collected came from the United States.<sup>10</sup>

By the summer of 1916, member organizations of the Polish Central Relief Committee came increasingly to aid overt political action in support of Polish independence. Not wishing to abandon their relief efforts, or to compromise them with political activity, to manage its political efforts the PCKR created the National Department (Wydział Narodowy) in August of that year. Headquartered in Chicago under the leadership of Smulski, it was conceived as an umbrella coordinating committee for Polonia's efforts in the United States and Canada. The new organization also pressed a claim to be the sole political representative for the Polish diaspora in the two nations. Gaining recognition by Britain, France, and Russia, it quickly grew to more than 500 local affiliated groups and collected over \$50 million in funding and provisions for Poland.<sup>11</sup>

### Forming a Diaspora Army

One of the ideas imported into the United States and Canada with the Mass Migration of 1870-1914 was that of fighting for Polish independence, a belief nurtured on memories of the nineteenth century revolts against the occupying powers. As early as 1905, with the outbreak of yet another Polish revolt, the Falcons Alliance began to organize paramilitary training to accompany its gymnastic activities. By 1912, when the group held its first four-week military training course in Philadelphia, it was providing extensive training for drill instructors in its local "nests." Two years later the Falcons sponsored an eight-month program at the Polish National Alliance-sponsored Alliance College in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, designed to produce officers for some future military force.<sup>12</sup>

The political divisions that separated Poles into mutually hostile armies in their own partitioned lands also encouraged those in the diaspora to volunteer for military units in various armies in the hope of assisting their homeland. The first

<sup>10</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 139. The \$2.5 million raised, when adjusted for inflation, would be approximately \$61,375,000 in 2018 dollars. This and other dollar conversions are based on the online converter "Historical Currency Conversions" at <https://futureboy.us/fsp/dollar.fsp> (accessed: 5 Aug 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 138; Zake, "National Department," 16; Radzilowski, *Eagle and Cross*, 152; Donald E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish American Efforts on Poland's Behalf, 1863-1991* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1991), 60-61; Stanley R. Pliszka (Pliska), "The 'Polish-American Army' 1917-1921," *The Polish Review*, Vol. X, no. 3 (1965), 49; Joseph A. Wyrwal, *Poles in American History and Tradition* (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1969), 322. \$50 million would be \$1,227,500,000 in 2018 currency.

<sup>12</sup> Donald E. Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young: A History of the Polish Falcons of America, 1887-1987* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1987), 91; Kathleen Urbanic, *Shoulder to Shoulder: Polish Americans in Rochester, NY 1809-1990* (Rochester, NY: Kathleen Urbanic, 1991), 64.

among these originated within a month of the outbreak of the war when, in August, Waclaw Gąsiorowski, then residing in France, urged the French government to assist in creating Polish military units to fight alongside its own troops. Unwilling to go quite that far, the French nevertheless called for Polish volunteers to enlist in the Foreign Legion. Training mostly in Bayonne, they became known as the Bayonne Legion. Enrolling Poles from France, the Netherlands, and even prisoners of war from Polish areas in Germany and Austria, in the spring of 1915 it was consolidated into the 1st Foreign Regiment. Thrown into the fighting, it suffered heavy casualties at Champagne and Notre Dame de Lorette while gaining praise for its determined attack at the Battle of Arras.<sup>13</sup>

While the Bayonne Legion was shedding its blood on the battlefield of France, and Gen. Józef Piłsudski's Polish Legions were fighting for Austria on the Eastern Front, each in the hope of recreating an independent Poland, efforts to establish a Polish military force also took root in North America. With the outbreak of the war, President Teofil Starzyński of the Polish Falcons Alliance, who was also a leader in the Polish Central Relief Committee, attempted to interest the Canadian government in establishing a Polish military unit. At that time the war was only weeks old, the massive casualties of Arras, Ypres, Passchendaele, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge as yet in the future. Also, the United States was neutral and Canada was not interested in jeopardizing the advantages in trade it accrued from its neighbor's neutrality. The Canadians politely declined the proposal.

Two years later Starzyński tried again. In the fall of 1916 he dispatched Andrzej Małkowski and Wincenty Skarzyński to Canada with a second proposal to form a "Polish Legion in Canada." Małkowski, generally considered the founder of the Harcerstwo (Polish scouting) movement in the United States, was an active Falcon, as was Skarzyński. By this time casualties on the Western Front had grown to unimaginable levels. It was apparent to everyone that the war would last longer than anticipated, be much more destructive, and continue to demand ever-increasing numbers of soldiers. In this environment, the Falcons found a supportive voice in William E. Price, a Québec businessman. Price used his political connections to approach Canadian Minister of Militia and Defense Sam Hughes who, along with General Sir Willoughby Gwatkin, the Canadian Chief of Staff, approved the idea to admit a pilot group to a Canadian officers training program at York University (today the University of Toronto).<sup>14</sup>

In January 1917, Franciszek Dziób, the Falcons' national athletic instructor, led 22 other men into Canada as the first group to enroll in the training program. Although now in operation, the new initiative had to be managed delicately be-

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<sup>13</sup> David Thomas Ruskoski, "The Polish Army in France: Immigrants in America, World War I Volunteers in France, Defenders of the Recreated State in Poland" (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2006), 30. Men from the German and Austrian areas who volunteered were given fake military papers with French names so that if captured they could avoid execution as deserters.

<sup>14</sup> Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 94.

cause of the international situation. Canadian authorities were willing to grant visas to Poles from the Russian partition since Russia was an ally, but not to those without U.S. citizenship who originated in the Austrian or German partitions since they were considered enemy aliens. However, it was illegal for American citizens to serve in foreign armies. This reduced the number of potential candidates. Also, the United States was still neutral so it would be inappropriate to have men crossing the border into Canada for military training. Strict secrecy was important. To preserve this as much as possible, all mail from the officer candidates was sent in bulk to the Falcons' headquarters in Pittsburgh where it was censored to eliminate references to Canada and then mailed to the addressees so that it would have a U.S. postmark.<sup>15</sup>

The situation changed dramatically two months later when President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war. The initial group of trainees completed their course of study in the same month. Five of the graduates were sent to Alliance College in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, where a new school for future non-commissioned officers had opened in March. Qualifications for entry, as established by the Falcons, were that the men had to be between the ages of 18 and 35, be physically fit, of good character, have a basic knowledge of mathematics, speak and read both English and Polish, and provide their own uniform and equipment. Each cadet received \$14 per month plus room and board. Eventually, 389 men completed the program and were sent on to Canada to join the Polish army forming there.<sup>16</sup>

"Camp Tadeusz Kościuszko," the primary training facility for Polish recruits opened at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, under Canadian Col. Arthur D'Orr LePan. "One can quite readily conceive that the camp presented interesting international associations," he later wrote. "It was no unusual sight to have gatherings of officers at which the countries of Poland, France, United States and Canada were represented and on each occasion was found officers who from their environment and education had different ideas and ideals, all cooperating with the one great ideal of making this new creation as big a factor as possible, not only in the creation of a national Poland, but as an agency for freeing the world from an oppression that not only Poles had heard of as we have on this continent, but also that they had felt in body and soul."<sup>17</sup>

Overall, 38,108 men volunteered for the Polish army units forming in Canada. Of these, 22,395 met the requirements for acceptance with 20,720 eventually be-

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 94; Pliszka, "The 'Polish American Army' 1917-1921," 50-51. Section 10 of the U.S. Penal Code prohibited American citizens from joining foreign armies. See letter from Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, to the Secretary of State, in the War Department files, February 7, 1919, 860c.22/66.

<sup>16</sup> Pliszka, "Polish American Army," 51; Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 59; Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France, 37.

<sup>17</sup> Report of Arthur LePan, March 26, 1919, in Jerzy Walter, ed., *Czyn zbrojny wychodźstwa polskiego w Ameryce: zbiór dokumentów i materiałów historycznych* (New York: The Polish Army Veterans' Association of America, 1957), 693.

ing transported to France. Demographically, 221 recruits were from Canada and the balance from the United States. About 62 percent traced their origins to the Russian partition, 31.5 percent to Austrian occupied lands, and three percent to area controlled by Germany. The remaining 3.5 percent were unknown or listed some other place of origin. Further data was as follows:<sup>18</sup>

Total Recruits Received	22,395
Sent to France	20,720
Discharged	
Physically Unfit	1,004
Compassionate Grounds	129
Subject to U.S. Draft	193
Undesirable	5
Other causes	91
Died (Flu Epidemic)	41
Deserters	212

The Polish American force began leaving for Europe in the final days of 1917.

### **A Pianist Seduces a President**

The internationally-known pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski arrived in the United States on April 15, 1915, as an official delegate of the General Committee for Assistance to War Victims in Poland then based in Lausanne, Switzerland. He quickly set about winning over the American people and their political leaders to the cause of Poland. In his first speech, made before a crowd estimated at up to 150,000 at the Kościuszko monument in Chicago on May 30, he informed listeners that he had not come “to give a concert” but “to appeal to the hearts of the American nation.”<sup>19</sup> Paderewski soon met Edward M. House, an intimate of President Woodrow Wilson. “We were friends at our first meeting,” House wrote. “I knew at once that I was in the presence of a great man, and one with whom it would be a delight to work. He enlisted my sympathies for Poland.”<sup>20</sup> Years later, following the war and the president’s death, House again returned to his Polish friend: “It was solely through Paderewski that I became so deeply interested in the cause of Poland, and repeatedly pressed upon the President Paderewski’s views, which I had made my own. That was the only real influence regarding Poland that I counted, and I am sure if Woodrow Wil-

<sup>18</sup> Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, 693; Joseph Hapak, “Recruiting a Polish Army in the United States, 1917-1918” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1985), 171; Valasek, *Haller’s Polish Army*, 311; Ruskoski, “Polish Army in France,” 48.

<sup>19</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 139.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in M.B.B. Biskupski, *The United States and the Rebirth of Poland: 1914–1918* (St. Louis: Republic of Letters, 2012), 134.

son were alive he would tell you that he was actuated by the same impulse that governed me."<sup>21</sup>

Paderewski met Wilson in the White House on November 12 to discuss Polish relief efforts. He immediately made an impression. "I wish you could have heard Paderewski's speeches for his country," the president wrote to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. "I knew Paderewski as a master of harmony, but as we heard his eloquent appeals for his country I felt that . . . he had touched chords more sublime than when he moved thousands as he commanded harmony from the piano."<sup>22</sup> Daniels was also quite impressed, writing: "I never saw Ignace Paderewski until he called at my office in the Navy Department during the World War to request cooperation to help his suffering countrymen in Poland. With eloquent words on his tongue and tears in his eyes, he related the story of the dismemberment of his country as if it were a fresh tragedy, and the present hopes and needs of his countrymen. With an audience of one, he was as much moved as if he were speaking to a multitude. He opened his heart to me and from that moment I was an ardent advocate of the ambition of the Poles. Again I saw him at the White House when he was entertained by the President and Mrs. Wilson. His playing moved Wilson—he played nothing but Chopin—and his presentation of his hopes for his native land converted Wilson to the cause of Poland."<sup>23</sup>

It did not take long for Paderewski's charms to yield results. Immediately after their first meeting the president declared January 1, 1916, to be "Polish Relief Day," calling forth a national response to Poland's plight that raised nearly \$1 million.<sup>24</sup> A journalist who attended one of Paderewski's concerts in New York reported that he prefaced it with a speech on "The Martyrdom of Poland." He described the scene thusly: "Neither Mr. Paderewski's speech nor his delivery of it will soon pass from the memories of those who heard it. It lasted about an hour and touched upon the glories of Poland—the loftiness of the Polish character, the idealism and humanitarian instincts of the nation's kings and law givers even in remote centuries, the prowess of its warriors, the higher glories of its poets, painters, scientists, philosophers and musicians; upon the rapacity of its partition in past times, and upon the illimitable horrors of its present plight." Following the remarks Paderewski's wife auctioned a number of dolls raising \$16,009 for Polish relief.<sup>25</sup>

Over the course of 1916 Paderewski's fundraising ability on behalf of Poland proved almost magical. More important still was his growing influence on Wil-

<sup>21</sup> Letter, House to Józef Orłowski, January 15, 1931, House Papers, Box 84, f. 2916.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 213.

<sup>23</sup> Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of War and After 1917-1923* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), 399.

<sup>24</sup> Pienkos, *PNA*, 108.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Schickel, *The World of Carnegie Hall* (New York: Messner, 1960), 171.

son and his administration. On January 22, 1917, in his famous "Peace Without Victory" speech before the Senate, Wilson stated publicly: "I take it for granted, for instance if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life or worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed."<sup>26</sup> Less than three months later, on April 2, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war. The Senate adopted the resolution on April 4 and the House of Representatives concurred on April 6. The same day the Senate acted, Paderewski addressed a meeting of Falcons in Pittsburgh where he challenged them to organize an army of 100,000 men, "an army of Kościuszko," to fight side by side with the United States.

With the United States no longer neutral, the only obstacle to open recruiting of a Polish army was the reluctance of the War Department to allow it for fear that men subject to conscription into the U. S. armed forces might thereby be lost. This barrier fell on September 27, 1917, when the president announced that "Recruiting to the Polish Army [of] all those who do not fall in the category of potential recruitment into the United States forces is hereby approved without any impediments."<sup>27</sup>

Several weeks later, on January 8, 1918, he issued his famous "Fourteen Points," the foundation for what he would urge upon the victorious nations at the Versailles Peace Conference. The "Thirteenth Point" read: "An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant."<sup>28</sup>

Because of Paderewski's musical genius, his charismatic presence, and his singular purpose to aid his homeland, Poland became a popular cause in America and the Polish American community became a major factor on the American political scene. John Smulski commented that "no one could resist him . . . they saw in him the truly providential man." Historian M. B. B. Biskupski concluded that "As leader of American Polonia, Paderewski was simply irreplaceable. . . . It was Paderewski who made Polonia something significant in America."<sup>29</sup>

### Creation of the Blue Army

By the end of spring 1917 the United States was a belligerent in a war in which its allies had been bleeding and dying in record numbers for two and one-half

<sup>26</sup> Pienkos, *PNA*, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, 437.

<sup>28</sup> For the "Fourteen Points," see The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/wilson14.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp).

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in M. B. B. Biskupski, "Paderewski as Leader of American Polonia, 1914-1918," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 43, no. 1 (1986), 39.

years. The French had long ago approved the enlistment of Polish men into their Foreign Legion, with experience proving the worth of these volunteers. On June 4, President Raymond Poincaré established a recognizable Polish army to serve with the French forces on the Western Front. Maintained at French expense, the army was to have Polish officers, colors (flags), and insignia but be subordinated to overall French command. Poles resident in France or any other country were eligible to enlist, as were prisoners of war from areas such as Silesia (Śląsk) or Posen (Poznań) with historic Polish populations. When finally constituted, it contained approximately 55,000 Poles interned in France and Italy, the Bayonne Legion, some 22,000 men over the legal conscription age, 2,800 prisoners of war captured in German uniform, and a few Poles residing in Brazil.<sup>30</sup> To these were added the North American volunteers from Camp Kościuszko at Niagara-on-the-Lake. The mixed composition of the new army is reflected in the 1st Polish Rifle Regiment (1 Pułk Strzelców Polskich) formed in January 1918. Its 72 officers included 20 from the Foreign Legion, four from the Russian army, 46 from Niagara-on-the-Lake, and two from the German army. About 60 percent of the non-commissioned officers were from North America with the rest from the German army.

Initially, Polish units were treated as replacements for French units, but on August 3, 1918, as the size of the Polish contribution grew, the French gave permission for the formation of a Polish division. Placed under the command of the French General Jean Vidalon, the new 1st Infantry Division contained the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Polish Rifle Regiments numbering 227 officers and 9,965 other ranks. It was supported by an attached brigade of French artillery and a company of engineers.<sup>31</sup> In short order, a 2nd and a 3rd Division came into existence. In a large open field near Villers-Marmery, Roman Dmowski, president of the Polish National Committee, along with representatives of the French, English, Italian and American governments, arrived to witness the formal creation of what came to be called the Blue Army (Błękitna Armia) because of the horizon-blue French uniforms it received. As they watched, President Poincaré presented Polish colors to the various units, commenting: "The sons of Poland are coming in great numbers from America to fight henceforth under their own colors on the side of their allies in defense of national ideals. All the future of a nation is wrapped up in the folds of your flags. The White Eagle can once more unfold its wings. It will soon float in the light of a sky once more serene, and in the rays of victory."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Pliszka, "Polish-American Army," 51; Joseph A. Wytrwal, *Behold! the Polish Americans* (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1977), 216, 218; Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 61; Report on the Polish Forces in France, Lieutenant Robert Maverick, American Military Attaché, June 24, 1918, 2034-6, Record Group 165, National Archives/College Park, MD.

<sup>31</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 63; Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 104.

<sup>32</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 64; Charles Phillips, *Paderewski The Story of a Modern Immortal* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), 355.

It was then that the soldiers swore their oath of allegiance: "I swear before Almighty God, One in Three, to be faithful to my country Poland, one and indivisible, and to be ready to give my life for the holy cause of its unification and liberation. I swear to defend my flag to the last drop of my blood, to observe military discipline, to obey my leaders, and by my conduct to maintain the honor of a Polish soldier."<sup>33</sup> In recognition of the immense contributions of Paderewski, his name was included on the muster roll of every unit. As Charles Phillips has eloquently described, "Daily at roll call the name Ignace Jan Paderewski was responded to not by one man but by the thunderous chorus of every regiment. There were a hundred thousand Ignace Jan Paderewskis in that army, as there were a hundred thousand who had taken its oath, which in itself was a memorable declaration of the aims for which Paderewski had striven."<sup>34</sup>

On July 14, 1918, Polish troops paraded on the Place de la Concorde in Paris on their way to the front. Six days later the 1st Polish Rifle Regiment captured German positions near the town of Auberive. On July 25 they followed up with what French General Louis Archinard termed a "splendid attack" that ruined one battalion of the German 66th Infantry Regiment and captured over 100 prisoners in the Bois Raquette near Saint Hilaire-le-Grand. The final French report on this initial action concluded that the Poles had "broken a fierce German offensive on 15 July, during the night from 24 to 25 July, following a short artillery fire preparation, they seized in one thrust, in spite of the enemy's hard resistance, the objects of their attack spread over the area 2 km wide and almost 1 km deep, captured over 200 prisoners and a significant amount of equipment."<sup>35</sup> Over the next two months, Polish troops fought in Champagne and the Vosges mountains.

In early October General Józef Haller arrived to assume command of Polish forces, taking the oath of allegiance on the 6th while symbolically touching the colors of the 1st Polish Regiment. Formerly the leader of the 2nd Polish Legion in the Austrian army, he had attempted to switch sides and eventually escaped to Russia. Taking ship from Murmansk, he arrived in France where Dmowski offered him the command on October 4. With this, the "Blue Army" went down in history as "Haller's Army" despite the fact that he took command only a month before the Armistice. During those four weeks Polish troops joined the fighting around Rambervillers and Raon-l'Étape and in Alsace and Lotharingia. When the guns finally fell silent, among the casualties were 206 Polish volunteers who were killed in France along with 862 wounded and 15 who suffered permanent disablement. Among the dead were 106 Polish Americans.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, XVI, 1-2; Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 63.

<sup>34</sup> Phillips, *Paderewski*, 355.

<sup>35</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 65; Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, Section XXXVIII.

<sup>36</sup> Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 101; Pliszka, "Polish-American Army," 56.

Following the armistice, Polish troops marched under the Arc de Triomphe in the Victory Parade in Paris. The service of Polish soldiers on the Western Front was honorable and successful. Yet, the formal creation of the Polish Army in France had political consequences far beyond any fighting that it actually did during the closing weeks of the war. As early as December 1917, Waław Gasi-orowski wrote in *Dziennik Narodowy* (National Daily) that "Today the army is Poland's foundation. The army will form the state, as the state cannot form the army."<sup>37</sup> This is exactly what happened. The Polish Army in France bought with its life, its blood, and its very existence a seat for Poland among the victorious nations who would create a new Europe at Versailles. As its political leader, Roman Dmowski, later stated in addressing the Blue Army veterans: "Your voluntary enlistment in the Polish Army in France made possible its creation, and thanks to its existence we were recognized as allies and admitted to participate in the peace conference."<sup>38</sup>

### "To Allay the Suffering"

Most direct relief measures for Poland ceased after U. S. entry into the war because of the closing of German- and Austrian-controlled regions to American aid workers. Yet at the same time, the creation of the new Polish army and the needs of Polish refugees in Western Europe attracted new civilian aid organizations. The first materialized under the leadership of Helena Paderewska, wife of the famed pianist. Already involved in Polish relief efforts, in 1917 she attempted to interest the Red Cross in organizing a Polish section, but was informed it was not possible since the Red Cross only operated in independent nations and Poland was not independent. Refusing to abandon the idea, she convened a meeting at the Gotham Hotel in New York on January 14, 1918. There, aided by Col. Arthur D'Orr LePan who had commanded Camp Kościuszko at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Dr. Frank Lenert, and several Polonia leaders, she created the Polish White Cross (Polski Biały Krzyż). The organization's initial mission was to support Polish soldiers, although it later expanded in the postwar years to providing aid to Poland in the 1920s.

Operating in the United States and Canada, and funded by donations from those two nations, the White Cross provided medicine, medical paraphernalia, and other support for the Polish army training camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake and also performed admirably during the deadly 1918 influenza pandemic. When the Blue Army moved to France, 42 White Cross nurses accompanied it, serving in field hospitals on the

<sup>37</sup> Joseph T. Hapak, "The Polish Military Commission, 1917-1919," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Autumn, 1981), 26.

<sup>38</sup> Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 110. In October 1918, the British government recognized the Polish Army as "autonomous, allied, and co-belligerent," and the American government did likewise the following month." For this see Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 67 and the *New York Times*, October 17 and November 5, 1918.

Western Front to give medical aid as well as providing cultural and educational activities, clothing, cigarettes, and special holiday packages at Easter and Christmas.

With the end of the war, the formal organization of the White Cross came to an end in January 1919, but its activities continued as its supporters merged with the activities of the Polish Women's Rescue Service of the National Department managed through its Chicago offices. It continued raising funds and other contributions for relief efforts in Poland, while many of its nurses provided their expertise in the war-torn nation under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association. During the Polish-Bolshevik War, the White Cross partnered with 228 other organizations, managed over 19,000 volunteers, and administered 145 hotels, 40 sewing facilities, 13 cleaning facilities, and 64 libraries. Their efforts provided over 200,000 sets of clothing and shoes to the needy, supported a medical facility in Warsaw, an orphans home, and other services. These activities continued until the Second World War.<sup>39</sup>

Another organization dedicated to aiding the homeland, its soldiers, and its civilian population was the Grey Samaritans. Organized in the spring of 1918 by Laura Blackwell Turczynowicz—an opera singer, theater producer, and wife of a Polish aristocrat—she worked with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to organize a group of young Polish American women to serve in Europe. The candidates underwent training to be nurses at Columbia University in New York City, then gained practical experience in hospitals, health education, and as case workers in the city's slums. Those who successfully completed the courses of study took the Grey Samaritan pledge: "I, —, in accepting the Polish Grey Samaritan uniform, pledge myself to uphold the highest ideals of womanhood in every action of my life; To be faithful in the fulfilment of the duties of a Polish Grey Samaritan; To be obedient to the orders of my Superiors; To serve the cause of Poland; To allay suffering and bind up the wounds of those by the wayside; Believing that in so doing I serve the cause of humanity."<sup>40</sup>

Herbert Hoover, the future U. S. president who was deeply involved in the American Relief Administration, recounted in his memoirs the world in which the young women soon found themselves: "Here were about 28,000,000 people who had for four years been ravished by four separate invasions during this one war, where battles and retreating armies had destroyed and destroyed again. . . . Many hundreds of thousands had died of starvation. The homes of millions had been destroyed and the people in those areas were living in hovels. Their agricultural implements were depleted, their animals had been taken by armies, their

<sup>39</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 139. For a treatment of the White Cross see Aneta Niewęglowska, *Polski Biały Krzyż a wojsko w latach 1919-1939* (Toruń: Mado, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Robert Szymczak, "An Act of Devotion: The Polish Grey Samaritans and the American Relief Effort in Poland, 1919-1921," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), 20; Gedgowd Collection, Polish Grey Samaritan Records, Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace, 20.

crops had been only partly planted and then only partly harvested. Industry in the cities was dead from lack of raw materials. The people were unemployed and millions were destitute. . . . The railroads were barely functioning. The cities were almost without food; typhus and diseases raged over whole provinces. Rats, lice, famine, pestilence, yet they were determined to build a nation."<sup>41</sup>

The first Grey Samaritans arrived in Warsaw in July 1919 where they were assigned to Kielce, Łódź, Lublin, Lwów, Pińsk, and Wilno. Among their duties was the distribution of provisions, clothing, and medical supplies, as well as serving as nurses in civilian and military hospitals, and training local volunteers. Braving disease and the vicissitudes of the Polish-Bolshevik War, by all accounts the record of the Grey Samaritans is extraordinary. Where they were assigned to hospitals the child death rates declined by about 50 percent.<sup>42</sup> A report to the American Relief Agency concluded that "the Polish Greys have increased the efficiency of the clothing program by 50%, that is, probably 50% more children had received outfits than otherwise if the girls had not supervised. A certain loss of clothing by theft and other causes had been figured on but the girls greatly decreased that. Their effect on the local committees was very beneficial. (1) They stimulated the Poles themselves to help (2) They stimulated the interest that made the Poles feel that America was there to put through an American job (3) They insured a fair distribution without discrimination of race or religion (4) They gave a good example of American organization. . . ."<sup>43</sup>

At the conclusion of their service in the fall of 1921, Sidney Brooks, an administrator with the American Relief Administration, left his impressions of the Grey Samaritans: "We all feel that their devotion and service, given under the most trying and difficult conditions, forms a record which has no equal in American relief work in all the countries of Europe since the Armistice."<sup>44</sup> Herbert Hoover took the time to pen a letter specifically singling-out the Grey Samaritans for their efforts. "I would like to take occasion to express the gratitude we all owe and the appreciation we hold for the extraordinary service of the Grey Samaritans in Poland. The hardships they have undergone, the courage and resource they have shown in sheer human service is a beautiful monument to American womanhood."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 356; Szymczak, "Act of Devotion," 15-16.

<sup>42</sup> Frank W. Thackeray, "'To Serve the Cause of Poland': The Polish Grey Samaritans, 1919-1922," *The Polish Review*, Vol. XXXV, no. 1 (1990), 42.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Szymczak, "Act of Devotion," 24.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Szymczak, "Act of Devotion," 34; Statement of Sidney Brooks, ARA headquarters, New York, September 7, 1924, in Tapping Collection, Polish Grey Samaritan Records, Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Szymczak, "Act of Devotion," 34; also quoted in Thackeray, "Polish Grey Samaritans," 50; letter, Herbert Hoover, ARA headquarters, New York, to Polish Grey Samaritans, YWCA, Warsaw, August 15, 1921. Tapping Collection, Polish Grey Samaritan Records, Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace, 34.

### The Army Moves to Poland

In April 1919, Gen. Haller's army consisted of seven rifle divisions organized into three corps with one supporting tank regiment and seven squadrons of aircraft. Although some records are missing, the strength is usually estimated at 108,000 men. On November 16, Marshal Józef Piłsudski, named commander-in-chief of the Polish Army, asked French Marshal Ferdinand Foch for the repatriation of the Polish Army in France to Poland. Originally, the plan was to load the troops aboard ships to transfer them to Danzig (Gdańsk), but that port was now a "Free City" under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the Germans objected to the transfer, fearing that a Polish army landing there might seize the city for Poland. As a result, the army was transported by train across Germany on the condition that all weapons be securely locked in boxcars.<sup>46</sup>

After the demobilization of some soldiers, and deducting losses, 1,240 officers and about 68,000 men transferred to Poland along with 18 airplanes and 120 tanks. Most of the remaining recruits from North America had been in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Rifle Regiments. These were transferred into the Polish Army as follows: the 1st Rifle Regiment became the 43rd Bayonne Rifle Regiment (43 Pułk Strzelców Legionu Bajończyków), the 2nd Rifle Regiment became the 44th American Rifle Regiment (44 Pułk Strzelców Legii Amerykańskiej), and the 3rd Rifle Regiment became the 45th Kresowy Rifle Regiment (45 Pułk Piechoty Strzelców Kresowych). All three were organized into the 13th Infantry Division of the Second Army Corps.<sup>47</sup>

After arriving in Poland, in May of 1919 the 13th Division was rushed into eastern Galicia where Ukrainian forces were attempting to seize the region in stalemated fighting that alternated back and forth, first one side advancing and then the other. The division arrived just in time to help blunt a Ukrainian offensive and then participate in a Polish counterattack that drove Ukrainian forces from the region. Polish historians generally credit the arrival of Haller's troops as providing the critical balance of power making the Polish attack decisive. Well-trained, well-equipped, experienced, and outfitted with 120 French Renault tanks (at that time the fourth largest armored force in the world), the Ukrainians had no answer for this offensive strength. Because of their efforts, in 1923 East Galicia was internationally recognized as part of Poland.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> For information on Danzig and the transfer to Poland by train see: Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 73. See also Minutes of the Council of Ten, Jan. 22, 1919, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, Vol. III, 670-71; Feb. 24, 1919, Vol. IV, 106-07 and 125-26; Feb. 11, 1919, Vol. IV, 315-16, 424-28, 430-31.

<sup>47</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 97; Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, Sections XXXVI and XXXVII.

<sup>48</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 97; Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, Sections XXXVI and XXXVII.

While the campaign in eastern Galicia drew to a conclusion, Poland was threatened by a major invasion of Bolshevik forces from the east. While one pin-cer of the invasion headed for Warsaw, another under General Semyon Budyenny drove into southeastern Poland aiming for Lwów (modern Lviv). Budyenny attacked Haller's force along the Dnieper River near Kiev (modern Kyiv), forcing it westward until the Bolsheviks were defeated at Luck on August 19-21, 1920. From there, the former Blue Army soldiers pursued the retreating Bolsheviks east to the Bug River. The final armistice on October 18, 1920, found them near Pińsk. During the conflict 2,155 of Haller's soldiers from North America were killed and 1,690 wounded. Their efforts in defeating Budyenny's army prevented it from linking up with the main thrust against Warsaw, contributing to the Treaty of Riga that finally established the borders of the reborn Polish nation on March 18, 1921.<sup>49</sup>

Following the end of the Russo-Polish War in 1921, the remaining volunteers from North America were gradually demobilized, but their return to their homes remained in some doubt. With the end of World War I, French support for the Blue Army ceased once it arrived in Poland. While in Polish service, expenses were assumed by the new Polish government, but there was no agreement that obliged it to pay for the return of veterans to the United States or Canada. An initial appeal to the United States for funding met with rejection because the men were not American citizens and had not been in the U.S. armed forces. At this point, Representative John Kleczka of Wisconsin addressed the House Military Affairs Committee on behalf of the stranded veterans. There had been, he explained, 24,600 men recruited in the United States of whom 15 percent were American citizens not subject to the draft, 20 percent had been exempt from the draft, and 65 percent were aliens, a large number of whom had wives and families in the United States. Following his speech, Senator James Wadsworth of New York, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, introduced legislation providing for the return of the Polish veterans at government expense. With this, the men were finally allowed to return aboard ships paid for by the U.S. government.<sup>50</sup>

Eventually, some 14,500 Polish veterans returned to United States and Canada, with a few others who initially chose to remain in Poland following later. To maintain their wartime relationships and further promote the cause of Poland they met in Cleveland in May 1921 to form the Polish Army Veterans Associa-

<sup>49</sup> Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 67, 98-102; Walter, *Czyn zbrojny*, Section XXXVII. Interestingly, one of those who fought for Polish independence in Haller's force was Ludwik Kaźmierczak, the grandfather of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

<sup>50</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 146; Ruskoski, "Polish Army in France," 122, 125; *Congressional Record*, 66th Congress, February 13, 1920, 2835; *Congressional Record*, House Committee on Military Affairs, 66th Congress, February 26, 1920, Volume 237, 9. Citizens not subject to the draft would have included those outside the age for conscription or people with medical or mental deferments.

tion in America (Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce, SWAP). Fittingly, they elected Teofil Starzyński, who had done so much to bring about formation of the Blue Army, as their first president.<sup>51</sup>

### Financial Support for Polish Independence

While the Blue Army fought in Europe for Polish independence, civilian support for the army, relief efforts, and later support for the newly independent Polish state continued in North America. Quantifying this support is difficult since it involved both direct and indirect assistance and in some instances it was difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate Polish American contributions from those of other Americans. Although the exact amount of direct financial contributions will probably never be known, John Smulski, who oversaw many of these efforts, estimated that North American Polonia provided over \$200 million in direct aid to Poland – the equivalent of a staggering \$4,910,000,000 in 2018 dollars. This is an enormous amount given to the cause by a population that was largely comprised of factory workers, miners, and other laborers making very modest wages. They also supported the efforts of the Polish White Cross, the Grey Samaritans, and other Polish relief efforts as noted above.

Indirectly, Polish Americans contributed to various relief efforts sponsored by the Red Cross, the Young Women's Christian Association, and other non-Polish organizations. In another example, Metropolitan Opera star Marcella Sembrich-Kochańska's "American Polish Relief Committee," soliciting funds outside the Polish American community, raised \$922,628 and collected over 25,000 bundles of clothing for shipment to Poland. Another such effort was Paderewski's "Polish Victims' Relief Committee" that reported raising another \$1 million from non-Polish audiences. Among the largest of these endeavors, after American entry into the war, were the Liberty Loan drives where people were asked to contribute to the war effort by purchasing United States savings bonds. Information on ethnic contributions for the First and Second Liberty Loan drives has not surfaced, but it is available for later campaigns. According to these data, Polish Americans purchased \$68,332,600 in bonds during the Third Liberty Loan and \$31,000,000 during the Fourth Liberty Loan for a total of \$99,332,600—\$2,438,615,330 in 2018 dollars.<sup>52</sup>

But even this was not the end of "Fourth Partition" support. Following the restoration of Polish independence, when the nation lay devastated by war and in perilous financial shape, Polonia continued to provide assistance. Polish historian Adam Walaszek estimates that Polish Americans invested in more than

<sup>51</sup> Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 111. For a history of the veterans' group see Jerzy Walter, compiler, *Czyn zbrojny wychodźstwa polskiego w Ameryce: zbiór dokumentów i materiałów historycznych* (New York: The Polish Army Veterans' Association of America, 1957).

<sup>52</sup> Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 140; Pliszka, "The Polish American Community," 47, 50.

200 Polish businesses during the 1920s. What *can* be verified from Polish records is that Polish Americans sent some \$170,000,000 to family members and friends in Poland between 1919 to 1923; purchased \$18,472,000 in Polish government bonds in 1919-20; bought \$49,901,000 in stock in Polish businesses; converted \$100,000,000 into Polish funds; and tourists and re-emigrants left \$75,000,000 in Poland when they departed—an astounding total of \$413,373,000 or \$10,148,307,150 in 2018 dollars.<sup>53</sup> All of these contributions helped to stabilize the financial situation of the new Polish government and improve the circumstances of a large proportion of its citizens.

### Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the "Fourth Partition" played a crucial role in the reestablishment of Poland as an independent state following more than a century of foreign occupation. The diaspora of no other subject nation formed an army of over 100,000 men to fight on the Western Front in the hope of recreating an independent homeland. The diaspora of no other subject nation provided the financial and material support to its homeland than did the North American Polonia. The diaspora of no other subject nation sent its sons in the thousands to its native land to win with their blood the independence promised by the Treaty of Versailles.

According to Jerzy Walter, who wrote the history of the Blue Army veterans, 42 officers and 1,790 enlisted men were killed serving in France and Poland, while another 83 officers and 1,928 men were wounded. Two officers and 102 enlisted men suffered permanent disability from poison gas.<sup>54</sup> They, and their comrades-in-arms who survived, contributed positively to French military operations on the Western Front. In eastern Galicia they changed the balance of power allowing Poland to regain and retain that region as part of the new independent nation. During the Bolshevik invasion they rendered good service in southeastern Poland, helping defeat the Bolshevik thrust toward Lwów and pushing it back all the way to Pińsk. Perhaps even more important, the very existence of the Polish Army in France was a visible symbol that bought Poland a seat at the table when the war was over. It also brought together men from all over Poland into a single army—it was not an army of German Poles, Russian Poles, Austrian Poles, Canadian Poles, American Poles, or Brazilian Poles, it was a *Polish* army representing the rebirth of the nation itself. And finally, historian Marian Zgórniak has concluded that it "significantly contributed to the rise and modernization of the military potential of the Second Republic."<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Stanley R. Pliszka, "The Polish American Community and the Rebirth of Poland," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan.-June, 1969), 58.

<sup>54</sup> Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young*, 110.

<sup>55</sup> Marian Zgórniak, "Polonia amerykańska wobec problemu niepodległości w czasie I wojny światowej," in Hieronim Kubiak, Eugeniusz Kusielewicz, and Tadeusz Gromada, eds., *Polonia amerykańska: przeszłość i współczesność* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1988).

In addition to these soldiers, many Poles, U.S. citizens and permanent residents prevented from volunteering by American law, later served in the U.S. army that went to France. This provided indirect support for Polish independence in that those who served in this way also helped to bring about the demise of the German and the Austro-Hungarian empires, paving the way for Polish independence. Estimates vary considerably, but a rough approximation would be that some 215,000 Poles served in the U. S. Army. This formed about 5.4 percent of the total American army which was proportionally high given that only between 3.0 and 3.5 percent of the American population was of Polish ancestry.<sup>56</sup>

As noted above, John Smulski estimated that the various Polish relief agencies raised approximately \$200 million in cash and supplies in support of Poland. Although it is impossible at this date to compile a detailed list of these, it is likely that this is a reasonable assessment. Then too, the efforts of Paderewski and others, including English-language Polish publications, to raise consciousness of the Polish plight among non-Poles certainly brought in contributions to Herbert Hoover's Polish relief organization and other non-Polish efforts. The actual amount, especially when added to all of the non-Polish relief efforts will no doubt never be known but is certainly significantly higher, perhaps even more than double the amount Smulski estimated for Polish organizations. And this does not even count Polonia's indirect aid for Poland through its purchase of Liberty Bonds or U. S. government assistance influenced, at least in part, by Paderewski's magical appeals.

No matter how one views it, the "Fourth Partition" contributed substantially to the successful rebirth of an independent Poland.

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#### Appendix: Polish Army Recruitment Centers<sup>57</sup>

Center No.	City	Recruits
1	Milwaukee, WI	1,395
2	Chicago, IL	5,740
3	Detroit, MI	2,825
4	Cleveland, OH	1,274
5	Buffalo, NY	1,818
6	Pittsburgh, PA	2,367
7	Wilkes-Barre, PA	1,077
8	New York, NY	3,250
9	Boston, MA	880

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<sup>56</sup> Pienkos, *PNA*, 111; Brożek, *Polish Americans*, 145.

<sup>57</sup> From Valasek, *Haller's Polish Army*, 399-400.

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10	Bridgeport, CT	854
11	Schenectady, NY	214
12	Winnipeg, Manitoba	51
13	Baltimore, MD	264
14	Erie, PA	453
15	Grand Rapid, MI	65
16	Hartford, CT	434
17	Holyoke, MA	386
18	Kansas City, KS	113
19	Meriden, CT	178
20	Minneapolis, MN	299
21	Philadelphia, PA	1,341
22	Reading, PA	57
23	Saginaw, MI	22
24	Scranton, PA	135
25	South Bend, IN	31
26	St. Louis, MO	611
27	St. Paul, MN	49
28	Stevens Point, WI	290
29	Syracuse, NY	73
30	Toledo, OH	506
31	Wilmington, DE	96
32	Worcester, MA	160
33	Bay City, MI	61
34	Duluth, MN	635
35	Youngstown, OH	57
36	Mt. Carmel, PA	47
37	Omaha, NE	176
38	Providence, RI	94
39	Toronto, Ontario	255
40	Wheeling, WV	78
41	New Britain, CT	139
42	South Chicago, IL	635
43	Utica, NY	623
44	Montréal, Québec	54
45	Trenton, NJ	175
46	Central Falls, RI	29
47	Springfield, MA	427
	Camp Niagara, Ontario	163
	Unidentified	311

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## REDEFINING AMERICANIZATION IN BUFFALO DURING WORLD WAR I

### Abstract

This article provides an overview of the Americanization campaign as it existed during and immediately after World War I, with discussion of developments in Buffalo, New York. Americanization involves the transition undertaken by immigrants who are acclimating to living in the United States. This article focuses on the change from “bottom-up Americanization” (as described by historian James R. Barrett) to “coercive Americanization” that happened as a consequence of World War I and the Red Scare that followed, with discussion of the main concerns of the Americanization campaign in the 1910s. Buffalo exhibits the same patterns that were evident nationally. Before the war, political radicals and labor leaders had provided a significant source of leadership and education for immigrant workers as they learned about American society. Their leadership had shaped workers’ wartime expectations for greater “industrial democracy,” but instead, the end of the war in Buffalo (as elsewhere in the country) was followed by a conservative reaction to a post-war strikes and violence. The result was a reactionary movement by government and private organizations that targeted socialist organizations and their leaders, bringing an end to the “bottom-up Americanization” led by radical political groups.

**Keywords:** Americanization, Buffalo, immigration, Lackawanna, National Americanization Committee, American Council on Education, Red Scare, New York, Lusk Committee, Niagara Frontier Defense League

### Introduction

The Wilson administration’s attempt to create national cohesion and unity in the face of widespread public opposition to American entry into World War I led to a wave of chauvinism, intolerance, and xenophobia that haunted the political landscape of the U.S. for a decade. In Buffalo, NY, the presence of Poles, Italians, and other immigrant groups within the labor force drew attention from people who questioned the immigrants’ loyalty to the U.S. during the hyper-patriotic years of the war, reshaping the meaning of “Americanization” from its pre-war form. The assimilation of “new immigrants,” mainly from Southern, Eastern, and Central Europe, had been a priority for Progressive reformers who understood the need to address the economic and social conditions facing working-class residents of industrial centers like Buffalo. Coercive, top-down versions of Americanization

existed before the war, but they were balanced by a type of bottom-up Americanization pursued by labor organizations, labor leaders, and working-class radicals. The war heightened nativism and fostered intolerance, especially for unassimilated ethnic communities, non-citizens, and political radicals, and Americanization became synonymous with coercion. Governmental agents infiltrated and monitored labor organizations in the name of reducing the appeal and potency of radical political and labor groups whose leaders challenged the governmental suppression of speech and political expression, or who expressed sympathy for the revolutionary Bolshevik government in Russia. This refocused emphasis of Americanization brought an end to bottom-up efforts by labor activists.

The discussion of “Americanization” is as old as the United States itself. The image of America as a “crucible” or cultural “melting-pot” – through which migrants were transformed into Americans – traces back to 1782, with Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*.<sup>1</sup> “What then is the American, this new man?” Crèvecoeur asked. “*He* is an American who, leaving behind him all ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the government he obeys, and the new rank he holds . . . Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.”<sup>2</sup> This “myth of Americanization,” historian Gary Gerstle explains, framed the assimilation of European immigrants to America as an emancipatory and liberating process, welcomed by immigrants, and easily accomplished.<sup>3</sup> Generations of historians have contested Crèvecoeur’s rosy view of immigration, showing how immigrants worked to preserve their culture (rather than discarding it), created cultural pluralism (rather than assimilating to existing practices), resisted coercive acculturation processes, and how constraints of race, class, and gender complicate Crèvecoeur’s simple narrative. Never were the repressive aspects of Americanization on display as clearly as during and after World War I, when the Wilson administration embraced “patriotic coercion” to unify the country behind the war effort.<sup>4</sup>

### Americanizing Immigrants

Like other cities in the industrial heartland, turn-of-the century Buffalo was a magnet for immigrants. A large percentage of Buffalo’s population, along

<sup>1</sup> Gary Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans,” *Journal of American History* 84, 2 (Sept 1997): 524-558. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2952569> (accessed: 11 Sep 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, quoted in Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans,” 524.

<sup>3</sup> Gerstle, 525.

<sup>4</sup> Gerstle, esp. 540-41. The term “Americanization” has been used in many ways. For an overview of the historiography and changing interpretations of the related concepts of “assimilation” and “Americanization,” see Russell A. Kazal, “Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History,” *The American Historical Review* 100 (April 1995): 437-71.

with the surrounding environs of Erie County in which it is embedded, was made up of immigrants. (In 1910, Erie County had 528,985 residents, so Buffalo's 1910 population of 423,715 made up 80% of the county's population.) The 1910 census identifies only 30.8% of Erie County's population as "native white" (both parents born in the U.S.); over two-thirds (68.5%) of the county's residents were either foreign-born or had parents who were.<sup>5</sup> The total was slightly higher in Buffalo, where the 1910 census identified 302,117 residents as foreign-born or of foreign parentage, representing 71.3% of the city's total population of 423,715.<sup>6</sup> The distribution among these groups was similar in Buffalo in 1920; 32.5% of Buffalo's population was "native white," with "native parentage," 42.4% were native-born whites with one or more foreign-born parents, and 23.9% were foreign-born whites.<sup>7</sup> In Depew, a working-class suburb of Buffalo, 89.5% of residents in 1920 were either foreign-born or had one or more parents who were.<sup>8</sup>

Polish migrants were strongly represented in this immigrant community; eventually, the Buffalo area would be home to one of the largest Polish diasporic communities in the U.S. In the 1910 census, migrants from Germany (a majority of whom were Poles) made up 47% of the total number of Buffalo's "white population of foreign birth or foreign parentage." This number, 141,969, was around a third (33%) of Buffalo's 1910 population (423,715 people).<sup>9</sup> The size of the Polish diaspora in Buffalo and surrounding Erie County is hidden in U.S. census data prior to 1920 because there was no specific category for Polish migrants. Instead, migrants who were Polish are included within the category of those born in Germany, as well as within the categories of those born in Russia and Austria-Hungary.<sup>10</sup> The 1920 census makes it possible to see the Polish diaspora more

<sup>5</sup> The census categorized 41.5% of Erie County's residents as "native whites" with one or both parents born outside of the U.S. (e.g., the children of foreign-born parents) and 27% were foreign-born whites. Another 0.4% were "Negro." See "Table I. – Composition and Characteristics of the Population for the State and for Counties," Population – New York, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Volume 3: Population: Reports by States Nebraska-Wyoming, Section 2*, 228. (Hereafter cited as *1910 Census, Vol. 3*.)

<sup>6</sup> "Table 13. – Foreign White Stock, by Nationality, for Cities of 100,000 or More," *1910 Census, Vol. 3*, 216.

<sup>7</sup> See "Table 10. – Composition and Characteristics of the Population, for Cities of 10,000 or More: 1920," Population – New York, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Volume 3. Population, 1920. Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States*, p. 690. (Hereafter cited as *1920 Census, Vol. 3*.) Table 10 also indicates that the black community had grown to 0.9% of Buffalo's population, a result of the Great Black Migration that started during the war years.

<sup>8</sup> See "Table 11. – Composition and Characteristics of the Population, for Places of 2,500 to 10,000: 1920," Population – New York, *1920 Census, Vol. 3*, 696.

<sup>9</sup> "Population – New York," *1910 Census, Vol. 3*, p. 187; "Table 13. – Foreign White Stock, by Nationality, for Cities of 100,000 or More," New York, *1910 Census, Vol. 3*, 216.

<sup>10</sup> After Germany, the next largest origin group identified in the 1910 census was from Ireland (10.9%), followed by Canada (9.8%), Italy (6.3%), Russia (5.6%), England (5.2%), and Austria (4.9%) [note: Hungary was listed as a separate country (1% of total)]. See Table 13. – Foreign White Stock, By Nationality, For Cities of 100,000 or More," Population – New York, *1910 Census, Vol. 3*, 216.

clearly, since the reconstitution of Poland as an independent country (1918) made it possible for Polish migrants to designate Poland as their homeland. In 1920, 25.8% of the foreign-born white population in Buffalo was identified as Polish (an additional 17.2% of the foreign-born white population designated Germany as their country of birth). The percentages for Erie County are very similar (26.2% of the county's foreign-born were from Poland, and another 17.8% from Germany).<sup>11</sup> Since migration from Eastern Europe ground to a halt after 1914, the immigrant population of the Buffalo area (including foreign-born and their children) in 1920 was mostly the same as 1910, identifiable even with some changes in census categories and the addition of Poland among countries of origin. Some Erie County communities were even more heavily Polish; in 1920, those born in Poland made up 46.6 and 37.1%, respectively, of the white foreign-born population of the industrial cities of Lackawanna and North Tonawanda (both of which adjoined Buffalo).<sup>12</sup>

On a national level, Progressive Era reformers focused heavily on improving the living and working conditions of immigrant communities, prioritizing Americanization as part of the acculturation and assimilation process that Progressives saw as essential both for the upward mobility of immigrants and the diffusion of social and political tensions. During the 1910s, "Americanization" was understood as acculturation to "the values and behavior of mainstream America."<sup>13</sup> During the war years, Americanization efforts were centralized under such organizations as the National Americanization Committee (established in 1915) and the American Council on Education (ACE), established in 1918 to unite prominent educational organizations. ACE took up the educational components of Americanization as part of its agenda.<sup>14</sup>

In 1919, *The American Journal of Sociology* published a long and detailed article summarizing the wartime Americanization measures coordinated by ACE that offers important insights into the premises behind Americanization as

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<sup>11</sup> Note that the census categories in 1920 are different than those used in 1910; the unit of measurement here was for "foreign-born white," and it did not include those with one or more foreign-born parents. The largest groups of foreign-born in Erie County in 1920 (aside from Poland and Germany) were from Italy (12.8%) and Canada (12.1%). No other country of origin reached 6%. See "Table 12. – Country of Birth of the Foreign-Born White, for Counties and for Cities of 10,000 or More: 1920," Population – New York, 1920 Census, Vol. 3, pp. 701-703.

<sup>12</sup> See "Table 12. – Country of Birth of the Foreign-Born White, for Counties and for Cities of 10,000 or More: 1920," Population – New York, 1920 Census, Vol. 3, 702-704.

<sup>13</sup> James R. Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," *Journal of American History* 79, 3 (Discovering America: A Special Issue; Dec 1992): 996-1020; quote 997. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2080796> (accessed: 11 Sep 2018).

<sup>14</sup> The American Council on Education (ACE) was created in January 1918 by bringing together eleven national societies and organizations in higher education. An additional three members joined within two months. Members included the AAUP, AAAS, NEA, and other groups that were influential in higher education. See <https://www.acenet.edu/Pages/A-History-of-ACEs-Members.aspx> (accessed: 12 Sep 2018).

it was understood during the war years. According to the report, earlier migrants from Europe had faced “few obstacles” in assimilating because of their social, and cultural similarities to Americans, but immigrants who arrived after 1885 were different. Most were Catholic, Orthodox, or Jewish, rather than Protestant, and they were also less literate than earlier arrivals. According to ACE, “Most serious of all perhaps was the fact that, unlike the earlier immigrants, many of the late-comers manifested no intention of making America a permanent home and no desire of becoming American.”<sup>15</sup> This point was so crucial that it was also highlighted as a reason why immigrants were unreceptive to the Americanization efforts of employers, educators, and others. Immigrants who did not intend to stay in the U.S. did not need to Americanize. However, the war changed plans for many immigrants, who were unable or unwilling to return to European communities riven by war and, often, forced conscription. The Americanization movement peaked during and after World War I, when, as Barrett noted, it “became a kind of crusade as employers, nationalist groups, and various state and federal agencies sought to remold the values and behavior of immigrant workers and their families.”<sup>16</sup> The preparedness campaign and American entry into the war raised concerns about communities of unassimilated immigrants, with Americanization prescribed as a solution for those concerns. While the U.S. government emphasized the need for citizen “vigilance” against potential espionage, the federal propaganda campaign to increase support for the war encouraged private groups (some of them newly created) to follow suit, carrying out illegal vigilante actions while claiming to be performing their patriotic duty. Private patriotic groups insisted that immigrants needed to speak English, demonstrate their patriotism, and accept capitalism.<sup>17</sup>

### Speaking English and Learning Civics

The 1919 ACE report provides insight into what, exactly, Americanization meant during World War I. Not surprisingly for a group centered on education, its two central areas of focus were English-language instruction and education about citizenship. The report summarized the goals and parameters of Americanization (“Americanism”) and the definition of citizenship as follows:

In the various explanations of the meaning of Americanism chief stress seems to be laid on the acquisition of the English language and American citizenship, and

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<sup>15</sup> Howard C. Hill, “The Americanization Movement,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 24, No 6 (May 1919): 609-642. Quote is from pp. 610-11.

<sup>16</sup> Barrett, 997.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Capozzola, “The Only Badge Needed Is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America,” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 88, no. 4 (Mar 2002), 1354-1382. Capozzola distinguished by “vigilance” and “vigilantism,” with the former encouraged by governmental authorities and the latter crossing the line into illegal coercion (1355).

on the adoption of American customs, standards, and methods of life; or, in other words, Americanism is defined as a process by which an alien acquires our language, citizenship, customs, and ideals. It is difficult to see why true Americanism necessitates on the part of the immigrant the adoption of our foods or our methods of preparing food, as urged by the National Americanization Committee. It is conceivable that one may continue to eat goulash or garlic and forego the pleasures of pie and yet become a true American in mind, heart, and action. Even the surrender of certain customs may impoverish the future America. The all-important thing, as Secretary Lane has so finely put it, would seem to be the adoption of the spirit of America.<sup>18</sup>

Other groups involved in Americanization efforts also prioritized English-language instruction and preparing the foreign-born for citizenship. In its 1915 report, “Americanizing a City,” the National Americanization Committee (mentioned in the ACE report, above) reported on its efforts to promote night schools among adult immigrants in Detroit. Men were the target constituency for these schools, but women were also encouraged to attend so they could learn to better communicate with shopkeepers and also “keep up with their children and their husbands.”<sup>19</sup> The Americanizers enlisted the help of Detroit’s largest employers to encourage (and in some cases, compel) their non-English speaking employees to attend night schools, but they also partnered with the Board of Education, religious leaders, and a wide range of municipal and social agencies.<sup>20</sup> Noting that workers who could not speak English were the last hired and first fired, the campaign promoted English-language acquisition as a practical step for economic advancement as well as “the indispensable key” in preparing for citizenship.<sup>21</sup>

The report sometimes struck an ominous tone, warning that “leagues” and “societies” had been organized within immigrant communities (“colonies”) in

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<sup>18</sup> Hill, 631-32.

<sup>19</sup> *Americanizing a City* (New York: National Americanization Committee and the Committee for Immigrants in America: December 15, 1915), accessible at: <https://ia600603.us.archive.org/13/items/americanizingcit00nati/americanizingcit00nati.pdf> (accessed: 15 Aug 2019). Quote is from p. 11. (Hereafter cited as *Americanizing a City*.)

<sup>20</sup> The campaign contacted all Detroit companies with over 100 employees, providing materials to promote night schools, and requested their cooperation. Some industrialists (including Henry Ford) ran their own night schools, but many others took part in the campaign, with varying degrees of compulsion for their non-English speaking employees. One company, the Northway Company, had “established a factory class and then gave its non-English speaking men a threefold choice: (1) to attend the factory class; (2) to attend the public night school; (3) to be laid off.” Other companies eschewed compulsion in favor of incentives. The Solvay Company, by contrast, offered a raise of 2 cents per hour to employees who attended night schools, noting that workers who didn’t speak English cost the company thousands of dollars because of mistakes in communication and the resulting industrial accidents. See *Americanizing a City*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Detroit, and that the city had been “invaded” by “all the races of the earth.”<sup>22</sup> Despite the scary imagery, the report’s authors sought to demonstrate that Americanization was essential to America’s future:

What America is facing now is not simply the economic problem of giving the immigrant a chance as a piece of benevolent paternalism; in the large number of unassimilated groups in our factories and towns, we are facing a vast social problem involving our national unity, the preservation of a uniform ideal of citizenship, the maintenance of industrial peace, and the conservation of a social ideal based on the use of the English language, a regard for American citizenship and American standards of living.<sup>23</sup>

In 1910, Detroit and Buffalo were very similar cities, and undoubtedly their common patterns raised similar concerns among those who promoted Americanization. Both cities were rapidly growing industrial centers with large foreign-born populations with similar ethnic profiles. In 1910, Detroit ranked as the 9th largest city in the U.S. with a population of 465,766; Buffalo was right behind it, ranking 10th with 423,715 residents.<sup>24</sup> Detroit’s population in 1910 was 33% foreign-born; 74% of its residents were foreign-born or had parents who were.<sup>25</sup> Buffalo’s 1910 population was 27.9% foreign-born; 71.3% of its residents were foreign-born or had parents who were.<sup>26</sup> Most of the recent immigrants to Detroit, like Buffalo, were from eastern and southern Europe, with a large Polish presence. Many of Buffalo’s leaders would have seen echoes of their own city in this description of Detroit’s ethnic enclaves:

The map of Detroit is now a map of nations. Two great Polish sections cover together perhaps a fourth of the city’s area. Well in the centre of the city is a solid Italian section. One whole end of the city is practically solid Hungarian – and Russians, Greeks, Roumanians, Servians, Jews, Belgians, Armenians, constitute smaller groups throughout. There are a half dozen cities, distinct in type, within the city’s boundaries.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 5. The language of the report conveys the sense that unassimilated immigrants presented potential danger. For example, the term “colony” is used many times to describe ethnic enclaves that had been established in the city; large groups of immigrant workers within individual factories are also referred to as “colonies.” At some points, the report explicitly describes the unassimilated workers as dangerous, as in this passage about a factory with several hundred immigrant workers: “a colony of six hundred non-English speaking workmen is large enough to have a powerful influence on industrial and social life, even if it had never become a ‘problem’ or a body of strikers within the plant.” (p. 11). In other words, a large body of unassimilated workers who went on strike could create problems for businessmen who owned the factories.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>24</sup> “Table 14. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1910,” <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab14.txt> (accessed: 15 Aug 2019).

<sup>25</sup> *Americanizing a City*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> “Table 13. – Foreign White Stock, by Nationality, for Cities of 100,000 or More,” *1910 Census*, Vol. 3, 216.

<sup>27</sup> *Americanizing a City*, 5.

At the national level, the Americanization campaign focused extensively on the presence of the adult male immigrant population. In evaluating the scope and effectiveness of Americanization efforts, the American Council on Education (ACE) report from 1919 drew upon the results of a survey of 50,000 organizations that included private groups and government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. The high percentage of unassimilated adult male immigrants was flagged as a major concern – as was the fact that they didn't speak English. The report emphasized that the failure to assimilate and inability to understand English raised concerns from an "economic, military, and educational point of view," since men in the military and wartime industries needed to know English in order to obey orders and follow directions.<sup>28</sup>

Polish-Americans<sup>29</sup> and their organizations were discussed extensively in the ACE report, often in context of resistance to Americanization. For example, the Polish Central Relief Committee of America, with 4 million members, served as ACE's example of a "racial organization"<sup>30</sup> which exists "for the purpose of maintaining or securing the political unity and independence and perpetuation of their native land." The report raised concerns about the Committee's activities, arguing that it "engages in various kinds of propaganda for the promotion of Polish liberty and is active in recruiting Polish regiments for service in Europe and in collecting money for war-relief purposes. While some of the organizations affiliated with it may have a real interest in American traditions, customs, and ideals, the controlling Central Committee is interested only in the native land. It makes no effort to Americanize its adherents or to promote the welfare of America."<sup>31</sup> This passage illustrates how fully the idea of patriotic service to America had permeated the Americanization campaign during wartime; by not embracing Americanization or promoting the welfare of America, the Polish Central Relief Committee served to embody the unassimilated immigrant presence within American society. Furthermore, the appropriateness of the organization's activities were called into question because they served the cause of Polish nationalism, rather than American nationalism. Other organizations that sought to promote coherence among migrant communities in order "to ensure the solidarity of the race in America" were similarly criticized

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<sup>28</sup> Hill, 112.

<sup>29</sup> The term "Polish-American" refers to Poles living in America. Since the early 20th century, public discussion about immigration often revolved around the status of "hyphenated Americans," whose dual identity was signaled with the use of a hyphen. This usage continues in the United States in the 21st century and has been extended to include pan-identity groups (for example, "Asian-Americans") and religious affiliation ("Jewish-American") as well to signal dual identity related to national origin.

<sup>30</sup> The characterization of Poles as a "race" highlights the changing understanding of ethnicity in 20th century America. During the early 20th century, "race" and "racial" were used to designate national origin or ethnicity.

<sup>31</sup> Hill, 614.

for not embracing Americanization. Apparently, there were only a few organizations in immigrant communities that actually promoted Americanization, and they were not very influential.<sup>32</sup> In other words, very few of the organizations that had been created by immigrants themselves were focused on Americanization; they pursued other goals, such as enforcing ethnic solidarity within the group, and many remained focused on concerns in their home countries rather than on their lives in the U.S. In light of these realities, Americanizers turned their attention to churches, mission schools, fraternal organizations and civic groups (many of which were “native” in origin), along with private “patriotic organizations” and industrialists.<sup>33</sup> These groups had expanded their work during 1915 and 1916, before the U.S. entered the war, emphasizing English-language instruction, patriotic demonstrations, and outreach efforts to immigrants through schools and civic organizations. After the U.S. entered the war in early 1917, the federal government became more involved in the Americanization campaign, often working with and through private organizations.

Before the war, Americanization efforts carried out by the federal government had focused mainly on investigating conditions affecting immigrants, issuing bulletins, and generating publicity around Americanization.<sup>34</sup> ACE called for a more robust federal response: creating a new federal agency in order to centralize Americanization efforts, increasing funding for Americanization, developing a standardized curriculum to teach citizenship, and providing special preparation for future teachers in the areas of civics and citizenship.<sup>35</sup> This call to action aligned with a perspective on the war that many Progressive reformers shared; they believed the war presented an opportunity to stimulate reform, to expand the role of the state, and to centralize a variety of worthy initiatives under federal authority, bringing about what some referred to as “war-socialism.” Philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey, for example, saw the war as a “plastic juncture,” a time when the direction of history could be changed.<sup>36</sup> While the war *did* centralize the economy and increased the role of the state, Dewey and his allies were to be disappointed in their broader hopes; the war sapped the nation’s appetite for reform. The agenda of the American Council

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 615.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 616-17.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 627-28; summary of the report’s final conclusions is on p. 642.

<sup>36</sup> See Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), especially Ch. 7, “War Collectivism.” Dewey was among the group of Progressives viewed the war with optimism, believing that it presented an opportunity to actualize a liberal agenda of state-building and reform. In a famous rejoinder to Dewey, Randolph Bourne warned that the war presented a threat to democracy, responding to Dewey’s optimistic hopes about the war with a question: “If the war was too strong for you to prevent, how is it going to be weak enough for you to control and mould to your own liberal purposes?” See David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49-53.

on Education met with disappointment as well; despite just having called for a significant investment of money and energy in the Americanization campaign during the war, ACE suspended its work on Americanization after the war. Reformers harbored little hope that reform would come through governmental action as the country turned away from the Progressive agenda and looked inward.

### Learning English

One of the top concerns of Americanizers, before, during, and after the war, was English-language instruction, especially in urban centers (like Buffalo) with large foreign-born populations. The 1919 ACE report provided information about efforts in New York State, including Buffalo. Because employed adults had little access to education aside from night schools, the number of night schools served as a gauge of adult male immigrants' access to literacy. Unlike some states, New York State permitted school boards to run free night schools, but they served very few students. More than a quarter (26%) of Buffalo's foreign-born population of 188,444 people could not speak English, but less than 5% of these non-English speakers attended night school, demonstrating the limited impact that formal steps toward literacy had upon this population.<sup>37</sup> Immigrants understood that acquiring language skills provided a path to advancement both for themselves and for their children. There were also practical implications in the factory setting. For example, immigrant steelworkers who didn't speak English had an accident rate twice as high as average for the industry.<sup>38</sup> In his case study of Lackawanna, New York, Richard S. Sorrell found that Americanization efforts promoted by Lackawanna Steel before the 1920s were limited in scope and had little impact. Lackawanna's history provides insight into the acculturation patterns for Polish immigrants and other groups from Eastern and Central Europe<sup>39</sup> in Western New York. Sorrell connects immigrants' interest in acquiring English-language skills with their assimilation into American society. Those who had made a commitment to stay in the U.S. were more interested in sending their children to school, but also in learning English themselves.

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<sup>37</sup> Hill, 620. Hill's source was a pamphlet entitled "War Americanization for States," p. 5, which had been published by the National Americanization Committee in Oct. 1917. Hill notes that circumstances in New York were "by no means exceptional" (p. 620, ft. 2).

<sup>38</sup> David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Non Union Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 197, as cited in Richard S. Sorrell "Life, Work, and Acculturation Patterns of Eastern European Immigrants in Lackawanna, New York: 1900-1922," *The Polish Review* 14, no. 4 (Autumn, 1969): 65-91. Accident rates are discussed on p. 67.

<sup>39</sup> Sorrell uses the term "Eastern European" to refer to "Polish, Czech, Slovak, Magyar, Croatian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Slovene, and any other Slavic group" (66), many of which would be considered Central European rather than Eastern European today.

Lackawanna Steel had established the city of Lackawanna as a company town, “an industrial satellite city” of Buffalo at the turn of the 20th century, when the company moved its operations from Scranton, Pennsylvania. During the period of Sorrell’s study (1900-1922), “foreign-born whites” made up around half of the city’s work force. Almost all of them were from Eastern Europe. In 1920, for example, 3,170 of Lackawanna’s 17,918 residents were Polish, with another 1,840 from other parts of Eastern Europe.<sup>40</sup> Lackawanna Steel took some steps toward creating welfare capitalism in the period between 1900-1922, building a hospital in 1904, and in the 1920s establishing a Sociological department and the Lackawanna Community House, which programed activities for children and providing English-language instruction to children and adults through “Americanization” classes. Sorrell, however, argues that these efforts were not very effective, and that acculturation of Lackawanna’s foreign-born workers became more effective and systematic after Bethlehem Steel acquired the plant in 1923.<sup>41</sup>

Sorrell traces the shifting expectations of Lackawanna’s foreign-born residents after the war. They were more receptive to assimilation and English-language instruction during the 1920s because they intended to stay in the United States and raise their children there. Bringing family members to join them in the U.S., getting married, and establishing families in the U.S. were actions indicating that they intended to become permanent residents. Once they embraced permanence, foreign-born residents accepted the need for their children to learn English in order to succeed. According to Sorrell, the Polish population of Lackawanna had always been receptive to education and respectful of teachers, even in parochial schools with poorly trained teachers or other inadequacies, or in public schools that did not have teachers with cultural backgrounds like those of their students. There were three parochial schools in Lackawanna in its early years, all of them Polish (most pupils were Polish).<sup>42</sup> Although the quality of instruction was not as good as public schools (according to a Senate study of the city), parochial schools were the top choice for Lackawanna’s Polish immigrant community. Classes were taught in Polish through the third grade, after which instruction shifted to English (Polish was a “bridge”). The parochial schools were staffed by nuns, who generally shared the same cultural background as their students, so at multiple levels the schools reinforced Polish cultural identity and served to bond

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<sup>40</sup> Sorrell, 66-67.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 65, 72-73.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 82. Sorrell challenges a claim from the era that “most of the Eastern European immigrants’ children attended parochial schools” by pointing out that while the Croatian immigrant community had a church, the church did not have a school. “Apparently only the three Polish immigrant churches had parochial schools and few non-Polish Eastern Europeans went to them” (82).

the community's children to the Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup> It seems that Lackawanna's Eastern European immigrant community accepted Americanization, on their own terms. For many other immigrants, however, the overall focus of Americanization in the 1920s was not on their own terms, and it was substantially different from its pre-war form.

### Challenge to "Bottom-Up Americanization"

Labor historian James Barrett argues that the war marked a turning point for Americanization, reducing what had been a complex, multi-faceted campaign into one that was coercive and marked by nativism. Barrett explains that several forms of Americanization existed before the war. One approach, coercive Americanism, was imposed upon immigrant workers by employers, middle-class reformers, educators, and others. However, existing alongside it was what Barrett labels "bottom-up Americanization," where immigrants learned about American traditions from other workers, from unions, and from a small but influential group of "labor radicals." During the war, Barrett argues, coercive Americanization grew stronger, both because of the government's propaganda campaign and the vigilante actions the official propaganda campaign spawned among citizens who often turned on immigrant "others" as part of the war's backlash against civil rights and political radicalism. After the war, this backlash culminated in the Red Scare of 1919-1920 and the suppression of post-war strikes. These actions also undermined the process of "bottom-up Americanization" by eviscerating the labor movement and eliminating many of its most effective leaders.

Barrett identified three goals that workers fought for through bottom-up Americanism during World War I: civil liberties, the "American standard of living," and cultural pluralism. He argues that these were "war goals" for labor in the pre-war years – and that immigrant workers joined the war effort in order to achieve them. Labor unions, which were particularly important in this bottom-up process, tailored their messages and actions to workers' needs. They taught English, civics, economics, and other subjects that helped new workers to understand their situations and to seek improvements in their circumstances through collective action with other workers. Barrett described the WWI era as a "watershed" of effective ethnic and interracial organizing by unions, whose

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 82-85. Sorrell uncovered no evidence of discrimination against Eastern European immigrant children and teachers of "Irish-English-German descent" (p. 85). Others, however, have identified churches and other institutions and locations as a site of great tension between the Irish who were there first and had risen to roles of authority, and the "new immigrant" newcomers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. See James R. Barrett and David R. Roediger, "The Irish and the 'Americanization' of the 'New Immigrants' in the Streets and in the Churches of the Urban United States, 1900-1930," *The Journal of Ethnic History* 24, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 2-33. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27501633> (accessed: 22 Aug 2019).

leaders framed their goals with patriotic pitches that aligned with traditional American rhetoric about democracy and freedom. Labor leaders' emphasis on democracy and material aims (achieving "the American standard of living") had unified workers in pursuit of these goals during the war, generating a wave of strikes that swept the country in 1919. Unfortunately, workers' unity was short-lived. At war's end, the definition of Americanism and patriotism narrowed so as to exclude labor's concerns; civil liberties were constricted, cultural pluralism was abandoned in behalf of a nativist "100% Americanism," and a post-war depression erased jobs and economic security. Reactionary politics, combined with effective strike-breaking tactics that created schisms along racial and ethnic lines and what Barrett terms a "patriotic frenzy," fragmented labor's wartime unity. The Red Scare of 1919-1920 was particularly devastating, Barrett argues, because it eliminated radical labor leaders who had led the battle for "bottom-up" Americanization.<sup>44</sup>

### Americanization Redefined

Developments in Buffalo followed closely upon the pattern of the "patriotic frenzy" that James Barrett describes taking place at the national level. Buffalo's business and political leaders had been concerned with the political activities of immigrant workers and labor leaders during the war, but it was post-war labor unrest and the Red Scare that followed that marked a turning-point for the Americanization effort in Western New York, sidelining Buffalo's radical labor leaders. Historian William Siener argues that the source of alarm for Buffalo's ruling classes was the Steel Strike of 1919, and the powerful unity demonstrated by the predominantly immigrant work force of Lackawanna Steel in supporting the strike, along with socialist success at the polls.

As we have seen, Polish workers represented a sizeable percentage of Lackawanna Steel's work force. They were also involved with the unions and organizations targeted by groups and agencies that took part in the Red Scare. In his case study of Lackawanna, Richard Sorrell describes Lackawanna's immigrant workers as "the most tenacious strikers" at the plant, noting that at "there was almost a complete walkout at Lackawanna Steel," in contrast with the national rate of participation (of around 50%). Strikers at Lackawanna also persisted longer than elsewhere, continuing to strike into the summer of 1920 although the strike had collapsed in January when workers elsewhere returned to work. Sorrell observes that the strike was "The event which probably stirred up the most feeling against the Eastern European immigrants . . . There was a violent national reaction against the part which 'foreign' laborers played in this strike. This reaction

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<sup>44</sup> Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up." See pp. 1009-10 for components of bottom-up Americanization; pp. 1014-15 and 1019-20 on the impact of WWI.

was felt very strongly in Lackawanna.”<sup>45</sup> Citing historian David Brody’s analysis of the 1919 Steelworkers Strike, Sorrell writes that

throughout the nation both steel company executives and newspapers accused the Eastern European immigrants of being the main cause of the 1919 Strike. They accused such immigrants of being “ignorant foreigners” and of failing to adopt “American ways.” The words radical and alien became almost synonymous. Company officials tried to use nativist appeals to split “American” workers from “foreigners.”<sup>46</sup>

These themes were also evident in Buffalo and Lackawanna during the strike, as Sorrell shows,

Steel plant heads and the Lackawanna police chief stated bluntly that “loyal Negroes and workmen of the Old Village” wanted to return to work, but they were being intimidated by the foreign element whom Lackawanna Steel leaders blamed for the strike. An advertisement in a Buffalo paper proclaimed, “Assert your Americanism, RETURN TO WORK.”<sup>47</sup>

The coverage of the strike in Buffalo’s newspapers highlighted the leadership and participation of immigrant workers. One especially nativist screed characterized the strikers as “[for] the most part ignorant foreigners, the scum of their native lands transplanted here without any real knowledge of American ideas of liberty or law observance,” concluding with a phrase that appropriated President Woodrow Wilson’s wartime slogan (“make the world safe for democracy”) and changed it to “Make Lackawanna safe for American workmen.”<sup>48</sup>

The business and political leaders of the Buffalo area had been worried about the region’s immigrant industrial workforce for a long time. In March 1917, on the eve of U.S. entry into the war, members of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce organized to create the Niagara Frontier Defense League (NFDL), a private patriotic group. The NFDL was created out of expressed concern for the potential for sabotage by the large number of “enemy aliens” who lived and worked in the region of the “Niagara Frontier” (Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Lockport, Lackawanna, the Tonawandas, and other industrial centers in Erie and Niagara counties). Historian John Olszowka likens the NFDL to the American Protective League (APL), which operated nationally as a private surveillance organization but in collaboration with the Justice Department. However, unlike the APL, which was disbanded soon after the war ended), the NFDL continued

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<sup>45</sup> Sorrell, 87-88.

<sup>46</sup> Sorrell, 89.

<sup>47</sup> Sorrell, 89.

<sup>48</sup> Sorrell, 90. The quote is from an account published in the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser and Journal* on 24 September 1919. Sorrell describes the paper as “the most vitriolic and anti-immigrant newspaper” in the region.

to operate into the 1930s and enjoyed a close working relationship with the FBI and Justice Department.<sup>49</sup> Originally, the NFDL had a two-fold purpose: collecting information about the enemy aliens for employers and governmental authorities and protecting factories, utilities, and other vital facilities from potential sabotage.<sup>50</sup> Although the category of “enemy aliens” was not well-defined, the impetus for organizing the NFDL stemmed from hysteria about potential pro-German sabotage from the region’s large German-American community. While the German-American community did have a distinct ethnic and cultural identity, there was little evidence that they posed any real threat to Buffalo’s factories or municipal safety.<sup>51</sup> Over time, and in response to financial pressures (the organization was funded by donations from member businesses), the NFDL shifted its focus from averting sabotage to a different goal: controlling the region’s industrial labor force. For a fee, the NFDL would supply factory owners with private agents to spy upon their workers and help thwart efforts at unionization. This private security force, made up of “ex-mechanics,” helped employers identify labor organizers and allowed the NFDL to create blacklists of so-called “labor agitators” and “floaters” (workers who moved from one employer to another in search of higher wages) that was circulated among employers. The NFDL also established a city-wide pay scale that set maximum rates for different categories of work in an attempt to cap the rapidly increasing wages during the war years.<sup>52</sup>

The NFDL’s activities in Western New York upheld the authority and power of business leaders in a wartime context of potential gains by organized labor, creating a preview of the conservative, pro-business decade following the war. The NFDL’s actions were also in line with those of another organization created in New York State out of the same impetus of anti-radical, anti-foreign sentiment, the Lusk Committee. Investigators for the Lusk Committee took particular interest in foreign-born workers and their political and fraternal organizations.

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<sup>49</sup> Olszowka provides a good overview of the NFDL’s origins and its activities in Western New York. John Olszowka, “The Niagara Frontier Defense League’s patriotic war on labor: the case of Curtiss Aeroplane, 1917-1918,” *Labor History* 53, no. 4 (November 2012): 451-460.

<sup>50</sup> Olszowka, 451-53.

<sup>51</sup> Olszowka estimates that German-Americans made up 30% of Buffalo’s population in 1915, and residents of Germany extraction held prominent positions in business and politics. Local papers featured a number of national stories about pro-German sabotage, which whipped up hostility. Olszowka does identify two violent confrontations, both stabbings, that grew from ethnic conflict. In both cases, the victims were German. One man was stabbed by a Pole and the other by an Italian. See 452-54.

<sup>52</sup> Olszowka, 458-60. Curtiss’s management came to regret their affiliation with the NFDL. Not only did the NFDL fail to stabilize the company’s workforce or help them avoid strikes, they also sent confidential reports about Curtiss to the FBI and federal authorities that revealed waste and inefficiency, bringing about several federal investigations into the company (461-62).

It is important to note here that neither the NFDL nor the Lusk Committee had the primary purpose of promoting Americanization. They *did*, however, seek to enforce a particular type of Americanization by identifying and eliminating groups and individuals that were by their standards “un-American” because of their anti-capitalist orientation or supposed affinity for radical politics. There was an additional intersection with Americanization as well: the actions of the Niagara Frontier Defense League and the Lusk Committee were at the heart of New York’s Red Scare, and the purge of radical organizations that they brought about was highly effective in eliminating labor leaders who had embraced “Americanization from the bottom up.”

### Buffalo’s Red Scare

The Lusk Committee, whose formal name was the Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities, was established by the New York State legislature in March 1919. Its charge was to investigate radical groups and individuals across the state who were suspected of revolutionary activities that “allegedly posed a threat to American democracy and capitalism.”<sup>53</sup> After its agents had spent months collecting information and surveilling labor unions, socialist groups, and others involved in radical political activities, the Lusk Committee brought the Red Scare to a fever pitch in the final weeks of 1919. Committee members and their agents traveled westward across the state, holding open hearings in major cities where agents publicly testified against radicals, generating lurid headlines that were accompanied by highly publicized arrests of dozens of people in each of the cities they visited.<sup>54</sup>

The Lusk Committee and other agencies involved in the Red Scare targeted socialism because it challenged democracy and capitalism, which were linked together as American traditions in need of protection. American socialist groups had loudly opposed the preparedness campaign that preceded US entry into the war, and they continued to criticize the war after U.S. entry, a stance that led their critics to label them as disloyal. Most European socialist parties had fallen in line behind their governments and embraced nationalism soon after the war began, but American socialists continued to speak out against war long after American entry. The propaganda campaign waged on the home front by the Wilson administration had emphasized wartime unity and branded dissent as unpatriotic, a message that was backed up by the repressive Sedition and Espionage Acts that prescribed harsh punishment for speech and actions that were loosely defined. Socialists in other countries faced similar constraints, for example in Great

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<sup>53</sup> *The Lusk Committee: A Guide to the Records of the Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities; A Guide to the Records Held in the New York State Archives* (hereafter cited as *Lusk Committee finding guide*), 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-5.

Britain, where restrictive legislation exacted harsh punishment for people who criticized the government, who resisted militarism as Conscientious Objectors, or who impeded the war effort in other ways.<sup>55</sup>

Buffalo was not a primary target of New York's Lusk Committee, since its main focus of investigations was downstate, in New York City. The Lusk Committee coordinated its surveillance of radical groups in Buffalo with the Niagara Frontier Defense League (NFDL), self-described "secret service committee" created by area business leaders.<sup>56</sup> In its early stages, the Red Scare seemingly had little to do with Western New York. Unlike cities such as Chicago or St. Louis, Buffalo was not affected by race riots of "Red Summer" 1919, and aside from the local media's press coverage of national incidents, there was little to indicate that the city would soon join in the national hysteria. Why did the Red Scare come to Buffalo, then? Historian William Siener argues that Buffalo's Red Scare was a reactionary movement, a backlash against the demonstrated power of working-class activism and concerns about the growing political power and influence of local socialist leaders. He sees class warfare as a part of Buffalo's Red Scare, but it was warfare from the top down, not from the bottom up, enacted by a ruling class determined to maintain its control. As Siener explained,

To be sure, local authorities and private citizens brought legal harassment, administrative intimidation, and ridicule in the press to bear against immigrant and radical populations throughout the spring and summer of 1919. But it was not until the nationwide steel strike touched the Lackawanna Steel plant, and socialists showed some strength in the municipal elections in November that hysteria resulted in more extreme measures in western New York.<sup>57</sup>

During the Red Scare, Siener argued, the Lusk Committee "carefully targeted two groups: agitators among the largely immigrant, left wing leadership, and the so-called 'parlor Bolsheviks' – members of the middle class who sympathized with socialism."<sup>58</sup> He continued, "By 1919, the government's primary objective was to break up socialism's left wing. Acting in concert with community leaders and the press, it made every effort to brand *all* reformers and labor leaders as radicals and, in Buffalo, to intimidate a vast immigrant population."<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> See Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> See materials in Folder 17: Buffalo-Niagara-Frontier Defense League, Box 4, L0038. Investigative Files, Lusk Committee Records. The Niagara Frontier Defense League is referred to as the Buffalo Niagara Frontier Defense Council in Lusk Committee materials.

<sup>57</sup> William R. Siener, "The Red Scare Revisited: Radicals and the Anti-Radical Movement in Buffalo, 1919-1920," *New York History* 79, no. 1 (January 1998): 23-54. Quote is from p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Siener, 27-28. Siener persuasively argues that the leaders and central agents of the Red Scare in Buffalo were motivated by "class cohesion and a sense of class-driven mission" (Siener, 28).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

The Lusk Committee held hearings in Buffalo in the final days of 1919. Following the same pattern as in other cities on its tour (New York City, Syracuse, and Utica), the Committee held open hearings where its agents gave sworn testimony against radicals in the local area. The hearings were quickly followed by arrests of those named in the hearings, along with some who were not publicly named but identified in sealed indictments. The Committee's investigations had focused particularly on groups and individuals thought to be affiliated with the new Bolshevik government in Russia, as well as on groups that might challenge capitalism within the U.S. *The New Age*, a socialist paper published in Buffalo, reported on the Lusk Committee hearings and the arrests, placing the local news within a national context in a long headline:

Hysteria Rampant in the United States: Authorities Take Radicals Seriously, Raid and Crush Them. Thousands Arrested: Disruption of Socialist Party Accomplished – Communist and Communist Labor Parties Utterly Destroyed – Hosts of Men to Be Deported – Citizen Radicals to Be Tried in Court – More Raids and Arrests Threatened – Harmless and Ill-Advised People Hit Hardest – Many Families Are Made Miserable.<sup>60</sup>

The Lusk Committee's raids and arrests in Buffalo had focused intensely on organizations made up of foreign-born workers, and it was clear that immigrants *had* been attracted to politically radical organizations. The contemporary account from Buffalo's Socialist *New Age* reported that of the 83 "alleged anarchists" who were arrested on January 2, 1920, only six were U.S. citizens. Few of those who had been arrested, according to the paper, were ideologues, or even aware of why the movements or groups they were part of were now seen as dangerous:

Most of the prisoners seem to be Russians, Poles, or Hungarians, and the government claims that radical leaders had planned to develop the recent steel and coal strikes into a general strike and ultimately into revolution.

It certainly was a disagreeable surprise to many of the arrested men to hear how dangerous they were, for it is our opinion that very few of them realized the consequences of the radical-sounding phrases by which they had allowed themselves to be caught. Very few of them were at all prepared to lead an active hand in any enterprise directed against our government. The phrase got hold of them and deprived them of the capacity of careful observation and clear thinking. . . .

And what have we now? The Socialist Party has been disrupted, sober-minded people have been scared away from the Socialist movement, the political agencies of our ruling classes have been furnished ample excuses for their rule of terror, and thousands of families have been made miserable.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> "Hysteria Rampant in the United States . . ." *The New Age* [Buffalo], vol. 8, no. 397 (January 8, 1920), 1. From <https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/parties/spusa/1920/0108-newage-hysteriarampant.pdf> (accessed: 20 Aug 2019).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

The *New Age* also reported on the arrest of 42 supposed Communists in Buffalo, on charges that the Communist Party advocated “criminal anarchy” and “the overthrow of organized government by force and violence.” Dr. Anna Reinstein, one of ten people to be released on bail, was described as “the last victim” arrested. The story ended by describing a charge levied by one accused Communist, affiliated with the Russia Soviet Bureau, that agents provocateurs from the U.S. Justice Department had been involved with bomb plots,<sup>62</sup> that they had actually plotted schemes that were being attributed to the Soviet government, and that they had helped to write the Communist Party platforms “which now form the basis of the prosecution of thousands of people.”<sup>63</sup> It is not clear whether many federal agents had actually burrowed into radical organizations, but there were such agents in Buffalo. One of them was H.E.M. Bernhard, an agent of the Lusk Committee, who had reached the inner sanctum of Buffalo’s Communist Party, the Executive Committee, and became their Recording Secretary. His detailed reports back to the Lusk Committee implicated many of Communist members who were later arrested.<sup>64</sup>

Agents like Bernhard had infiltrated radical groups in Buffalo and other industrial cities, together with labor spies who were deployed to the region’s factories to monitor any suspicious developments. During 1919, the Committee’s agents had also conducted raids on the headquarters of many radical organizations and seized their membership records and correspondence. The surveillance in Buffalo was part of a state-wide investigation that resulted in thousands of arrests across the state, along with the eventual expulsion of five Socialist members from the state legislature.<sup>65</sup> Fifteen men (non-citizens) who belonged to the Union of Russian Workers had been arrested in Buffalo in early November as part of the Palmer Raids,<sup>66</sup> and six of them were deported on the same ship as Emma Goldman, the famous anarchist-turned-communist. However, most of the people who were arrested in Buffalo as a result of the Lusk Committee’s actions were eventually

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<sup>62</sup> The delivery of bombs to prominent individuals, including Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, had helped to kick off the Red Scare by providing evidence of violent intent by unknown bomb makers.

<sup>63</sup> “Hysteria Rampant in the United States,” 2.

<sup>64</sup> Officer list for Communist Party (Buffalo), dated December 2, 1919, Folder 17: Buffalo-Niagara-Frontier Defense League, Box 4, L0038. Investigative Files, Lusk Committee Records. Siener also discusses Bernhart’s reports in some detail.

<sup>65</sup> While thousands were arrested, the finding guide for the Lusk Committee’s records notes that “only a few score were charged, and only a handful convicted or deported,” since the seized records provided little substantiation of illegal activities. *Lusk Committee finding guide*, 6.

<sup>66</sup> The Palmer Raids were a series of raids and arrests that were coordinated and carried out across the nation by the Justice Department under the authority of U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. William Siener identifies two raids by the Justice Department in Buffalo, one in November 1919 and another in early January 1920. Raids were carried out by agents of the U.S. Department of Labor. Non-citizens who were arrested were often tried, and deported, without due process of law.

released. There was little evidence that those arrested presented a danger to the public or that the groups that they belonged to had the potential to enact revolutionary change. Their arrests, however, do seem to have deterred many from further engagement in radical politics, which was certainly a goal of the Lusk Committee.<sup>67</sup>

Even the most committed radicals, those on the far left range of the political spectrum, were affected by their experiences during the Red Scare. One example is Dr. Anna Mogilova Reinstein, who was arrested on December 31, 1919, and charged with criminal anarchy as a suspected Communist. Anna had been a prominent national leader of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) since the early 1890s, and like many SLP leaders, her beliefs and goals were closely aligned with the international socialist movement. Both she and her husband, Boris Reinstein, were immigrants from different areas of the Russian Empire (Anna was born in Włocławek, Poland, and although she was not an ethnic Pole, she was fluent in Polish); both had become naturalized American citizens. Together with Boris, who became a professional revolutionary engaged in agitating, organizing strikes, and recruiting members in the name of the SLP, Anna had exercised considerable influence among Polish immigrants in Buffalo and Lackawanna for more than two decades. Their political activities had an impact, but so did Anna's medical practice; a very high percentage of her patients were Eastern European immigrants living in communities such as Buffalo, Cheektowaga, and Lackawanna. On the eve of U.S. entry into the war, Boris had slipped out of the U.S. and traveled to Moscow where he became a participant in the Bolshevik Revolution. By 1919, when Anna was arrested, Boris had risen to a high rank within the Bolshevik government. The news of Anna's arrest was carried in national and international press accounts published as far away as New Zealand.<sup>68</sup> Although she never publicly repudiated her husband's political beliefs or his role in the Bolshevik government, Anna never reassumed her once-prominent role as a socialist leader in Buffalo after her experience during the Red Scare.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Siener, 39.

<sup>68</sup> "Wife of Soviet Chief Arrested," *New York Evening Telegram*, December 31, 1919, 3. See also "Charged with Sedition. Buffalo Lady Arrested," *New Zealand Post*, January 3, 1920, 5. (The story from New Zealand was carried by the United Press Association.)

<sup>69</sup> Boris and Anna lived separate lives after he returned to Russia in 1917, and although she maintained an active medical practice, she did not resume the public role as a political agitator that had defined her life before her arrest. My observations are drawn from extensive research on the Reinstens. The shift in Anna's role is evident in public records and in her personal correspondence, much of it included in the Reinstein Family Archives, Anna Reinstein Library, Cheektowaga, NY. For more on the Reinstens, see Andrew Kier Wise and Penny Messinger, "Anna and Boris Reinstein and the Socialist Response to the First World War," in *Intellectuals and the First World War: A Central European Perspective*, ed. by Tomasz Pudłocki and Kamil Ruszała (Kraków, Poland: The Jagiellonian University Press, 2019; New York: Columbia University Press), 236-266.

## The Aftermath

Most of the leaders of Buffalo's socialist movement who were arrested during the Red Scare were sidelined in much the same way that Anna Reinstein had been. The leaders of Socialism's Left Wing in Buffalo were arrested, discredited in the press, and in some cases driven out of town. Most detainees were "approaching early middle age," William Siener observes, "and many of the people who were detained were young family men." They were also highly skilled, the majority did not own their homes, and most (at least 70%) were foreign-born or had parents who were, but who had been in the U.S. for an average of 16.5 years.<sup>70</sup> They embraced the idea of radical social and economic change, but contrary to what they were charged with, most "professed a belief in non-violent change."<sup>71</sup> After the Red Scare, many retreated to private life or turned in a more conservative direction. Several became Republicans.

In tracing what happened to the leaders of Buffalo's radical community, Siener found that many of them had simply disappeared from Buffalo, either during the most intense phases of the Red Scare or in the months and years that followed. Equally importantly, they were no longer around to lead strikes or to define Americanization in ways that challenged the wishes of Buffalo's Chamber of Commerce and its offspring organization, the Niagara Frontier Defense League, which had played such an important role in the region's Red Scare. By May 1920, Siener writes,

efforts to organize industrial unions had been seriously set back, most radical labor leaders at the national level were in jail and their organizations broken, and a local cadre of radical leaders were under indictment. Although calls for immigration restriction, and the growth of the Ku Klux Klan in the north signaled the persistence of fears of immigrants and radical ideas, the hysteria abated. Anti-radical leaders directed their energies toward acculturating immigrants rather than deporting them. This approach resonated in Buffalo because of the need for industrial labor. Buffalo's civic and religious leadership, moreover, took stands in favor of Constitutional freedom and against anti-radical excesses.<sup>72</sup>

In Buffalo, the war years had brought a redefinition of Americanization. Instead of a process undertaken by workers and led by unions or socialists, after the Red Scare, business leaders determined the focus and contents of Americanization lessons and mandated such training for immigrant workers at factories such as Bethlehem Steel. However, since the war had interrupted the plans of many immigrants to return home, another important post-war development was immigrants' willingness to Americanize and become permanent residents of the com-

<sup>70</sup> For a detailed demographic profile and discussion of those who were arrested, see Siener, 43-48.

<sup>71</sup> Siener, 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

munities in which they lived. In cities such as Lackawanna, immigrants and their children set about learning English as a strategy for social advancement. They did so in a different way than before the war, however. The post-war backlash against radicalism had eliminated many of the key working-class leaders and changed immigrants' expectations about civil rights and labor protests. Civil rights were among the "war goals" pursued by working-class immigrants, but the wartime restrictions on civil rights and the persecution of socialists and other dissenters contradicted the type of "bottom-up Americanism" favored by working-class immigrants. Likewise, the failure of the post-war strikes in 1919 (the general strike in Seattle, the Boston Police Strike, and the nationwide steel strike that affected Lackawanna and Buffalo) threatened the second "war goal," the American standard of living that promised material comfort to immigrant workers. Workers did not share equally in the prosperity of the Great Bull Market of the 1920s. A third "war goal," cultural pluralism, was also now in eclipse, thanks to the emphasis on uniformity and assimilation of the wartime propaganda campaign. At war's end, the three elements of "bottom up-Americanism" had been repressed by the approach taken by native-born Americanizers whose "coercive Americanism" had won the day.

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## A SOUTHEASTERN “GATEWAY TO EXPANSION”. KYIV’S POLISH INTELLECTUALS, THE POLITICS OF PERIPHERAL NATIONALISM AND VISIONS OF NATIONAL EXPANSION IN RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE 1905-1926

### Abstract

This article reconstructs the emergence of a national-conservative “southeastern lobby” consisting of Polish intellectuals, political activists, and affluent landowners hailing from the city of Kyiv and the wider region of Right-Bank Ukraine in the first quarter of the twentieth century. During the turbulent opening years of Poland’s interwar independence, the leaders of this “lobby” established a foothold in Warsaw, vigorously appealing to the government for the incorporation of their region, the former “southeastern borderlands” of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, into the embryonic Second Polish Republic. This piece argues that the lobby developed at the confluence of the long-standing struggle of local Polish elites to defend their landholdings against the Russian state and the Ukrainian peasantry, on the one hand, and the rise of the right-wing National Democratic movement in Kyiv after 1905 on the other. While the alliance underpinning the “lobby” was never entirely stable and faced withering criticism from more socially progressive Poles, it nevertheless cohered around shared visions of the preservation of “Polish civilization” and its material and spiritual capital (*stan posiadania*) on the Dnieper River, evolving into a movement for the annexation of the Right Bank into Poland as the Russian Empire collapsed into chaos in 1917. The article emphasizes that the “lobby” embraced their geographically peripheral position to present themselves as visionaries of prosperity and security in the wild “southeast,” where, they argued, a nascent Poland could find its most fecund space for colonization, economic expansion, and territorial aggrandizement.

**Keywords:** nationalism, identity, property, colonialism, borderlands, Poland, Ukraine, Russia

### Introduction

When an independent Poland emerged in November of 1918, the questions of where its borders would lie and who would be its citizens were up for intense deliberation. These issues were contested not only by elites in Warsaw, but also by members of Polish minorities living in the ethnically mixed borderlands of the former

German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian Empires. Representatives of these distant, peripheral communities appealed in writing and through personal delegations to the authorities in Warsaw for protection and often incorporation into Poland. Faced with mounting chaos and insecurity amid wars and revolutions, these peripheral Poles not only presented tragic stories of endangered minorities, but also embraced their peripheral status and fashioned themselves as visionaries of Polish economic, territorial, and demographic expansion in the borderlands. This was especially true of one community of Poles hailing from the so-called "southeastern borderlands" of Right-Bank Ukraine who operated in Warsaw, Kyiv, and the lands in between them in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Hailing primarily from the Right Bank's small but influential stratum of landowners, capitalists, and intellectuals, these Polish elites fashioned themselves as bearers of Poland's special "civilizing mission" on the Dnieper River. Though geographically distant from Poland's ethnographic borders, the Right Bank, these activists argued, could reclaim its historic role as Poland's southeastern "gateway" to security and prosperity.

While the most determined and prominent defenders of this southeastern "mission" forged a national-conservative alliance devoted to preserving Polish property and geopolitical influence, they were hardly the only ones to lay claim to the future of "Polish civilization" in Right-Bank Ukraine. Beginning with the upheavals and liberalizations of the Revolution of 1905, Kyiv's most prominent Poles vigorously debated the history, identity, and future trajectory of their community, which, they could agree, bore unique social and political responsibilities by virtue of its disproportionate degrees of education and affluence in a heavily impoverished, overwhelmingly Ukrainian-speaking territory. While the Poles of the Right Bank have earned a reputation for hopelessly clinging to antiquated ideas of nobiliary privilege rooted in the bygone Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a closer examination of their deliberations reveals a more vibrant, complex, and dynamic intellectual milieu open to relatively new currents in Polish national thought. Even as the Commonwealth's heritage loomed large in their thoughts, Kyiv's leading Polish minds creatively contested and reconfigured the concept of a "civilizing mission" in order to imagine themselves at the helm of modern national movements. For some, this meant abandoning Polish claims to the Right Bank and turning to a different kind of "mission" in service of the rural masses by fostering a modern, enlightened Ukrainian nation stretching from the Carpathian Mountains to the Kuban' River. Far stronger, however, was the idea that Poles should not only conserve but also vigorously expand their material and demographic strength in the southeast, "civilizing" and "colonizing" this benighted and backward borderland to support a strong, industrializing Poland.

The most ardent and articulate proponents of both of these broadly defined positions, strikingly, were often newcomers from other areas of partitioned Poland or native sons of the Right Bank returning from years in emigration, making the debates that raged in Kyiv's Polish press after 1905 profoundly transnational

in terms of the people, organizations, and ideas that shaped them. Though much of Right-Bank Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union by 1921, the visions of Polish identity and "civilization" conceived in Kyiv over the previous fifteen years lived on and continued to evolve within the boundaries of the Second Polish Republic, where, as Kathryn Ciancia shows in the case of Volhynia, a vast cohort of largely non-elite actors turned eastward to "civilize" the predominantly non-Polish eastern borderlands (*Kresy Wschodnie*). What "civilization" exactly entailed in this context remained as contentious as it had been prior to 1918, yet it endured as an important framework within which Poles thought about the "wild east" and their own place in relation to it. Meanwhile, in an even wider sense, the ideology and practice of the "civilizing mission" constituted a truly global phenomenon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as major empires sought to justify their interventions in allegedly barbaric regions on the basis of humanitarian imperatives. While interwar Poland never acquired formal colonies abroad, the eastern borderlands remained a space of underdevelopment and instability to be "civilized" in the Polish imagination. The most important thread linking these contexts from 1905 through 1926 was what can be broadly called the "southeastern lobby," a grouping of national-conservative Poles based in Kyiv who embraced the idea of a "civilizing mission" and claimed the Right Bank as Poland's own exclusive space for colonial growth and development.

### The Southeastern Lobby

In mid-December of 1918, a group of national-conservative Polish landowners, urban professionals, and political activists from the former Russian *gubernias* of Kyiv, Podolia, and Volhynia founded a mission to the nascent government of the Second Polish Republic in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> Headed by nobleman Franciszek Pułaski, the Circle of Poles of the Ruthenian Lands (*Koło Polaków Ziemi Ruskich*), as the organization was called, claimed to represent the interests of the small but socioeconomically powerful Polish minority dispersed throughout the lands on the right (western) bank of the Dnieper River known as Right-Bank Ukraine. In January of 1919, the Circle's leaders issued a petition to Head of State Józef Piłsudski and the organizers of Poland's provisional parliament calling for representation for Poles from the Right Bank in the embryonic national legislature. Because the Right Bank had belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before its demise in the late eighteenth century, the document's authors reasoned, Poles from that region deserved to participate in rebuilding their resurrected fatherland, even if they ultimately ended up being excluded from its territory.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aleksy Deruga, *Polityka wschodnia Polski wobec ziem Litwy, Białorusi i Ukrainy, 1918-1919* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1969), 107.

<sup>2</sup> Franciszek Pułaski and Tomasz Michałowski, "Polski Komitet Wykonawczy na Rusi." Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnika Państwa, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie. Fond 3, folder 38.

The Circle's appeal to interwar Poland's nascent national center, however, went far beyond requesting a modest handful of seats for Poles from the Right Bank. Taken together with another statement issued in early February, the Circle's petitions to elites in Warsaw laid out a grand vision of Right-Bank Ukraine's crucial strategic and economic importance for a reborn Poland. In past centuries, the authors emphasized, the Right Bank's numerically weak but spiritually committed Polish community had defended the southeastern fringes of Western Christendom and "Polish civilization" from the onslaughts of Turks, Tatars, and Cossacks.<sup>3</sup> As the Right Bank's principal landowning and industrial elite, Poles had built prosperity and stability in an otherwise empty, wild borderland, maintaining their resolve and a considerable amount of their material wealth against both the Ukrainian peasantry and the Russian state. Now, in 1919, the Right Bank's territory and riches hung in the balance amid war, revolution and agrarian unrest, demanding a decisive response from Warsaw that would bring Poland's vital southeastern outlets for economic expansion and geopolitical ambitions into the young polity's borders. In fact, the Circle argued in the early months of 1919 and in subsequent publications, only Poland could rightfully reclaim the Right Bank, whose Ukrainian peasant majority had demonstrated their backwardness, "darkness," and inability to create a lasting political order. If Warsaw ceded the Right Bank to the forces of "anarchism" and "Bolshevism," Poland would lose a hardy, resourceful population capable of defending "Polish civilization" and set the country up for weakness and failure.<sup>4</sup> If Poland reclaimed these imperiled borderlands, by contrast, the Right Bank would bear considerable fruits, furnishing ample raw materials, untapped markets for industrial goods, and space for Polish colonists from further west.<sup>5</sup>

The growing southeastern lobby of Polish elites from Right-Bank Ukraine in Warsaw exerted considerable effort at determining the fate of their native region in the tempestuous years between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the demarcation of the Polish-Soviet frontier at Riga in 1921. Motivated by a combination of direct material interests and visions of future Polish greatness, these activists emphasized their credentials as defenders of "Polish civilization" to claim a special place in building Polish statehood. Yet, for all of the pamphlets that they published and speeches that they gave, proponents of southeastern expansion ultimately failed to bring the Right Bank into an independent Poland, not least because of their weak position within the country's emerging political architecture. In fact, the one moment when the Right Bank came under Polish control

<sup>3</sup> "Określenie w ogólnych zarysach zasadniczego politycznego stanowiska Koła Polaków Ziem Ruskich w Warszawie w sprawie południowo-wschodnich kresów Rzeczypospolitej." Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnika Państwa, Archiwum Akt Nowych. Fond 3, folder 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Aleksander Weryha Darowski, *Kresy ruskie Rzeczypospolitej (województwa kijowskie, wołyńskie, bractawskie i podolskie)* (Warsaw: Koło Polaków Ziem Ruskich w Warszawie, 1919), 78-80.

was when Piłsudski, accompanied by the Circle's socialist and progressive-democratic rivals, briefly captured Kyiv in the spring of 1920.<sup>6</sup> By the collapse of the Polish-Ukrainian front against the Red Army in June of 1920, many of the dispossessed and dislocated landowners from the Right Bank had fled westward to Poland, where the Circle and its affiliates created mutual aid structures for these refugees while denouncing the terms of the Polish-Soviet peace agreement.<sup>7</sup>

However, other leaders of the southeastern lobby rebounded after 1921, joining the right-wing government of the Popular-National League that deposed Piłsudski and set out to build a "Poland for the Poles" by 1922.<sup>8</sup> Now focusing on the ethnically Belarusian and Ukrainian marches of eastern Poland, prominent Polish émigrés from Kyiv and the surrounding countryside, among them some the National Democratic leaders, set out to strengthen the "Polish element" within the territories formally under Warsaw's rule. The role of these Polish émigrés from Right-Bank Ukraine in shaping the borderland policies of interwar Poland has received relatively little attention, and their pre-1918 history has also neglected to draw sustained treatments. While groups like the Circle of Poles of the Ruthenian Lands arose in Warsaw in late 1918, a growing if often internally divided movement to revive "Polish civilization" in Right-Bank Ukraine and reclaim the region for the Polish fold had been evolving in Kyiv and the surrounding countryside since the opening of the twentieth century.

The intellectual and institutional roots of the southeastern lobby extend at least to the Revolution of 1905, when the abolition of major restrictions on Polish public life allowed two important historical currents to interact. The first of these, which can be traced back to the defeat of the Polish uprisings of 1830-31 and 1863-64, was what Daniel Beauvois has termed the wealthy Polish nobility's "battle for the land" in the Right Bank.<sup>9</sup> Facing unruly Ukrainian peasants and a hostile Russian state after 1831, many of the Right Bank's Polish landowners fought vigorously to protect their material assets all the way up to 1920. The other crucial factor involved in producing the southeastern lobby was the emergence and growth of the right-wing National Democratic movement in Right-Bank Ukraine after 1905. Led by Joachim Stefan Bartoszewicz, a publicist who arrived to Kyiv in 1905, the local National Democrats envisioned the Right Bank as a natural space for Polish demographic and economic expansion in the vicious

<sup>6</sup> Michael Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919-1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1995), 99-100.

<sup>7</sup> Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 146.

<sup>8</sup> Leon Wasilewski, *Polska dla Polaków czy Polska dla wszystkich obywateli polskich? (sprawa mniejszości narodowych w Polsce)* (Warsaw: Nowe Życie, 1924), 13-14.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Beauvois, *Walka o ziemię: szlachta polska na Ukrainie prawobrzeżnej pomiędzy cara-tem a ludem ukraińskim, 1863-1914*, transl. Krzysztof Rutkowski. (Sejny: Fundusz "Pogranicze," 1996), 19-25.

struggle for the creation of a "Great Poland" between Germany and Russia.<sup>10</sup> In 1906, the Right Bank's entrenched agrarian elites and its emerging, largely urban community of the National Democrats began to publish newspapers and form civic organizations geared towards defending Polish material interests on the Dnieper.<sup>11</sup> The concept of defending and expanding "Polish civilization" gradually emerged from this context, reflecting both the landowners' sense of identity as upholders of order on the frontiers of the old Commonwealth and the National Democrats' expansive vision of southeastern expansion in the name of a vigorous, industrialized Poland.

The alliance that produced the southeastern lobby, however, was never neatly preordained or destined to survive, as an examination of post-1905 Polish political discourse and mobilization in the Right Bank will reveal. Landowners with a strong sense of ancestral connection to their "little fatherland" (*mała ojczyzna*) on the Dnieper did not easily yield to the aggressive, "all-Polish" program of the National Democrats, many of whom arrived in Kyiv from other parts of Europe around 1905.<sup>12</sup> It was often figures such as Bartoszewicz, a Warsaw-born National Democrat who married into a powerful landowning family from Volhynia, who did the most to bridge these gaps and advance the cause of a broadly national-conservative front. Meanwhile, the wave of liberalizations that followed the unrest of 1905 allowed other political currents, among them the Polish Socialist Party, the all-Russian Constitutional Democrats, and the Polish "regionalists" (*krajowcy*), to contest the direction of Polish political life on the Dnieper.<sup>13</sup> In fact, while some historians accurately describe the heady months that followed the October Manifesto as a Polish national renaissance in the borderlands, this period was equally a time of national deliberation and questioning for many peripheral Poles.<sup>14</sup> For some Polish intellectuals, the correct path forward entailed establishing close ties with the Ukrainian peasantry and the Ukrainian national movement rather than trying to cling to a predominantly non-Polish region for economic and strategic gains. In a corner of the Russian Empire beset by land hunger, ethnoreligious tension, and poverty, being a propertied, educated bearer of "Polish civilization" was as much a burden as a benefit.

<sup>10</sup> Stanisław Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej (okres 1887-1907)* (London: Myśl Polska, 1964), 149-154.

<sup>11</sup> Zygmunt Chojewski, *Spółczesność polska na Rusi* (Warsaw: Pamiętnik Kresowy, 1937), 18-22.

<sup>12</sup> Mirosław Ustrzycki, *Ziemiańscy polscy na Kresach w latach 1864-1914: Świat wartości i postaw* (Kraków: Arcana, 2006), 271-272.

<sup>13</sup> *Zanim przyszła Pożoga: dokumenty i materiały dotyczące działalności polityczno-społecznej Polaków na Podolu w latach 1905-1910*, ed. Roman Jurkowski (Olsztyn: Centrum Badań Europy Wschodniej, 2011), 639-642.

<sup>14</sup> Andrzej Romanowski and Beata Panek, "The Year 1905 and the Revival of Polish Culture Between the Neman and the Dnepr," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 41, no. 1 (March 1999): 45-67, [www.jstor.org/stable/40870032](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40870032).

So, although it cohered thanks to the elective affinities between the longstanding efforts of conservative landowners to protect their status and the ambitions of National Democratic newcomers, the southeastern lobby was under pressure and criticism from the very beginning. The southeastern lobby's central concept of "Polish civilization," though expressed in diverse ways, rested at its core upon three main interconnected arguments. The first was historical, namely that Poles had played a disproportionate, unique part in civilizing Right-Bank Ukraine and turning it from a wasteland into a place of prosperity since the second half of the sixteenth century, when the region became part of the Kingdom of Poland. The second argument held that this glorious history justified the socioeconomic power of Poles at the start of the twentieth century, who had earned their wealth and created civilization through intensive labor and enjoyed a right to defend it from either the backward peasants or the hostile imperial state. Third and finally, the lobby's ideologues maintained that Poles held both a prerogative and a world-historical obligation to continue civilizing the Right Bank, especially, after 1918, by incorporating their region into an independent Poland.<sup>15</sup> It was with these convictions in mind that the southeastern lobby looked upon and demanded an integral place within an independent Poland after November of 1918.

### **The Long View: Poles, Landholding, and Nationality in Right-Bank Ukraine**

In 1919, the appeals of the Circle of Poles of the Ruthenian Lands to the government in Warsaw stressed the importance of Right-Bank Ukraine to Poland as a source of agricultural wealth and territory ripe for future settlement. This aspect of their letters reflects both the historical economic importance of the Right Bank to Poland in early-modern times and the centrality of the defense of landholdings to the identity of the region's Polish agrarian elites throughout the long nineteenth century. Polish visions of nationhood and "civilization" in the so-called southeastern borderlands were intimately connected with changing relations of production on the ground, and the agenda of the Circle, as a representative of the landed elites, was strongly shaped by a commitment to defending Poland's "national property" (*stan posiadania*), a concept analogous to the German nationalist idea of *nationaler Besitzstand*.<sup>16</sup> Reconstructing this long term context is essential to understanding the post-1905 emergence of a southeastern lobby dedicated to preserving "Polish civilization" on the Dnieper.

When the three Russian *gubernias* that later formed Right-Bank Ukraine were transferred from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the Kingdom of Poland in

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<sup>15</sup> Darowski, *Kresy*, 3-7.

<sup>16</sup> Leon Wasilewski, *Narodowa Demokracja a ruch rewolucyjny w zaborze rosyjskim* (Kraków: Drukarnia Narodowa w Krakowie, 1907), 30-35.

1569, they were dramatically transformed by an influx of Polish landowners, Polish peasants, and Jews drawn by the European grain trade.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, many members of the indigenous Orthodox, East Slavic nobility underwent cultural and religious integration into the Polish nobility. The economic and demographic shifts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries contributed to a growing sense of alienation between the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking, Orthodox village and the Polish or Polonized Ruthenian manor, preparing fertile ground for convulsions of unrest fueled by socioeconomic and ethnoreligious grievances.<sup>18</sup>

While the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth reached its territorial and economic heights around 1618, its southeastern lands carried the seeds of its cataclysmic undoing. When hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky launched what was intended to be a limited revolt aimed at winning nobiliary privileges for the Commonwealth's registered Cossack troops in 1648, a mass insurrection against Polish rule erupted among peasants, burghers, and lower clergymen of Orthodox, Ukrainian-speaking background.<sup>19</sup> Over the next two decades, internal strife and foreign interventions rocked the Commonwealth to its core, devastating the population and economy while leaving the state severely weakened from a military and geopolitical standpoint. While the territories on the left (eastern) bank of the Dnieper became part of Muscovy by 1667, the Right Bank remained within the Commonwealth, though its Jewish community had been destroyed and its agrarian order seriously shaken. Polish nobles reclaimed the region's landholdings, yet the local peasants continued to express their vernacular culture of unruliness and resistance, most notably in the Haidamak revolts of the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

When the Commonwealth was partitioned at the end of the eighteenth century, the lands of the Right Bank became part of the Russian Empire under Catherine II. Initially, the presence of strong Polish cultural and economic influences in Russia's new southwestern borderlands was not a threat to St. Petersburg, so long as the local non-Russian elites practiced loyalty to the empire's ruling dynasty.<sup>21</sup> This changed significantly under Nicholas I, who was Russia's Tsar at the time of the November Uprising of 1830-31.<sup>22</sup> Although relatively few affluent Poles from the Right Bank joined in the revolt for fear of losing their status, Nicholas responded with harsh repressions against Poles that included confiscations of land-

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<sup>17</sup> Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations. Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, 1569-1999*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 105-107.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-114.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-117.

<sup>20</sup> Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 134-137.

<sup>21</sup> Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-ethnic History*, transl. Alfred Clayton (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 129.

<sup>22</sup> Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 35-43.

holdings, linguistic, educational, and cultural restrictions, and efforts at strengthening the "Russian element" in the southwest. Though not yet systemic, efforts at uprooting the dominant Polish presence in the Right Bank and the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania began under Nicholas and his governors, who aimed to reclaim these lands for the fold of Orthodoxy and Russian monarchism.<sup>23</sup> A more sustained effort at reclaiming the Russian Empire's western borderlands gained momentum under Alexander II and his successors following the January Uprising of 1863-64. This last nineteenth century push to reinstate the Commonwealth ended in bloodshed and defeat, and once more incited imperial authorities to target Polish influences in the Right Bank. Stricter, more systemic decrees banning the acquisition of property by Poles and the use of the Polish language went into effect in the western borderlands as the Russian authorities strove to create a loyal, ethnically East Slavic, Orthodox nobility in the Right Bank.<sup>24</sup>

By the close of the nineteenth century, these decrees had notably reduced the Polish presence in the city of Kyiv, valued by Russian conservatives as the Jerusalem of Orthodoxy, and the share of the Right Bank's private land under Polish ownership declined to somewhere around fifty to sixty percent. The ranks of the nobility had also substantially thinned, and most of this land remained in the hands of about four thousand people. Yet, in spite of these gains, Nicholas and Alexander had failed to create a strong Russian elite and, if anything, had steeled the determination of Polish nobles to maintain their rural properties.<sup>25</sup> If Poles were barred from buying land, they often found ways to work around official decrees, enlisting the help of local Jewish tenant farmers or even managing the estates of absentee Russian nobles appointed by the center. Polish nobles also formed a welter of cooperative organizations aimed at defending landholdings and preventing young heirs from facing expropriations, treating this endeavor as a sacred national duty and, according to Beauvois, often conflating the protection of "patrimony and *patria*."<sup>26</sup> At the same time, however, it was often bankruptcies and heavy debts that cost Polish landowners their estates, especially during periods of economic depression such as the "Long Depression" of the 1870s.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, Polish landowners also found ways of expanding their wealth in spite of official restrictions, employing, for instance, recently emancipated Ukrainian serfs as wage laborers on the vast sugarbeet plantations that became incredibly lucrative after the 1860s.<sup>28</sup> This new labor regime significantly worsened existing socioeconomic tensions between the village and manor, introducing physical abuse by Polish farm managers, worsening the poverty of the Ukrainian masses,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>25</sup> Beauvois, *Walka*, 41-47.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 47, 70.

<sup>28</sup> Chojecki, *Spółeczeństwo*, 10-15.

and giving rise to rural strikes by the region's increasingly militant "proletarian peasants."<sup>29</sup> While some affluent Poles actively sympathized with the peasant masses, for most the borders of the civilized world were the boundaries of the manor, which looked out onto a dangerous and dark expanse.<sup>30</sup> Yet, for the time being, Polish elites in the countryside enjoyed substantial control over the profitable industries of sugar refinement and alcohol production, holding a dominant proportion of the mills, refineries, and distilleries that powered the Right Bank's agrarian economy.<sup>31</sup> While most of the region's 400,000 Polish-speaking Catholics counted in the imperial census of 1897 were smallholding peasants or industrial laborers of modest means, Poles still made up at least half of Right-Bank Ukraine's affluent landholding nobles and urban professionals.<sup>32</sup> Surrounded by a sea of heavily illiterate and impoverished Ukrainian-speaking peasants and confronted with a hostile Russian monarchist movement in Kyiv and the provincial towns, these Polish elites led a prominent yet inherently precarious existence by the eve of the Revolution of 1905. Their preoccupation with maintaining Poland's hard fought "national property" in a mostly non-Polish borderland, sometimes in the name of defending "civilization," would prove to be central to how these Poles navigated the tempestuous first two decades of the twentieth century. The protection of agrarian interests, in the minds of these Poles, had grown to be synonymous with the defense of Polish nationhood over the course of eight decades under post-1831 imperial Russian rule.<sup>33</sup>

### Contesting the Nation: Polish Political Movements in Kyiv after 1905

According to imperial census results from 1897, the Polish population of the three Right Bank *gubernias* of Kyiv, Podolia, and Volhynia possessed a strongly agrarian character. Most Polish-speaking Catholics were involved in agriculture, a privileged few as landowners and the vast majority as either middling or poor peasants, farm overseers, and managers of refineries and distilleries. Yet, a full quarter of Poles were classified in the census as "townspeople," a category that included educated urban professionals as well as unskilled laborers living in the growing metropolis of Kyiv and smaller provincial towns such as Berdichiv, Vynnytsia, and Zhytomyr.<sup>34</sup> By the eve of the Revolution of 1905, these urban

<sup>29</sup> Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 50-55.

<sup>30</sup> Ustrzycki, *Ziemianie*, 200-201.

<sup>31</sup> Jerzy Wowk, "Historyczne uwarunkowania rozwoju kultury polskiej na Ukrainie prawobrzeżnej na przełomie XIX-XX w.," in *Kultura polska w życiu Ukrainy: historia, dzień dzisiejszy: materiały z II międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej, Kijów, 6-9 listopada 1997 roku* (Kyiv: Główna specjalizowana redakcja literatury w językach mniejszości narodowych Ukrainy, 2000), 113.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-108.

<sup>33</sup> Beauvois, *Walka*, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Wowk, "Uwarunkowania," 107-110.

environments, especially Kyiv, served as receptors for new intellectual currents emanating from different parts of the Russian Empire and other regions of partitioned Poland. When Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto in 1905, students, political activists, and intellectuals who were either based in Kyiv or had migrated to the city amid the chaos and liberalizations emerged at the forefront of Polish public life, benefiting from the recent legalization of Polish language periodicals, the proliferation of civic organizations, and the introduction of unprecedented avenues for formal party politics.<sup>35</sup> Yet, if the unrest of 1905 opened the way for a vibrant revival of Polish national life, it also prepared the stage for intense deliberations about the legacy, present direction, and fate of Polish nationhood in Right-Bank Ukraine. It was in the wake of this feverish ferment that the south-eastern lobby began to take shape as a broad coalition of national-conservative forces, partly as a continuation of the nineteenth century "battle for the land" but also as the project of the leaders of Kyiv's recently founded branch of the National Democratic movement.<sup>36</sup>

When Russian troops crushed the January Uprising in 1864, many Polish intellectuals and elites became averse to the idea of reinstating the former Commonwealth by way of another armed insurrection. Rather than plotting another revolt, they increasingly turned away from lofty Romantic ideas of Polish messianic nationalism for the more sober outlook of positivism and mundane forms of "organic work."<sup>37</sup> By the 1890s, however, a more youthful cohort of Polish nationalists placed the question of independence back on the agenda, though they soon splintered into competing currents with contrasting visions of what a future Poland should look like.<sup>38</sup> One of these tendencies was embodied in the Polish Socialist Party, whose leader, Józef Piłsudski, called for the unification of the oppressed nationalities of Russia behind a common struggle for freedom and the resurrection of the Commonwealth as an equal, anti-Russian federation of its constituent nationalities.<sup>39</sup>

Initially, the future ideologues of the National Democratic movement shared the PPS's preoccupation with mobilizing working class Poles and even uniting the peoples of the former Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup> However, the National Democrats developed their distinct vision of Poland's future by the turn of the century, turning away from the messianic rhetoric of the PPS and embracing a brutal world-

<sup>35</sup> Chojecki, *Spółeczeństwo*, 23-29; Mariusz Korzeniowski, *Za Złotą Bramą. Działalność społeczno-kulturalna Polaków w Kijowie w latach 1905-1920* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2009), 143-187.

<sup>36</sup> Stanisław Zieliński, *Liga Narodowa na Rusi, 1890-1920* (manuscript). Ossolineum, Wrocław, 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43-52.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-134.

<sup>39</sup> Snyder, *Reconstruction*, 69-70.

<sup>40</sup> Porter, *Nationalism*, 104-106.

view inspired by Social Darwinism.<sup>41</sup> For Roman Dmowski and Zygmunt Balicki, two of the most prominent National Democrats, the fight for a “Great Poland” was less about emancipation and more of an inherently violent struggle against other nations for territory, resources, and power. The National Democrats were determined to organize and discipline the Polish masses towards this end by building an army of “modern patriots” prepared to sacrifice their lives for the national interest and, in Dmowski’s words, place Poland’s destiny above personal interests.<sup>42</sup> This meant taking an “all-Polish” approach to organizing the nation in a way that would transcend local or regional identities, loyalties to the partitioning powers, and class interests. Balicki called this ethos “national egoism,” or the idea that the nation, as a living social organism confronted with a dangerous environment, naturally possesses both the right and the obligation to expand aggressively in all directions and at the expense of weaker neighbors.<sup>43</sup>

Shedding the promising teleological outlooks of both Marxism and Polish messianic nationalism, the National Democrats thus approached the world as the grand stage for a perpetual, merciless contest for survival among nations.<sup>44</sup> In mapping how this struggle would play out geopolitically, the National Democrats distinguished between the lands of “core Poland,” meaning the former Congress Kingdom, Austrian Galicia, and the eastern parts of the Prussian province of Posen. Other regions, where ethnic Poles made up a minority of the population, constituted the “borderlands” in which the National Democrats anticipated a more difficult scramble for supremacy.<sup>45</sup> For Dmowski, the right approach to building a “Great Poland” was to concentrate on constructing a westward oriented “fortress of Polishness” against Germany on the Vistula and Warta Rivers, which meant relegating the former eastern lands of the Commonwealth to a place of secondary importance.<sup>46</sup>

Yet, Jan Ludwik Popławski, the main National Democratic theorist of nationalities questions, insisted until his death in 1908 that Poles could not afford to forget about the eastern frontiers, namely the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Right-Bank Ukraine.<sup>47</sup> For Popławski, these territories were the natural outlets for the vital energies of “core Poland,” having served as empty spaces for colonization and “creative work” since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>48</sup> The

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>42</sup> Roman Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*, 2nd edition (Lviv: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze, 1904), 1-16; Barbara Stoczewska, *Ukraina i Ukraińcy w polskiej myśli politycznej: od końca XIX wieku do wybuchu II wojny światowej* (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, 2013), 79-80.

<sup>43</sup> Zygmunt Balicki, *Egoizm narodowy wobec etyki* (Lviv: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze, 1902), 53; Stoczewska, *Ukraina*, 80-81.

<sup>44</sup> Porter, *Nationalism*, 219.

<sup>45</sup> Roman Dmowski, *Niemcy, Rosya i kwestya polska* (Kraków: H. Altenberg, 1908), 30-31.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>47</sup> Jan Ludwik Popławski, *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 2 (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolff, 1910), 77, 366-368, 373-374.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 377.

eastward flow of Polish influences, Popławski wrote, had been temporarily arrested by the failure of the January Uprising in 1864, yet the substantial landholdings and material wealth still owned by Poles could easily accommodate further growth and colonization given sufficient effort. Now, in a time of industrialization, peripheral territories such as Right-Bank Ukraine would provide raw materials for the developing heartlands around Warsaw and Łódź, and in return serve as markets for factory produced wares.<sup>49</sup> Limiting the struggle for national reconstruction to "ethnographic Poland," for Popławski, was unthinkable, as it would deprive Poland of its most crucial areas of demographic, material, and territorial expansion, artificially stifling the nation's growth.<sup>50</sup>

As for the overwhelmingly non-Polish population living in the Right Bank, Popławski took up a more realistic assessment than Dmowski, who, focusing on the situation in East Galicia, often called for the "Polonization" of the Ukrainians.<sup>51</sup> Popławski, by contrast, contended that the East Slavic and Baltic peoples between Poland and Russia were "raw ethnographic material" rather than full nations, lacking their own distinct traditions of statehood. This meant that these lesser "nationalities" would inevitably be dominated by Polish, Russian, or German influences depending upon who acted most effectively. While Ukrainians and Belarusians could never be fully "Polonized," Popławski believed that they could be brought into the Polish fold if the National Democrats strengthened Polish influences in the borderlands and won the loyalty of the local peasant masses through material improvements.<sup>52</sup>

While Popławski developed expansive visions of Polish expansion in Right-Bank Ukraine, the actual situation of the National Democrats by 1905 was far more modest. A chapter of the National League only emerged in Kyiv in 1901, largely as the initiative of activists hailing from other parts of partitioned Poland and national-conservative university students affiliated with the *Polonia* union that split from the more left leaning *Korporacja* in 1903.<sup>53</sup> The early activities of the National League focused on educating Polish peasants in the countryside of the Right Bank to halt their "denationalization," a cause that expanded rapidly following the Revolution of 1905.<sup>54</sup> With the declaration of the October Manifesto, the National Democrats formed a political party in the Right Bank and worked together with conservative landowners to begin publishing *Dziennik Ki-*

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 380-381.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 367-368.

<sup>51</sup> Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w Polsce w latach 1923-1929* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), 123-124.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>53</sup> Zieliński, *Liga*, 6-11; Jan Euzebiusz Chmielewski, "Pierwsze lata korporacji studentów Polaków w Kijowie (1884-1892)," *Niepodległość* 19, no. 1 (1939): 107-35, [www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/show-content/publication/edition/28148?id=28148&from=FBC](http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/show-content/publication/edition/28148?id=28148&from=FBC).

<sup>54</sup> Chojecki, *Spółeczeństwo*, 16, 22.

*jowski* (Kyiv Daily), which would run until 1920, in March of 1906. Financed partly by Count Włodzimierz Grocholski, *Dziennik Kijowski*, in contrast to the more socially progressive and short-lived *Głos Kijowski*, vigorously defended large landholdings as a natural part of the agrarian economy and rejected plans for redistribution and parcellation as “socialist” or “Marxist.”<sup>55</sup> After 1905, the activities of the National Democrats and their growing circle of landowning allies focused on mobilizing Polish peasants through an expanding network of schools, defending landholdings in the press and through cooperative organizations, and agitating for elections to the large landholding curia of the State Duma.<sup>56</sup>

The leader of Kyiv’s National Democratic movement and the longest serving editor of *Dziennik Kijowski* was Joachim Stefan Bartoszewicz, a publicist born in Warsaw who had spent time organizing national-conservative newspapers and working in the state statistical office in Lviv in Austrian Galicia.<sup>57</sup> Bartoszewicz first arrived at the Right Bank in 1904, when an estate in rural Volhynia owned by the family of his wife, Maria Jełowicka, faced seizure by the Russian state. Bartoszewicz’s time in the countryside, however, proved to be draining and agonizing following the loss of a young child and a general dissatisfaction with life outside of a major city. By the end of 1905, however, the revolutionary tide opened the way for Bartoszewicz and his family to relocate to the dynamic metropolis of Kyiv, where they settled in an apartment on Prorizna Street in the city center.<sup>58</sup> Bartoszewicz soon became acquainted with the local National Democratic leadership and developed ties with landowners such as Grocholski, serving as a vital intermediary between the Right Bank’s Polish agrarian elite and the growing national-conservative movement centered in Kyiv. Bartoszewicz’s work in developing such networks helped to forge the foundations of the future southeastern lobby by 1907.

As the leader of a nascent political movement with limited reach and resources in a predominantly non-Polish region, Bartoszewicz and his associates primarily concentrated upon quotidian undertakings such as founding rural schools and spreading the reach of *Dziennik Kijowski*. Yet Bartoszewicz, much like Popławski, understood these everyday endeavors to be only the beginning of a much grander, more sustained campaign for the restoration of Polish cultural, political, and socioeconomic influences throughout Right-Bank Ukraine. Like most National Democrats and many Polish landowners, Bartoszewicz believed that “Polish civi-

<sup>55</sup> Ignacy Łychowski, “Dwie kultury, dwie drogi,” *Dziennik Kijowski*, February 19, 1906, 1-2; Szczepny Poniatowski, “W sprawie agrarnej,” *Dziennik Kijowski*, February 15, 1906, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Roman Jurkowski, “Polskie Stronnictwo Krajowe na Rusi 1907-1909,” *Echa przeszłości* 10 (2009): 191-217.

<sup>57</sup> Marek Białokur, “Joachim Bartoszewicz redaktor naczelny ‘Dziennika Kijowskiego’ w latach 1906-1912. Przyczynek do dziejów polskiej obecności w Rosji,” in *Polska w Rosji – Rosja w Polsce: stosunki polityczne*, ed. Ryszard Paradowski and Szymon Ossowski (Opole: Instytut Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2003), 160.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

lization" had historically transformed the Right Bank from a wild borderland into a productive territory and could continue this progress if given the opportunity.<sup>59</sup> The idea of a Polish "civilizing mission" in Right-Bank Ukraine is one of the major motifs in Bartoszewicz's numerous articles and monographs, all of which assign a special role to Poles as the determined builders of progress and prosperity in the southeast. Bartoszewicz did not consider the Jews to be a proper nation, dismissing them as a "global exploitative collective," and insisted that Russians had only gained a foothold in the Right Bank since 1864 because of generous sponsorship from St. Petersburg.<sup>60</sup> The Ukrainian-speaking peasantry make few appearances in Bartoszewicz's work, probably because he also considered them to be an unrefined "nationality" that could not seriously compete with Poles.

For Bartoszewicz, a proper nation needed its own traditions of patriotism and statehood as well as a collective, spiritually unifying mission to bind together its individual members. Right-Bank Ukraine, Bartoszewicz was profoundly convinced, always had been and once again would become the premier site of Poland's civilizing work.<sup>61</sup> Expansive Polish landholdings, he dreamed, would sustain a three or even fivefold increase in the number of Poles in the Right Bank, which, by Bartoszewicz's estimate, stood at 800,000, around half of whom were still "nationally unaware."<sup>62</sup> What mattered most, to Bartoszewicz, was reinvigorating the "spiritual principle" that had enabled Poles to amass such vast reserves of "national property" despite their modest numbers, an undertaking whose renewal would necessitate nothing less than a devoted struggle for the soul of the Polish nation.<sup>63</sup>

By the eve of the First World War, the National Democratic movement in the Right Bank had helped to construct an impressive network of schools and libraries in the countryside and managed to keep printing *Dziennik Kijowski* despite Bartoszewicz's brief but physically scarring imprisonment for holding illegal political meetings.<sup>64</sup> One former resident of the Right Bank even remarked that although formal political groupings were notably weak among the region's Poles, the National Democrats probably attracted the most sympathy because of their uncompromising stance on defending Polish landholdings and restoring Polish influences more broadly.<sup>65</sup> Yet, by 1914, the National Democrats were still far from forging the disciplined national-conservative movement that they en-

<sup>59</sup> Joachim Bartoszewicz, *Na Rusi: polski stan posiadania. Kraj, ludność, ziemia*. (Kyiv: L. Idzikowski, 1912), 98-100.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, "Co to jest naród?," *Ateneum polskie* 3, nos. 2-3 (1908): 129-139; idem, *Na Rusi*, 98.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bartoszewicz, "Co to jest naród?," 136-137.

<sup>64</sup> Chojecki, *Spółeczeństwo*, 18-22.

<sup>65</sup> Zygmunt Podhorski, "Spółeczeństwo polskie na Ukrainie wobec wydarzeń politycznych w Rosji," in *Pamiętnik Kijowski*, vol. 4 (London: Koło Kijowian, 1980), 153-160.

visioned, and "Polish civilization" had yet to experience a dramatic renaissance of the sort imagined by Bartoszewicz and his close colleagues. It would only be in 1917 to 1920, amid widespread chaos in the countryside and the immediate threat of expropriation, that a stronger national-conservative bloc took shape in the form of the southeastern lobby.

At the same time, the arrival of the National Democrats to Kyiv quickly evoked a range of critical reactions from Poles who articulated competing visions of the organization of national life in the Right Bank and the role of Polish elites in a predominantly Ukrainian-speaking borderland. The debates about Polish nationhood that proliferated in Kyiv's newspapers and polemic press after the Revolution of 1905 held significance for post-1918 developments, as some of the National Democrats' established rivals attempted to discredit the southeastern lobby's calls for annexation and steer Poland's policy towards Ukraine in a different, ostensibly more federally oriented direction. Initially, however, the most vocal opponents of the rise of the National Democrats were other conservatives, some of whom attended the inaugural meetings of the National Democratic Party of Ruthenia (*Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne na Rusi*) in March of 1906.<sup>66</sup> One Pole from the Right Bank insisted that the very idea of forming a political party was antithetical to the principle of national unity, unsuccessfully demanding that the National Democrats dissolve their organization as soon as possible. Criticisms from below were also present, with one Polish proletarian from Kyiv attacking the editors of *Dziennik Kijowski* for aligning themselves with the interests of the agrarian magnates who "drink our blood."<sup>67</sup>

So, while Poles on the Right Bank may not have been as familiar with the fine workings of party politics as National Democrats trained in Austrian Galicia, which enjoyed substantial constitutional freedoms, they proved capable of dissenting from the National Democratic approach to national mobilization from the very start. Perhaps the best funded offensive came from the "regionalists" (*krajowcy*) headed by Prince Roman Damian Sanguszko, an affluent landowning noble who took issue with the notion of an "all-Polish" understanding of Polish nationhood in Right-Bank Ukraine. In the view of Sanguszko and his confederates, the Right Bank, or "Ruthenia" (*Ruś*), as most Poles called it, was a "region" (*kraj*) with its own distinct history and characteristics that set it apart from other sections of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>68</sup> A similar "regionalist" current developed in the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania around the same time, with its chief ideologue Roman Skirmunt arguing that the Polish elites of this territory should devote their efforts to bettering the lot of the local Belarusian and Lithuanian peasants. Since agrarian relations were far worse in the Right Bank,

<sup>66</sup> "Walne Zgromadzenie Polskiego Stronnictwa Narodowego na Rusi," *Dziennik Kijowski*, March 9, 1906, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Edward Paszkowski, "Bez maski," *Dziennik Kijowski*, September 28, 1906, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Zanim*, 664-676.

however, Sanguszko's "regionalists" were generally more interested in forging ties with friendly Russian landowners and winning support from the imperial government, although this effort largely faltered by 1909.<sup>69</sup> In one telling criticism of the Right Bank "regionalists," a commentator ridiculed Sanguszko's formulation of Polish nationhood as an anachronism and a contradiction, belittling the thought that one could at once claim to be a Pole by nationality but only identify with a small corner of the old Commonwealth as one's fatherland.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of the "regionalist" failure to gain traction in the Right Bank after 1905, the "all-Polish" idea was far from achieving hegemony in the imaginations of "Ruthenian Poles" for whom the writings of Dmowski, as Mirosław Ustrzycki writes, were distant and poorly known.<sup>71</sup>

Another peripheral yet fascinating alternative to the National Democratic model was put forth in 1909 by Vyacheslav Lypynsky, a young thinker and activist from the Right Bank. Originally born Wacław Lipiński to a Polish noble family, Lypynsky gravitated toward the Ukrainian national movement in his university years, severing ties with many of his Polish colleagues after they rejected the idea of combining the Polish and Ukrainian student organizations. Yet Lypynsky differed significantly from most contemporary members of the Ukrainian movement, who generally emphasized the leading role of the peasant masses as a source of national culture and the latent driving force behind the push for autonomy within, or sometimes independence from, Russia and Austria-Hungary.<sup>72</sup> For Lypynsky, it was the largely Polonized nobility of Europe's Ukrainian-speaking lands who would lead the construction of a conservative, monarchic Ukrainian state, providing the wealth, expertise, and initiative that the peasants lacked. Returning to the Union of Lublin in 1569 and the Khmelnytsky Uprising of the mid-seventeenth century, Lypynsky argued that the indigenous East Slavic, Orthodox nobility of Ukraine had progressively abandoned the lower estates by adopting the culture, customs, and religion of the Polish nobility, thereby abdicating from their historical role as the leaders of the nation.<sup>73</sup> At the start of the twentieth century, Lypynsky called upon fellow Polish and Polonized elites to embrace the cause of Ukrainian conservative statism and soundly reject the National Democrats' attempts at winning the Right Bank's propertied, educated stratum for the "all-Polish" cause.<sup>74</sup> The cataclysmic alternative would be a violent struggle for power between the aggrieved peasantry and the

<sup>69</sup> Jurkowski, "Stronnictwo," 215-216.

<sup>70</sup> *Zanim*, 677-678.

<sup>71</sup> Ustrzycki, *Ziemianie*, 272-274.

<sup>72</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, "Viacheslav Lypynsky and the Ideology and Politics of Ukrainian Monarchism," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 27, nr. 1 (1985): 33-34, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00085006.1985.11091792](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00085006.1985.11091792).

<sup>73</sup> Wacław Lipiński (Vyacheslav Lypynsky), *Szlachta na Ukrainie. Udział jej w życiu narodu na tle jego dziejów* (Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1909), 12-19.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-77.

isolated, self-serving nobility preoccupied with defending its material wealth at all costs. In stark contrast to Bartoszewicz, Lypynsky vigorously promoted the idea that a future Poland and Ukraine should be constituted as individual states within their respective ethnographic boundaries.<sup>75</sup>

Lypynsky's ideology of Ukrainian statism did not garner much of a following in the ranks of the Right Bank's Polish nobility by 1914. However, the idea that the region's Polish elites should relinquish grand territorial claims to non-Polish borderlands while mending ties with the local populace found another outlet in the literary journal *Kłosy Ukraińskie*. Organized by a circle of progressive liberals and moderate socialists aligned with Józef Piłsudski, *Kłosy* debuted at the start of 1914, barely a few months before the outbreak of the First World War. Edited by Jan Ursyn-Zamarajew, a Warsaw-born publicist of Polish and Russian descent, *Kłosy* was positioned from its inaugural number as a more intellectually inclined and socially forward alternative to the existing National Democratic press in Kyiv.<sup>76</sup> It is difficult to point to a single coherent political program expounded in the pages of *Kłosy*, though a brief look at the activities and writings of its main contributors can provide some general outlines. These key ideas espoused in the *Kłosy* circle, which was likely much smaller than the national-conservative group that ran *Dziennik Kijowski*, proved to be important as the foundations of a pro-Piłsudski movement opposed to the southeastern lobby between 1917 and 1920.

While Ursyn-Zamarajew regularly directed brief barbs at the National Democratic camp, it was Eugeniusz Starczewski, a liberal lawyer from Volhynia who moved to Kyiv in 1909, who developed a deeper refutation of the ideas of men such as Bartoszewicz. In two major books published in 1912 and 1916, Starczewski reached the conclusion that an independent Poland would have to be restricted by ethnographic borders, meaning that the prized cities of Lviv and Vilnius would be excluded from its territory.<sup>77</sup> The peoples of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, he emphasized, had supposedly made it clear that they neither needed nor desired Polish leadership in organizing their affairs. In direct contrast to Kyiv's National Democrats, Starczewski argued for an "ethnographic Poland," insisting that Poles living east of Poland should shed their dreams of a special "civilizing mission" and accept the status of one ethnic minority among many.<sup>78</sup> In fact, Starczewski blamed eastward expansion for Poland's downfall in early-modern times, contending that rapid growth in this direction had drained the "ethnographic heartlands" of Pomerania,

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 70, 85.

<sup>76</sup> Stanisław Garztecki, "Codzienna prasa polska w Kijowie w latach 1906-1918: wspomnienia," *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 8, nr. 1 (1969): 107-19, [bazhum.muzhp.pl/media/files/Rocznik\\_Historii\\_Czasopiśmiennictwa\\_Polskiego/Rocznik\\_Historii\\_Czasopiśmiennictwa\\_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1/Rocznik\\_Historii\\_Czasopiśmiennictwa\\_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1-s107-119/Rocznik\\_Historii\\_Czasopiśmiennictwa\\_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1-s107-119.pdf](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media/files/Rocznik_Historii_Czasopiśmiennictwa_Polskiego/Rocznik_Historii_Czasopiśmiennictwa_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1/Rocznik_Historii_Czasopiśmiennictwa_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1-s107-119/Rocznik_Historii_Czasopiśmiennictwa_Polskiego-r1969-t8-n1-s107-119.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> Eugeniusz Starczewski, *Sprawa polska* (Kraków: Skład G. Gebethnera, 1912), 201-207; idem, *Nasze sprawy* (Kyiv: Księgarnia Leona Idzikowskiego, 1916), 39-44.

<sup>78</sup> Idem, *Sprawa polska*, 314-318.

Silesia, and West Prussia of their indigenous Slavic element. Seeking an easy living from the rich, sparsely peopled lands of the east, Poles had abandoned their westerly outposts in droves, giving up socioeconomic and cultural power to Germans and Jews.<sup>79</sup> To correct this terrible mistake, Poles should now resign from an aggressive "civilizing mission," respect Ukrainian and Belarusian self-determination, and reclaim their ancestral homelands in the west. Yet, Starczewski maintained elsewhere that Poles should still take care of their substantial material interests in the east, "just as any living organism would."<sup>80</sup> Czesław Jankowski, a nobleman from the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania whose works Bartoszewicz heavily criticized in the pages of *Dziennik Kijowski*, went beyond Starczewski's vision, arguing that each landowner in the eastern borderlands would do well to exchange his "Belarusian swamp," his place on the "Curonian frontier," his "black soils of Chernihiv," or his abode "close to Kolomyia" for a "Warsaw tenement building."<sup>81</sup> For Jankowski, a future Poland should be centered on the "triangle" between Warsaw, Kraków, and Poznań, turning away from the eastern borderlands.<sup>82</sup>

If Starczewski and Jankowski elaborated a theory of Polish nationhood that broadly rejected National Democratic principles, it was Stanisław Stempowski, a native of Podolia and comrade of Józef Piłsudski, who experimented with how coexistence between Polish elites and Ukrainian peasants might look in practice. Having fled his native estate for Warsaw because of the unbearable socioeconomic and ethnoreligious tensions in Right-Bank Ukraine, Stempowski returned to his family's property after 1905 with the aim of striking a livable relationship with the peasantry.<sup>83</sup> In his postwar memoirs, Stempowski claims to have desired to prove the National Democrats wrong by rejecting their blind preoccupation with preserving "national property" and turning his estate into a model of equity between manor and village. Having accepted that Podolia's future would belong to its dominant nationality, Stempowski claims to have gradually discredited a scheming foreman responsible for agitation in the nearby villages and reached an agreement with the peasants about the use of his forests and fields. From Stempowski's recollections, the peasants initially responded with both suspicion and confusion at his socially progressive advances, but some of them ultimately seemed to have been won over.<sup>84</sup> When an independent Poland emerged in 1918, Stempowski cited his experiences in Podolia to push for a policy of support for

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 53-60.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, *Nasze sprawy*, 44-47.

<sup>81</sup> Czesław Jankowski, *Naród polski i jego ojczyzna* (Warsaw: L. Bogusławski, 1914), 60.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 7; idem, *Polska etnograficzna* (Warsaw: B. Wierzbicki, 1914), 14-15.

<sup>83</sup> Andrzej Chojnowski, "Stanisław Stempowski on his Participation in the Government of the Ukrainian People's Republic," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, nos. 1-2 (1990): 145-147, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41036360>.

<sup>84</sup> Stanisław Stempowski, *Pamiętniki, 1870-1914* (Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1953), 302-314.

Ukrainian statehood against the southeastern lobby's cries for total annexation of the Right Bank.<sup>85</sup> For Stempowski, the days of Poland's exploitation of Ukraine would come to an end in any case, but Polish elites could still avoid bloodshed and destruction by reorienting their classical "civilizing mission" away from the accumulation of property and towards the cultivation of the Ukrainian masses.

### War and the Revolutions of 1917

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 ignited hopes in the ranks of Kyiv's Polish intelligentsia that a favorable solution to the "Polish Question" would emerge from a major clash involving all three powers that controlled the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. How a future Poland would look, of course, was a matter of deep disagreement between representatives of the different currents of political thought that had taken root in Kyiv since 1905. These contrasting visions of Polish nationhood articulated on the printed page before 1914 began to clash on the stage of mass politics after March of 1917, when Russia's embattled Tsarist regime collapsed under a failing war effort and transferred power to the equally shaky Russian Provisional Government in Petrograd (St. Petersburg). Within days of the February Revolution, signaled by the Provisional Government's sweeping annulment of Tsarist restrictions on public life and discriminatory statutes against non-Russians, the Poles of Right-Bank Ukraine swiftly organized themselves behind the Polish Executive Committee of Ruthenia (PKW, *Polski Komitet Wykonawczy na Rusi*) formed at *Ogniwo*, a prominent cultural club in downtown Kyiv.<sup>86</sup> With Joachim Bartoszewicz as its first and longest serving chairman, the PKW represented a diverse ecology of civic organizations, political parties, educational circles, agrarian cooperatives, and unions of soldiers, workers, and peasants from the three Right-Bank *gubernias* as well as the Left-Bank *gubernia* of Chernihiv.<sup>87</sup> While many of these organizations took shape in 1917, others, particularly humanitarian and medical groups involved in caring for Polish refugees displaced by the war, had already emerged over the past few years.<sup>88</sup>

The chief task of the PKW was to serve as the highest organ of Polish national autonomy in the southwestern Russian Empire, coordinating national life throughout this territory and reporting to the Provisional Government in the name of the entire Polish population. With Bartoszewicz was its elected leader, the PKW, in its initial months, featured a reasonable balance of national-conservative, liberal, and socialist figures on its standing council.<sup>89</sup> By July of 1917, the

<sup>85</sup> Idem, "Ukraina (1919-1920)," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 21 (1972): 64-88.

<sup>86</sup> *Zjazd Polski na Rusi w Kijowie: w dniach 18-24 czerwca [N.S. 1-7 lipca] 1917 roku* (Vinnytsia: Drukarnia polska w Winnicy, 1917), 129-132.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Chojecki, *Spółeczeństwo*, 23-29.

<sup>89</sup> *Zjazd*, 132.

PKW had grown into what critics later decried as a "state within a state," encompassing a vast network of Polish schools, organizing militia units to defend Polish property, and constructing a system of "political commissioners" who reported to Kyiv from nearly every *gubernia*, district (*uezd*), town, and village in the Right Bank.<sup>90</sup> The PKW's leaders had also cultivated friendly relations with the Ukrainian Central Rada led by the populist historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, with whom Bartoszewicz briefly shared the stage and exchanged warm regards at a major Ukrainian manifestation in central Kyiv at the start of April.<sup>91</sup>

Yet, as the PKW grew and the political landscape in the Right Bank shifted, the apparent consensus within the Polish elite and the rapport between Polish and Ukrainian leaders both started to break down. When more than 500 delegates from across the Right Bank met in Kyiv to discuss the PKW's future in early July of 1917, a "Democratic Bloc" headed by Stanisław Stempowski charged the leadership with overstepping the bounds of autonomy and called upon those present to vote for strong restrictions on the PKW's powers. Rather than acting on its own in "general-national affairs," Stempowski argued, the PKW should immediately recognize the supreme authority of the pro-German Kingdom of Poland created in November of 1916, a move that was intolerable for the pro-Russian National Democrats.<sup>92</sup> The appeal was soundly defeated, reflecting the growing power of the National Democrats whose ranks now included Stanisław Grabski and other prominent ideologues who had fled eastward with the collapsing Russian front. Stempowski was certainly aware of these rising national-conservative influences and wished to halt their further expansion, but his faction was heavily outnumbered and subsequently broke with the PKW to form the Polish Democratic Center of Ruthenia (PCD). Eugeniusz Starczewski, though absent from the conference, served as the PCD's honorary chairman and penned a series of articles attacking the PKW's alleged evolution into a "state within a state," arguing that Poles would never tolerate similarly extensive structures of German, Jewish, or Ukrainian autonomy on ethnically Polish territories.<sup>93</sup>

The PCD's stance on Polish autonomy in Ukraine proved attractive to left-leaning Ukrainian activists, and the organization, along with the Polish Socialist Party, gathered a majority of seats in the Central Rada in late July. This amounted to the marginalization of the PKW, whose "most socially radical elements," to the outrage of Bartoszewicz, were invited to occupy some of the PCD's mandates.<sup>94</sup> Hrushevsky, a proponent of creating an "ethnographic Ukraine" that would extend wherever the majority of the local peasants spoke Ukrainian, explained this decision by claiming that inviting rightist Poles into the Rada would turn the Rada's Polish Vice-Secre-

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 10-11, 18-19.

<sup>91</sup> *Polacy na Ukrainie: zbiór dokumentów*, vol. 1, ed. Stanisław Stępień (Przemyśl: Południowo-Wschodni Instytut Naukowy, 1998), 26-27.

<sup>92</sup> *Zjazd*, 36-50.

<sup>93</sup> Eugeniusz Starczewski, *Życie polskie na Ukrainie* (Kyiv: N. Gieryn, 1917), 13-23.

<sup>94</sup> *Polacy*, vol. 1, 28-29; *Polacy*, vol. 2, 27.

tariat into a hotbed of reaction.<sup>95</sup> Also, the Rada's experiment in minority self-rule extended national-personal autonomy, or the right to form a non-territorial assembly of self-identifying individuals, to Poles, Jews, Russians, and, after January of 1918, any nationality that could gather at least 10,000 signatures. What this meant was that only Ukrainians could claim national-territorial autonomy within a federated, democratic Russia, whereas nationality and territory would be explicitly decoupled for Ukraine's internal minorities.<sup>96</sup> While this model appealed to the PCD, it was unacceptable to the PKW, whose national-conservative leaders still viewed the Right Bank as part of Poland's integral, territorial sphere of "civilization."

Matters worsened for the heavily national-conservative PKW in the autumn of 1917, when the breakdown of the nearby Eastern Front sent an influx of deserters from the Russian army, many of them armed and politically radicalized, into the already unsettled countryside of Right-Bank Ukraine.<sup>97</sup> Local peasants had already been expropriating estates since at least March, but this latest shock, combined with the Bolshevik October Revolution, truly ignited agrarian disorder on the Dnieper.<sup>98</sup> In response to peasant rebellions, Polish soldiers stationed in the region mobilized to defend landholdings, in some cases serving as the private armies of affluent noblemen. Count Zdzisław Grocholski founded the Committee for Struggle against Anarchy, which organized armed formations in the Right Bank and joined the escalating struggle for the land that, in the words of Zofia Kossak, amounted to a bloody "inferno."<sup>99</sup> In late November, largely in an attempt to win back its thinning peasant base and stave off Bolshevik power, the Central Rada issued its Third Universal, a decree that declared the socialization of "non-toiling" land and the creation of an autonomous Ukrainian People's Republic within a future Russian federation.<sup>100</sup> While peasant revolts were already well underway, the Third Universal enraged the PKW's leaders, who condemned the Rada's encouragement of the destruction of Polish landholdings, the cornerstone of Poland's civilizing work in the southeast.<sup>101</sup> The PKW also rejected the Rada's territorial aspirations, rebuffing Ukrainian claims to the Right Bank as "premature" and emphasizing the region's historical place within Poland.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi, "Misto," in *Na porozi novoi Ukraïny: Statti i dzherel'ni materialy*, ed. Lubomyr R. Wynar (New York: Ukrainian Historical Association, 1992), 42-47.

<sup>96</sup> Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 74-77.

<sup>97</sup> Bohdan Hud', *Ukrains'ko-pol's'ki konflikty novitnoi doby: etnosotsial'nyi aspekt* (Kharkiv: Arkana, 2011), 253-318.

<sup>98</sup> Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 59-60.

<sup>99</sup> Mieczysław Wrzosek, *Polskie korpusy wojskowe w Rosji w latach 1917-1918* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1969), 121.

<sup>100</sup> Krawchenko, *Social Change*, 59; Plokhy, *Imperial Russia*, 72.

<sup>101</sup> "Protest przeciw konfiskacie ziemi polskiej na Rusi," *Ojczyzna i Postęp* 88 (January 1918), 22-26.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

Within the Rada's Polish Vice-Secretariat, members of the PCD and the PPS also protested against the agrarian measures, leading to an emergency meeting with Prime Minister Volodymyr Vynnychenko that led to a "clarification" exempting many types of private property from expropriation.<sup>103</sup> The actual effectiveness of this declaration in halting peasant violence, in reality, was probably minimal.

The Rada's Third Universal evoked strong reactions from within the PKW, who regarded the move as a "fratricidal" attack against the collective material and spiritual resources of the Polish minority in Right-Bank Ukraine. The murder of the aged Count Roman Damian Sanguszko, formerly the leader of the "regionalists," by marauding deserters proved to be a source of special moral outrage for Poles in the Right Bank, many of whom regarded this killing as emblematic of the ongoing assault against "Polish civilization."<sup>104</sup> Beyond the region, periodicals in Warsaw and Lviv echoed the PKW's condemnations, describing the Rada as a "Bolshevik" organization and even describing the present unrest as an ugly manifestation of the "Ukrainian problem" that had previously "reared its head" in the time of Khmelnytsky and the Haidamak rebels.<sup>105</sup> In the spring of 1918, after the Rada had gained recognition for Ukraine from the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, Bartoszewicz expressed his frustration with what he considered to be Berlin and Vienna's efforts at reburying the "Polish Question" to their mutual benefit.<sup>106</sup> Ukraine, for Bartoszewicz, was by now a puppet of international diplomacy used to surround Poland geographically and prevent the proper restoration of Polish statehood.<sup>107</sup>

At roughly the same time, Jan Ursyn-Zamarajew penned a much different interpretation of the latest events, describing the creation of a Ukrainian polity as a powerful step towards the destruction of the tyrannical Russian state and the making of a new Eastern Europe of free nations.<sup>108</sup> As for the Rada's agrarian policies, Ursyn described them as "no more radical than the ideas of [Viktor] Chernov," explaining that the Third Universal had been issued as a defensive measure to win peasant support for what was essentially a struggle for Ukrainian national independence.<sup>109</sup> Ursyn's view, however, was a minority position among Polish elites in Right-Bank Ukraine, many of whom increasingly gravitated towards the national-conservative southeastern lobby headed by the National Democrats during the brutal and traumatizing end of 1917.

<sup>103</sup> "Roz'iasnennia heneral'noho sekretariatu z zemel'noho pyttannia, vykladenoho v tret'omu universali," *Ukrains'ka tsentral'na rada*, ed. Vladyslav Fedorovych Verstiuk, et al. (Kyiv: Navchal'nyi posibnyk, 1996), 149-150.

<sup>104</sup> "Zbrodnia sławucka," *Dziennik Kijowski*, November 7, 1917, 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> "Dylemat ukraiński," *Myśl Niepodległa*, December 30, 1917, 840-41.

<sup>106</sup> Joachim Bartoszewicz, *Sprawa polska* (Kyiv: Przegląd Polski, 1918), 13-14.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>108</sup> Jan Ursyn-Zamarajew, *Pierwsze walki o niepodległość Ukrainy (ruch ukraiński: 1917-1918)* (Kyiv: Księgarnia Leona Idzikowskiego, 1920), 36-37.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

### The Southeastern Lobby and Polish Nationhood after 1918

When the Ukrainian Central Rada failed to deliver shipments of grain to the Central Powers under the terms of the Brest-Litovsk agreement, German forces instated a monarchist government under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi in Kyiv. Under Skoropadskyi, the progressive nationalities policies of the Rada withered, though the presence of a conservative regime backed by the Central Powers certainly brought a measure of stability to the Poles of Right-Bank Ukraine. Yet, with the end of the First World War on the Western Front, Skoropadskyi's rule collapsed, and a new, largely leftist Ukrainian Directorate attempted to gain power in Kyiv. In practice, the Directorate's power was severely limited, not least by the continuation of intense agrarian unrest and the resumption of Bolshevik campaigns in Ukraine.<sup>110</sup> For the leaders of the PKW, the renewed chaos once more threatened "Polish civilization," but the emergence of an independent Poland centered in Warsaw provided unprecedented opportunities for a potential Polish intervention in the region.

A formal lobby of Poles from the "southeastern borderlands" took shape in Warsaw in December of 1918, with nobleman Franciszek Pułaski heading the Circle of Poles of the Ruthenian Lands and Count Zdzisław Grocholski now leading the PKW. In the first half of 1919, as Polish forces fought their way to the Zbruch River in the south and through present-day Belarus and Lithuania in the north, the Circle appealed to Józef Piłsudski, then the Allied appointed Head-of-State, the Legislative *Sejm*, and the Polish reading public to recognize the importance of the Right Bank for Polish nationhood. Shaped by the experiences of 1917, the Circle's published works depicted the Ukrainian national movement in bleak terms, describing it as heavily Bolshevized and struggling for control of a backward, benighted peasantry incapable of building a coherent political order.<sup>111</sup> Some documents issued by the Circle did make room for the possibility of Ukrainian autonomy and potentially statehood, but only in the distant future and under the guardianship of Poland.<sup>112</sup> By contrast, Poles emerge as the bearers of a civilizing mission in the southeast, having labored over the course of generations to bring a wild, treacherous periphery into the world of enlightenment and prosperity. In one book intended for a wide readership, the Circle presented a wealth of carefully curated statistics demonstrating that Poles, though outnumbered by Ukrainians and Jews, were essentially the sole driving force of material progress west of the Dnieper.<sup>113</sup> Meanwhile, maps created by Eugeniusz Romer later republished by the Circle showed the former Commonwealth to be a spatially organic, unified space, once more suggesting that a southeastern route to

<sup>110</sup> Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 358-359.

<sup>111</sup> "Określenie"; Edward Paszkowski, *Zawierucha ukraińska* (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolff, 1919), 61, 74.

<sup>112</sup> "Określenie."

<sup>113</sup> Darowski, *Kresy*, 78-80.

national expansion was not only desirable but also natural.<sup>114</sup> In fact, in prefacing the Circle's statistical handbook on the Right Bank, the authors maintained that the southeastern borderlands were just as vital to Poland's survival as the Baltic Corridor.<sup>115</sup>

Despite their sustained efforts to steer Poland's borderland policies, the Circle's leaders faced considerable obstacles to the Right Bank's annexation into Poland. First, the Polish delegation at Versailles, headed in part by Roman Dmowski, had already resolved in 1918 to relinquish sovereignty over large expanses of the former Commonwealth.<sup>116</sup> This included much of the Right Bank, save for western Volhynia and northwestern Podolia, which, in Dmowski's view, would burden an independent Poland with backward masses of East Slavs.<sup>117</sup> Joachim Bartoszewicz, though strongly wedded to the idea of a Polish mission in the southeast, appears to have subordinated to Dmowski on this point after leaving Kyiv for Western Europe.<sup>118</sup> Dmowski focused primarily on winning industrially and strategically valuable territories from a weakened Germany rather than marching eastward, a position that the right-wing Popular-National Union pursued in the *Sejm*.

Perhaps surprisingly, it was Piłsudski who proved to pursue the Circle's goals in practice, although his outlook on Ukrainian statehood was different from those of Pułaski or Grocholski. Before the Polish-Ukrainian offensive into the Right Bank began in late April of 1920, Stanisław Stempowski and the PCD wrote to Warsaw calling for support for Ukrainian statehood, though on the condition that western Volhynia and all of Galicia would be part of Poland and that Poland would enjoy the right to "economic penetration" in Ukraine.<sup>119</sup> These points, and not those put forth by the Circle, became enshrined in the notoriously unequal Warsaw Agreement signed between Piłsudski and Ukrainian leader Symon Petliura in late April of 1920.<sup>120</sup> It was also Stempowski, and not any of the Circle's leaders, who received a portfolio in Petliura's short-lived government, which rapidly captured Kyiv in May of 1920 only to be beaten back by the Red Army one month later.<sup>121</sup> The subsequent breakdown of the Polish front left Piłsudski's dreams of federation in ruins, especially as the National Democrats shaped the

<sup>114</sup> Eugeniusz Romer, *Ziemie dawnej Polski* (Vienna: Wojskowo-geograficzny Instytut w Wiedniu, 1909).

<sup>115</sup> Darowski, *Kresy*, 7.

<sup>116</sup> Roman Dmowski, "Memorjał o terytorjum Państwa Polskiego, złożony sekretarzowi Stanu, Balfourowi, w Londynie w końcu marca 1917 r.," *Pisma, Tom VI: Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa. Druga połowa*, (Częstochowa: A. Gmachowski, 1937), 262-66.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-265.

<sup>118</sup> Joachim Bartoszewicz, *Walka o Polskę* (Poznań: Nakład Sekretariatu Dzielnicego Związku Ludowo-Narodowego w Poznaniu, 1920), 19-21.

<sup>119</sup> *Ukraine and Poland in documents, 1918-1922*, vol. 1, ed. Taras Hunczak (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 40-41.

<sup>120</sup> Palij, *Defensive Alliance*, 70-75.

<sup>121</sup> Chojnowski, "Stanisław Stempowski," 144-145.

terms of the Polish-Soviet peace at Riga and, in 1922, restricted Piłsudski's broad executive powers.<sup>122</sup>

### Interwar Afterlives

When the Polish-Soviet frontier was fixed in 1921, the vast majority of Right-Bank Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union. Just western Volhynia and the extreme northwest of Podolia joined Poland, leaving a substantial population of Polish peasants, whose descendants now live in Ukraine's Khmelnytsky and Zhytomyr *oblasts*, outside of the Polish state. Yet, even if Poland had lost the greater part of Right-Bank Ukraine by 1921, Right-Bank Ukraine provided many of the people and ideas that shaped interwar Poland's borderland policies and, to this day, influenced the ways in which Poles have remembered the lost southeastern peripheries. Many of the region's landowning elites emigrated to interwar Poland, in some cases following the retreat of Polish-Ukrainian troops from Kyiv in June of 1920. Displaced and often dispossessed, the noble refugees who helped to form and finance the Circle decried the terms of the Peace of Riga as a betrayal of the sacred unity of the old Commonwealth.<sup>123</sup> Count Zdzisław Grocholski continued publishing operations in the name of the Circle, while individual nobles such as Maria Dunin-Kozicka and Zofia Kossak wrote popular memoirs of their time in the Right Bank during the early twentieth century. Their works both recall times of a pastoral stability and plenitude on the Polish oases of civilization and portray the total destruction of this world in the ruinous whirlwind of the October Revolution and Russia's civil wars. This émigré tradition continued after the Second World War, when many descendants of the Right Bank's nobility fled Soviet and Nazi depredations and settled in the West, publishing a series of edited volumes in London as late as 1980.

For National Democrats from the Right Bank such as Joachim Bartoszewicz, the loss of the region was cataclysmic, artificially partitioning Poland's natural borderlands into Polish and Soviet sectors. Blaming Piłsudski for his brash intervention in Ukraine, Bartoszewicz claimed in 1920 that more of Right-Bank Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania could have been won had Dmowski been in charge.<sup>124</sup> Yet, Bartoszewicz accepted these territorial losses for the time being, insisting in 1924 that Poles should now direct their energies to integrating the mostly Belarusian and Ukrainian speaking eastern lands into Poland proper.<sup>125</sup> Denying the existence of a Ukrainian nation, Bartoszewicz accepted the ethnolinguistic distinctiveness of the "Ruthenians" (*Rusini*) but maintained that these East

<sup>122</sup> Snyder, *Reconstruction*, 64.

<sup>123</sup> Zarycki, *Ideologies*, 146-147.

<sup>124</sup> Bartoszewicz, *Walka*, 19-20.

<sup>125</sup> Idem, *Znaczenie polityczne kresów wschodnich dla Polski* (Warsaw: Polskie Towarzystwo Opieki nad Kresami, 1924), 1-5.

Slavs must be turned into loyal subjects of the Polish state.<sup>126</sup> This meant supporting ethnic Polish minorities in the borderlands, using Polish as the dominant language of administration and education, and, through gradual colonization from the west, improving the demographic situation of Poles. Bartoszewicz appears to have embraced Stanisław Grabski's peculiar theory of "strength without force," whereby the Polish state and the ethnically Polish population would demonstrate their material and cultural superiority to non-Poles as a means of winning their respect and eventual assimilation.<sup>127</sup> Though the Polish state would always promote Polish interests, Grabski cautioned against excessive "protectionism" and argued that the greatest force for the expansion of "Polish civilization" lay in the "spontaneous growth of the Polish nation," embodied in the colonization of the eastern borderlands by "our farmers, mechanics, doctors, lawyers," and other members of the kind of "industrious and intelligent population" envisioned by Bartoszewicz in 1912.<sup>128</sup> Apparently, many of the governors of the eastern regions agreed with this position in the early to mid-1920s, viewing Polish colonization and even demographic engineering as a favorable way of making unruly territories more easily governed. This was the prevailing mood at a congress of eastern voivodes held in 1922, where anxieties over the porousness of Poland's frontier with the Soviet Union and the growth of pro-Soviet inclinations among the local peasants were prominent.<sup>129</sup>

In spite of the chaos and losses of 1917-1921, Bartoszewicz was convinced that Poland could rise again as a bastion of authority and order in the minds of the East Slavic "tribes" inhabiting the borderlands. To this end, he helped in founding Poland's Society for the Care of the Borderlands in April of 1922. The Society's principal goal was to strengthen Polish influences in predominantly non-Polish areas by all possible means, as its Lublin-based newspaper, *Watch on the Bug* (*Straż nad Bugiem*) reflected into the 1930s. Unsurprisingly, the Society's five official founders included three National Democrats who had risen to prominence in Kyiv after 1905 alongside Bartoszewicz, namely Zygmunt Berezowski, Wilhelm Kulikowski, and Mirosław Sawicki.<sup>130</sup> Under their guidance, the Society for the Care of the Borderlands constituted one continuation of the PKW and the

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 29-33; idem, *Podręczny słownik polityczny: do użytku posłów, urzędników państwowych, członków ciał samorządowych i wyborców* (Warsaw: Perzyński, Niklewicz i Spółka, 1923), 780-781.

<sup>127</sup> Stanisław Grabski, *Z codziennych walk i rozważań* (Poznań: Wielkopolska Księgarnia Nakładowa Karola Rzepeckiego, 1923), 41-43.

<sup>128</sup> Idem, *Uwagi o bieżącej historycznej chwili polski* (Warsaw: Nakład Perzyński, Niklewicz i Spółka, 1922), 115; Bartoszewicz, *Na Rusi*, 98-99.

<sup>129</sup> "Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z konferencji z wojewodami z Kresów Wschodnich z dnia 14 czerwca 1922 r.," Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych w Warszawie, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie. Fond 9, folder 1001.

<sup>130</sup> *Statut Polskiego Towarzystwa Opieki nad Kresami* (Warsaw: Polskie Towarzystwo Opieki nad Kresami, 1922), 14-15.

southeastern lobby that, among other organizations, strove towards a changing vision of strengthening the “Polish element” in the peripheries. They also steadfastly claimed predominantly non-Polish borderlands as part of Poland’s natural territorial sphere on the basis of “civilization,” using this reasoning to counter the rising tide of East Slavic ethnic nationalism in the Second Polish Republic. The thread that unified these organizations was a strong belief in the need to both defend and expand the boundaries of “Polish civilization,” a cause that proved capable of incorporating the interests of a diverse community of borderland actors in the early twentieth century. It is now time for historians to relate the Polish case to a wider world of civilizing missions, as well as concepts of “national property,” both on the European continent and in other contexts.

### Conclusions

The Polish southeastern lobby that materialized in Warsaw in November of 1918 began to take shape well before the restoration of Polish independence. Its central ideas, personalities, and organizational structures can be traced back at least to the National Democratic-led national-conservative milieu that congealed in Right-Bank Ukraine, and in particular in the city of Kyiv, following the Revolution of 1905. At the same time, the southeastern lobby’s preoccupation with the defense of landed interests and the protection of “national property” was a continuation of the longstanding struggle of the Right Bank’s Polish agrarian elites to preserve their landholdings since 1864, if not 1831. The National Democratic newcomers to the Right Bank and the region’s traditional Polish landholding stratum organized around common material interests and a shared ideology of defending “Polish civilization,” first against the Russian state and the Ukrainian peasantry and later against the rising tide of the Bolshevik revolution. In their appeals to the Polish government, these southeastern activists presented themselves as visionaries of Polish territorial and economic aggrandizement in the Right Bank, arguing for the region’s centrality to the survival of a young Poland. The southeastern lobby, of course, was never free of disagreements or discord, and also elicited the determined opposition of more progressive Poles who denounced the National Democratic obsession with defending the land. Figures such as Joachim Stefan Bartoszewicz, a Warsaw-born National Democrat who married into a Volhynian noble family, emerged as leaders and important mediators within the southeastern lobby. While Poland failed to regain its foothold in Right-Bank Ukraine by 1921, the southeastern lobby’s leaders did not simply resign from their grand designs, but instead continued their campaign for eastward expansion in different forms throughout the interwar period and beyond. The campaign to promote “Polish civilization” in the east, though uprooted and pushed far back from the Dnieper, was still alive.

CARL L. BUCKI (*Buffalo, NY*)

## RESPONSE ON THE HOME FRONT: HOW BUFFALO'S POLISH COMMUNITY SUPPORTED THE ALLIED CAUSE DURING WORLD WAR I

### Abstract

Prior to the start of the First World War, Buffalo's Polish community shared a commitment to the cause of Polish independence. After the start of hostilities in 1914, the community worked to support humanitarian relief for Poland and to prepare for the possibility of American involvement. Then when the United States entered the conflict, American policies aligned closely with the views of Polonia. Finding that the war fulfilled the patriotic goals of both Poland and the United States, the Polish community responded enthusiastically. While continuing to assist the cause of war relief, they energetically supported both the formation of a Polish army and recruitment for the armed forces of the United States.

**Keywords:** World War I, Buffalo, Polonia, war relief, Polish immigrants

### The Polish Community of Buffalo, New York

The Allied victory in World War I was achieved not only on the battlefield, but also with support from the home front. The Polish Community of Buffalo, New York, presents an outstanding example of this support. To explain its intensity and impact, this paper addresses three questions. First, what was the nature and character of Buffalo's Polonia? Second, how did the community respond after the start of combat in 1914? Finally, how did the community respond after America's entry into the war in 1917?

At the beginning of World War I, Buffalo was home to approximately 90,000 Poles, who represented more than 20% of the city's population.<sup>1</sup> Most lived in geographically distinct neighborhoods, the largest of which was situated on the city's East Side in an area that centered on Broadway and Fillmore Avenue. Smaller enclaves existed in the Black Rock section in the city's northwest corner and in an area known as Kaisertown.<sup>2</sup> Polish neighborhoods tended to maintain

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<sup>1</sup> "Buffalo's Polish Celebration," *The Buffalo Enquirer*, May 5, 1913, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Richard C. Brown and Bob Watson, *Buffalo: Lake City in Niagara Land* (Buffalo: Windsor Publications, 1981), 185.

a character that was distinct from the rest of the city. Poles maintained their own churches, patronized their own businesses, and supported a plethora of ethnic cultural organizations. On July 4, 1918, most of Buffalo joined in a community celebration of American independence. The Poles, however, maintained a separate observance. Thus, *the Buffalo Evening News* reported that arrangements were made for a distinct celebration at Humboldt Park that was “arranged principally for Polish citizens.”<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the First World War, most Polish immigrants were peasants who had enjoyed only limited educational opportunities in their native land.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the historical record shows that the Polish residents of Buffalo were keenly knowledgeable about Polish history. They were intensely patriotic and shared a common commitment to the cause of Polish independence. Poles repeatedly expressed these characteristics through community activities and events. The following four examples illustrate this pattern:

#### 1. GRUNWALD COMMEMORATION OF 1910:

In July of 1910, more than 60,000 Polish residents attended ceremonies marking the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald, during which Polish forces defeated the Teutonic knights and thereby assured the continued independence of Poland.<sup>5</sup> To accommodate the large crowds, organizers planned a parade route that extended for four miles and that snaked through numerous streets in the large Polish community on the city’s East Side. *The Buffalo Evening Times* observed that participants included representatives from “every Polish society and parish in this city and vicinity,” and that marchers were “attired in gorgeous uniforms.”<sup>6</sup>

The Grunwald celebration holds special significance for two additional reasons. First, it confirmed the patriotic spirit of Polish women. Previously, parades were a male activity. Thus, a prominent English language newspaper could not help but to make the following comment:

Not the least interesting part of the parade was the section in which women took part. Among the women’s organizations which turned out in large numbers were the Ladies’ Falcon Society, the Mickiewicz Dramatic Circle and Singing Society, St. Agnes Society and about 50 more women in carriages and about 100 who marched afoot.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the event indicated a desire to accommodate both loyalty to Poland and allegiance to the United States of America. Thus, the parade featured the

<sup>3</sup> “Buffalo Celebrates Second War-Time Fourth of July,” *Buffalo Evening News*, July 5, 1918, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Greene, “Poles,” in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. by Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 790.

<sup>5</sup> “Poles Celebrated,” *The Buffalo Commercial*, July 16, 1910, 10; “Big Celebration,” *The Buffalo Commercial*, July 18, 1910, 6.

<sup>6</sup> “Polish Holiday,” *Buffalo Evening Times*, July 18, 1910, 4.

<sup>7</sup> “Big Celebration,” *The Buffalo Commercial*, July 18, 1910, 6.

flags of both countries. In the closing program, a short history of the battle was read in Polish by Rev. Dr. Alexander Pitass and in English by Attorney Leon J. Nowak.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY – 1911:

The Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, was an attempt to implement reforms that would strengthen Poland in its unsuccessful struggle to preserve independence. For almost as long as Poles had a significant presence in Buffalo, the community celebrated the spirit of that constitution. For example, in May of 1911, more than 7,000 volunteers conducted four major parades and celebrations that were attended by thousands of residents.<sup>9</sup> In describing one of these events, *The Buffalo Courier* observed that “if applause at Dom Polski Hall on Broadway last night could have been heard in Russia, it would have driven all the bears out of that country.”<sup>10</sup>

## 3. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF UPRISING OF 1863:

On February 9, 1913, the Polish community marked the 50th anniversary of the Polish uprising of 1863. In describing these activities, the Buffalo Sunday Morning News published the following report:

No celebration in local Polish circles has ever aroused the enthusiasm which to-day's event has among them. In every section of the Polish settlement business blocks and dwellings are decorated with American flags and those of Poland. Old Glory and the red flag bearing a white eagle are waving gloriously in little Poland. The memory of those who died in the notable struggle for the liberty of Poland is being commemorated in a most appropriate manner. The day will be one long to be remembered in local Polish annals.<sup>11</sup>

Ten thousand marchers participated in the parade, which included representation from all of the Polish fraternal organizations.<sup>12</sup> As an indication of unity within the community, labor organizations walked in the same division as leaders of the Polish Businessmen's Association.<sup>13</sup> Later that evening, the community gathered at Buffalo's largest assembly hall, the Broadway Auditorium, for a musical tribute.<sup>14</sup> The English language press was duly impressed by the intensity of spirit. “The eloquent addresses by leading Polish citizens, the parade participated

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> “Poles Mark Great War to Maintain their Birthright,” *The Buffalo Courier*, May 7, 1911, 51; “Black Rock Poles Had Big Celebration,” *The Buffalo Evening Times*, May 15, 1911, 4; “Polish Citizens in Annual Parade,” *The Buffalo Courier*, May 22, 1911, 6.

<sup>10</sup> “Poles Celebrate Anniversary of Day of Freedom,” *The Buffalo Courier*, May 4, 1911, 7.

<sup>11</sup> “Poles to Pay Tribute to Heroes Today,” *The Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, Feb. 9, 1913, 42.

<sup>12</sup> “Buffalo's Poles Pay Tribute to Heroes of '63,” *Buffalo Evening News*, Feb. 10, 1913, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Poles to Pay Tribute,” 42.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

in by 10,000 men and women, the concert of Polish compositions, the religious services in all of the Polish churches were all impressive of the patriotism and love of the Poles for their native land.”<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY – 1913:

The Polish Constitution celebration of 1913 would again reflect the community’s unity and spirit. *The Buffalo Enquirer* reported that on Sunday, May 4, patriotic celebrations were held in three auditoriums all located within blocks of each other on the city’s East Side. Two thousand people attended a rally at Dom Polski Hall, another 2,000 attended festivities at Corpus Christi Hall, and 1,800 people squeezed into St. Adalbert’s Hall.<sup>16</sup> In an editorial, this newspaper observed: “In no hearts does the pulsation of patriotism beat with greater sincerity than in the hearts of those sons and daughters of Poland who yearly celebrate the anniversary of the adoption of their constitution.”<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the start of World War I, the Polish community of Buffalo was intensely supportive of Polish independence. Moreover, this support was not confined just to a small group of intellectuals, but extended broadly throughout Polonia. Indeed, more than 2/3 of all Polish residents personally participated in certain events. Such was the environment when war began shortly after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914.

### Initial Reaction to Conflict

World War I presented difficult challenges both for Poland and for Polish immigrants in the United States. Many saw the war as a potential opportunity to promote the cause of a free and independent Poland. But how to accomplish that goal was unclear. Since 1795, Poland had been occupied by the military forces of Prussia (later Germany), Austria and Russia. As a divided nation, Poland was caught on both sides of the conflict. Germany and Austria were at war with Russia. Consequently, their Polish populations were drafted to serve in opposing armies. Moreover, Polish territories became battlegrounds. Opposing armies caused vast destruction throughout Poland. Soon after Germany had declared a state of war on August 1, 1914, Polish residents of Buffalo started to receive dire reports about the destruction of their homeland. On August 16, 1914, a mass meeting was held at the Broadway Market “to inform the Poles about the present condition of the European conflict.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Buffalo’s Poles Pay Tribute,” 1.

<sup>16</sup> “Poles Celebrate Anniversary,” *The Buffalo Enquirer*, May 5, 1913, 6.

<sup>17</sup> “Buffalo’s Polish Celebration,” *The Buffalo Enquirer*, May 5, 1913, 4.

<sup>18</sup> “Poles to Raise Funds for Relief Work in Great European War,” *Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, August 16, 1914, 55.

Buffalo's Polonia responded in three ways. First, some joined paramilitary organizations like the Polish Falcons. Second, the Polish community participated actively in raising funds for war relief. Third, the Polish residents of Buffalo held rallies in support of Polish independence. Let us examine chronologically some of the more significant events.

The Polish Falcons of America (Związek Sokolstwa Polskiego w Ameryce) is a fraternal benefit society that traces its origin to the formation of its first branch in 1887. The organization is particularly recognized for programs that encourage physical fitness and patriotism. Starting at the end of the 19th century, many of its units organized paramilitary exercises as a demonstration of their preparedness for future participation in a struggle for Polish independence.<sup>19</sup> Just when World War I was beginning, the Polish Falcons held their previously scheduled convention in Buffalo, New York.

On September 6, 1914, the *Buffalo Times* reported the start of a momentous assemblage:

Polish Buffalo is today greeting thousands of fellow countrymen from practically every hamlet and village in the United States. Forty thousand strong is the anticipated army of delegates and visitors to the eleventh Convention and military maneuvers of the Polish Falcons' Alliance, which opens tonight in Broadway Auditorium with Governor Glynn as the principal speaker and guest of honor.<sup>20</sup>

The opening day of the convention was a Sunday, but no church in Buffalo could possibly accommodate the enormous crowd of visitors. Consequently, Bishop Charles Colton agreed to celebrate a military field Mass.<sup>21</sup> Then in the afternoon, convention organizers presented one of the largest parades that Buffalo has ever witnessed. *The New York Times* reported that "more than 10,000 Falcons participated in a parade today in which every 'nest' from the fifteen circuits in the Union was represented. Many of the organizations were in full military costume."<sup>22</sup> From start to finish, this opening parade lasted for two hours and fifteen minutes.<sup>23</sup> An estimated 30,000 spectators viewed the line of march.<sup>24</sup>

The convention proceedings began in the evening of September 6 at the Broadway Auditorium, where fifteen musical bands and a choir of 350 voices

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<sup>19</sup> Donald E. Pienkos, "Polish Falcons of America," in *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, ed. by James S. Pula (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2011), 389-392.

<sup>20</sup> "Polish Falcons Open Convention in City Today," *Buffalo Evening Times*, September 6, 1914, 53.

<sup>21</sup> "Dream of a Free Poland," *The Buffalo Express*, September 7, 1914, 8.

<sup>22</sup> "Glynn Advises Poles," *The New York Times*, September 7, 1914, 6.

<sup>23</sup> "Dream of a Free Poland," *The Buffalo Express*, September 7, 1914, 8.

<sup>24</sup> "Maneuvers of Falcons Well Done," *Buffalo Evening News*, September 8, 1914, 1.

entertained the audience. Delegates witnessed a short movie about the Battle of Raclawice, in which Tadeusz Kościuszko led Polish patriots in their fight against Russian forces. *The Buffalo Express* reported that “nearly every speaker at the mass meeting expressed the hope that out of the present cataclysm in Europe would come the independence for which Poland has yearned.”<sup>25</sup> Buffalo’s health commissioner, Dr. Francis E. Fronczak, established this theme in his remarks upon the opening of the convention:

We are living in a time when world history is being made. We hope that our brethren over the sea will hear the words of encouragement we are sending to them and that one of the results of this upheaval of nations will be the rebuilding of the old Poland, for which we have been struggling since 1775.<sup>26</sup>

Convention highlights included military maneuvers, during which 3,500 uniformed members conducted a sham battle on a farm in the community of Bowmansville, just a short distance from the Buffalo city limits.<sup>27</sup>

From the start of the war in 1914 until America’s entry into the conflict in 1917, the most pervasive response was support for war relief. On September 3, 1914, at Dom Polski Hall, an open meeting was held to organize a fund-raising campaign.<sup>28</sup> Then on Sunday, September 13, mass meetings were scheduled at every Polish parish for two purposes: to “inform the assemblages about the present conditions in Europe,” and to “urge the raising of funds.”<sup>29</sup> In October of 1914, leaders from Buffalo joined with other groups from across America in forming Polski Centralny Komitet Ratunowy, the Polish Central Relief Committee. This national organization aimed to provide aid to millions of suffering victims of the conflict in Europe. Widely recognized for his leadership on behalf of Polish causes, Dr. Francis E. Fronczak of Buffalo would assume the presidency of the Polish Central Relief Committee in June of 1915.<sup>30</sup>

In the fall of 1914, inspired leaders saw Thanksgiving and Christmas as opportunities to serve the needy people of Poland. Thus, a local relief committee was formed. On the morning of Thanksgiving on November 26, 1914, five hundred women went door to door throughout the Polish community to collect funds on behalf of widows and orphans in Poland. Then in the afternoon and evening, the Kółko

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<sup>25</sup> “Dream of a Free Poland,” 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> “Falcons Fight Sham Battle in Fields near Bowmansville,” *Buffalo Evening News*, September 9, 1914, 1.

<sup>28</sup> “Local Poles to Raise Funds in Aid of Poland’s Freedom,” *Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, August 31, 1914, 43.

<sup>29</sup> “Plan Demonstration in All Polish Churches Next Sunday,” *Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, September 6, 1914, 60.

<sup>30</sup> Donald E. Pienkos, “Fronczak, Francis,” in *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, ed. by James S. Pula (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2011), 140.

Polek charity organization joined with the Polish Ladies Association in sponsoring a fundraising event at Dom Polski Hall on Broadway.<sup>31</sup> To raise additional monies, actors from Buffalo's Polish theater produced a play entitled "Kinemetograph."<sup>32</sup>

Again for the purpose of giving support to the cause of war relief, the Polish Ladies Relief Committee held a bazaar at the Dom Polski Hall on December 13, 1914. *The Buffalo Sunday Morning News* reported that prizes included "over 500 beautiful gifts, among which are pretty laces, embroideries, pillow tops, cushions and fancy works of all kinds."<sup>33</sup> Evening activities featured recitations by 88 students, with at least one representative from every public and parochial school of the city's East Side.

On August 4, 1915, German forces occupied Warsaw, a city that Russia had previously controlled.<sup>34</sup> The result was a mass dislocation of people. *The New York Times* reported that more than 4.5 million refugees had fled from the attacking lines of the German and Austrian armies. This newspaper concluded that "from the Vistula to the Bug [Rivers] stretch desolation and misery."<sup>35</sup> Almost immediately upon receipt of news about the capture of Warsaw, the various organizations of Polonia came together to organize a public rally of support for Poland. This event occurred on Sunday, August 8, at Teutonia Park. The *Buffalo Enquirer* reported that "the object of this demonstration was to make protest against atrocities committed on Poles in Europe."<sup>36</sup> Despite short notice and rainy weather, more than 25,000 people attended the formal program and many more were turned away due to space limitations. The presentation included a parade of more than 5,000 marchers, field maneuvers by the Polish Falcons, two plays by members of the Adam Mickiewicz Library and Dramatic Circle, and a concert by a united Polish choir of 340 singers under the direction of Leon Olszewski.<sup>37</sup> By acclamation, the attendees approved a resolution presented by Dr. Francis E. Fronczak:

As sincere citizens of this country caring for its good and preserving the just laws and Constitution of the United States, we hereby express our loyalty to the government and desire to work in mutual citizenship. We know the American people . . . sees the injustices of the nations. We sincerely hope the sons of Poland at the future peace conference will receive assistance from the American people, and also aid in regaining the freedom of Poland.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "To Give Entertainment for Polish Widows and Orphans," *Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, November 8, 1914, 54.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Hold Bazaar Today to Help Polish Children in Europe," *Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, December 13, 1914, 78.

<sup>34</sup> "Warsaw is Now Ruled by German Army; City Falls," *The Buffalo Enquirer*, August 5, 1914, 1.

<sup>35</sup> "4,000 Killed Crossing Bug," *The New York Times*, August 17, 1915, p.2.

<sup>36</sup> "Big Demonstration for Relief of Poles," *The Buffalo Enquirer*, August 9, 1915, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

The program concluded with a plea for financial support and a collection of funds for war relief.

The parade and rally on August 8, 1915, served as a statement of enthusiasm and unity among the Polish residents of Western New York. Participants included men, women and youth. All of the leading community organizations were represented, and attendees came from every significant Polish district in Buffalo and the surrounding area.

The holiday season of 1915 would be the second Christmas during which Poland stood at the center of combat activity. The Buffalo Evening News reported that 4,000 Polish towns were “in ashes” and that millions of Poles were starving.<sup>39</sup> Helena Górska Paderewska, the wife of the noted pianist and patriot, came to Buffalo on the day after Thanksgiving in 1915 to promote a special project for war relief.<sup>40</sup> Large numbers of unemployed Polish artists were then living in exile in Paris. The Polish Artists’ Mutual Help Society secured the assistance of painters, sculptors, decorators, wood carvers and experts in fine needlework and embroidery to create dolls in native Polish costumes. At the Iroquois Hotel, Mrs. Paderewska presented these dolls for sale, with proceeds to benefit both refugee artists and the Polish babies milk fund.<sup>41</sup>

From the beginning of the war in 1914 until America’s entry into the conflict, the Polish community committed itself to the cause of humanitarian relief for Poland. As part of a drive to encourage Buffalonians to join the Red Cross, membership forms were printed in Polish. *The Buffalo Evening News* reported that “the foreign-born among Buffalo’s population are responding splendidly to the appeal for members.”<sup>42</sup>

In May of 1916, Polonia celebrated the 125th anniversary of the Polish Constitution of 1791. Commemorative events took place on the East Side of Buffalo, as well as in the city’s Black Rock section and in the nearby municipalities of Depew, Lackawanna and Niagara Falls. As administrator for the Catholic Diocese, Monsignor Nelson Baker authorized a special collection for the cause of Polish war relief during all Masses on May 7. In an open letter to all pastors, Monsignor Baker explained the special need for a generous response:

Faultless Poland is the theatre of the bloodiest and most terrible world war in history. Every living Pole of fighting power is in the ranks of one of three fiercely battling armies, and brother is pitted against brother to fight and suffer and die for an alien cause. Ten thousand towns and villages have been laid waste, and fifteen hun-

<sup>39</sup> “Millions Starving in Poland, 4,000 Towns are in Ashes,” *Buffalo Evening News*, November 26, 1915, 1.

<sup>40</sup> “Paderewskis Take Park in Luncheon to Aid Yarn Week,” *The Buffalo Courier*, November 27, 1915, 6.

<sup>41</sup> “Sells Dolls to Aid Starving Babies,” *The Buffalo Courier*, November 26, 1915, 7.

<sup>42</sup> “Foreign-born Buffalonians Join Red Cross,” *Buffalo Evening News*, March 7, 1917, 1.

dred churches have been destroyed in this awfully afflicted and truly Catholic land. Nearly all the children under seven years of age are dead from hunger and exposure. Five hundred thousand old men, women and children are facing starvation.<sup>43</sup>

To the entire community, Father Baker issued the following statement: "Poland, A Catholic country, is, in consequence of the present war, passing through unspeakable sufferings and is for the greater part completely devastated, sunk in a destitution so terrible that the world, perhaps, has never seen its like."<sup>44</sup> From this special collection, the Polish churches of Buffalo raised \$7,671.47.<sup>45</sup> If adjusted for inflation, this collection would amount to more than \$167,000 in 2018.

The 1916 celebration of the Polish constitution included a three-day bazar at the Polish Union Hall, with all proceeds to be dedicated to the cause of relief for the victims of conflict in Poland.<sup>46</sup> Notably, "the fair was opened when Mrs. Josephine Kudlicka pressed a button, turning on a flood of light."<sup>47</sup> This display served to express a spirit of hope that the Polish nation would experience a transformation from darkness to a time of bright futures.

### Response to America's Entry into the World War

By the end of 1916, the war had become a seemingly interminable tragedy. On December 11, 1916, more than 600 women gathered at Dom Polski Hall in Buffalo for a meeting of the Polish Ladies Relief Committee, to mark its second anniversary and to make plans for additional fundraising endeavors.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, pressures were mounting for the United States to enter the war. Maxwell Nowak, a prominent Polish merchant and a leader of the Association of Polish Businessmen, accepted an invitation to speak to the Civic Education Association on March 26, 1917. In his remarks, Nowak assured the leading citizens of Buffalo that Poles "would be prompt in responding to the call of this country for men in case of war."<sup>49</sup> Polonia would not have long to wait. On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson requested that Congress approve a declaration of war.

The Polish community of Buffalo gave immediate support to President Wilson. At the time, Congressman William F. Waldow was undecided on the issue of war. Concerned for his vote, Buffalo's Polish leaders directed two unequivocal telegrams to their representative. The first was sent by the Polish Union of America and read as follows:

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<sup>43</sup> "Devoted Poland, War-Stricken, Famished and Devastated," *Catholic Union and Times*, May 4, 1916, 1.

<sup>44</sup> "Polish Bishops' Appeal to be Read in Churches," *Buffalo Evening News*, April 29, 1916, 2.

<sup>45</sup> "Polish Churches Collect Fund for War Relief," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 9, 1916, 14.

<sup>46</sup> "Bazar Marks Birthday Polish Constitution," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 4, 1916, 15.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "Polish Ladies Relief Committee Celebrates," *Buffalo Evening News*, December 11, 1916, 15.

<sup>49</sup> "Poles Would Respond Promptly to Call," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 27, 1917, 9.

The Polish Union of America of Buffalo, an organization of 25,000 members, mostly from your district, endorses the President and the war resolution before your house. Stand with us.<sup>50</sup>

A second telegram came from the business and professional leaders of Polonia, and read as follows:

We and 99 per cent of the Americans of Polish descent of your district are with the President and for the resolution declaring a state of war with Germany, now before your house. We trust that you will represent our sentiments by your vote. America first, always.”<sup>51</sup>

During the weeks following America’s entry into war, the Polish community publicly reaffirmed its loyalty to the United States. In its edition for May 7, 1917, *The Buffalo Evening News* published a headline entitled “Thousands of Poles Cheer for U.S. Flag.”<sup>52</sup> The newspaper reported that at four different events to commemorate the Polish Constitution of 1791, “there were cheers for the Stars and Stripes and for President Wilson.”<sup>53</sup> In particular, members of the Polish Roman Catholic Union raised the American flag at their local headquarters and adopted a resolution “assuring President Wilson of the local support of Poles in America.”<sup>54</sup> On May 14, local branches of the Polish National Alliance adopted a similar resolution at an event in the Dom Polski Building on Broadway.<sup>55</sup> Then on May 20, “Old Glory was raised on a new pole at the home of the Polish Citizens’ Protective Association on Broadway and Deshler Street . . . with patriotic exercises.”<sup>56</sup>

Shortly after the United States declared war, Ignacy Jan Paderewski proposed the creation of an army recruited from Polish immigrants.<sup>57</sup> Its purpose would be two-fold: to assist the Allied cause and to advance the creation of a free and independent Poland. France immediately embraced the proposal and offered financing. The United States government approached the idea with reluctance, but after several months of negotiations, agreed to allow recruitment starting in the fall of 1917. Eventually, more than 24,000 Polish residents from across America would volunteer for service in this separate military unit. Due to the color of its uniforms, this force became known as the “Blue Army.”

<sup>50</sup> “Waldow Comes in; Will Back Wilson,” *The Buffalo Express*, April 6, 1917, 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Thousands of Poles Cheer for U.S. Flag,” *Buffalo Evening News*, May 7, 1917, 13.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> “Poles Adopt Resolution Pledging Loyalty to U.S.,” *Buffalo Evening News*, May 14, 1917, 5.

<sup>56</sup> “Polish Citizens’ Assn. Hold Flag Raising,” *Buffalo Evening News*, May 21, 1917, 7.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph T. Hapak, “Polish Army in France,” in *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, ed. By James S. Pula (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2011), 385.

In anticipation of a recruitment drive for the Blue Army, members of what was known as the Franco-Polish Military Legation visited Buffalo in late September of 1917.

Buffalo is to have as guests Sunday a distinguished group of men who are to participate in a big meeting to be held in Humboldt park Sunday afternoon, to further the organization of the Buffalo independent Polish regiments which are to offer their services to the United States in the world war, the regiments to be raised in Buffalo to join the allied armies. . . . The Polish citizens are especially interested, and the attendance will include a large number of Buffalo Poles who are anxious to enlist for service with the allied armies.<sup>58</sup>

Both within and outside Polonia, the leaders of Western New York responded favorably to proposals for the formation of a Polish army. On Sunday, September 23, the Reverend Czeslaw Duzynski, chaplain of Polish troops in France, celebrated a High Mass at St. Stanislaus Church, the largest Polish parish in Western New York. After the service, the parish's influential pastor, Father Alexander Pitass, hosted a dinner for the visiting officials and community leaders.<sup>59</sup> Then on Monday, September 24, the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce sponsored a luncheon in honor of the Franco-Polish commissioners.<sup>60</sup> That same afternoon, these commissioners spoke at a rally chaired by Dr. Francis E. Fronczak, a prominent Polish physician who was then serving as Buffalo's Health Commissioner. As many as 20,000 residents attended this meeting, which was held at the Broadway Market located in the heart of Buffalo's Polish district.<sup>61</sup>

In response to the meetings on September 23 and 24 of 1917, the Polish community formed a Citizens Recruitment Committee whose purpose was to seek volunteers for the Blue Army. Maxwell Nowak, a prominent businessman, served as chair. With support from more than 900 donors,<sup>62</sup> the Committee initially operated three recruiting stations: two in the large Polish district on Buffalo's East Side and one in a Polish district in the city's Black Rock section.<sup>63</sup> An additional office was later opened in the nearby city of Lackawanna.

The Citizens Recruitment Committee accepted almost 2000 volunteers from Western New York.<sup>64</sup> These were in addition to even greater numbers who either volunteered for or were drafted into the military forces of the United States. The recruitment success was remembered a decade later when Buffalo hosted a convention of the Polish Army Veterans' Association. On that occasion, the Association's National Commander, Colonel Teofil Starzyński, "acclaimed Buffalo as the

<sup>58</sup> "Noted Poles and French to Visit Buffalo," *Buffalo Evening News*, September 20, 1917, 2.

<sup>59</sup> "Seek Buffalo Recruits for Poles in France," *Buffalo Evening News*, September 24, 1917, 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> "Buffalo Sends 107 Recruits to Polish Army," *Buffalo Evening News*, November 19, 1917, 2.

<sup>63</sup> "Seek Buffalo Recruits for Poles in France," *Buffalo Evening News*, September 24, 1917, 3.

<sup>64</sup> "Polish Mission Coming for Mass Meeting," *Buffalo Evening News*, April 27, 1918, 5.

first city in the United States to organize a contingent for the Polish army and for contributing per capita more volunteers to the American division of the army than any other city in the country.”<sup>65</sup>

The Blue Army would mostly train at Niagara-on-the-Lake, a town located near Buffalo but across the border in Canada. Due to the proximity of the Blue Army encampment, the Polish community of Buffalo undertook a broad program to support the recruits, including both those from Buffalo and the many who would pass through Buffalo on route to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Before the soldiers crossed into Canada, the Citizens Committee provided meals and an opportunity for relaxation. For example, 300 recruits from Chicago and 100 recruits from Buffalo were scheduled to leave Buffalo for Niagara-on-the-Lake at 4 PM on November 29, 1917. Before they left, however, the Polish community hosted a celebration. The day began with Mass at St. Stanislaus Church, where more than 1000 supporters served as escorts for the soldiers. “Thousands more lined the street outside the edifice.”<sup>66</sup> Then at midday, local leaders joined the recruits for dinner at the Broadway Auditorium, which was then the city’s largest assembly hall. After all were served, the Reverend Stanislaus C. Bubacz spoke on behalf of the community:

This is the greatest day that ever has dawned for free Poland. It is Poland’s last chance to wrest herself from the powers that long have exploited her, to make her own place in the sun, to be the champion of freedom in the old world, as this great country is in the new. It is to you men that Poland looks for freedom. . . . Go: fight to the finish for the ideals the we have learned to love so well in this great adopted land of ours.<sup>67</sup>

The farewell celebration on November 29, 1917, was extraordinary but not unique. Throughout the war, as Polish recruits passed through Buffalo, the Citizens Committee provided warm meals, temporary lodging, and strong moral support. Parades and celebrations occurred whenever troops left on the final portion of their trip to the training encampment.<sup>68</sup> Chairman Nowak emphasized that funds for these endeavors were “provided voluntarily by the Polish people of Buffalo.”<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, the Citizens Committee remembered the soldiers after they had settled into their encampment. During December of 1917, the Polish

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<sup>65</sup> “Polish War Vets Visit Tomb of War Dead,” *Buffalo Evening News*, May 28, 1928, 14.

<sup>66</sup> “Polish Citizens Honor Recruits for Big Army,” *Buffalo Evening News*, November 30, 1917, 23.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> “Buffalo Poles to Prepare for War Service,” *Buffalo Evening News*, October 23, 1917, 15; “107 Polish Men Leave Buffalo for War Camp,” *Buffalo Evening News*, November 20, 1917, 10; “Sixth Polish Unit to Leave Buffalo Today,” *Buffalo Evening News*, December 6, 1917, 9. An exception to the regular parade occurred in January of 1918, when recruits were driven by car to the train station due to weather conditions. “More Polish Recruits Start for Training Camp,” *Buffalo Evening News*, January 8, 1918, 18.

<sup>69</sup> “Additional Polish Recruits Reach City,” *Buffalo Evening News*, December 12, 1917, 5.

community held events where attendees contributed “hundreds of gifts” in addition to monetary donations.<sup>70</sup> As a consequence, “truckloads of gifts” were sent to the encampment, “where Christmas trees will be erected and informal celebrations held.”<sup>71</sup>

The training facility at Niagara-on-the-Lake was able to accommodate about 10,000 recruits. By early December in 1917, however, the camp was at capacity. Meanwhile, hundreds were still arriving in Buffalo. Upon receiving instructions that the men were to delay their arrival until billets became available for them, Buffalo's Citizens Recruitment Committee assumed responsibility for the quartering of 600 men.<sup>72</sup> Many slept in church halls and private homes. All were fed, and everyone eventually made his way to service in the Blue Army.<sup>73</sup>

The Polish community's support for the Blue Army was only part of a broad support for the entire war effort. This sentiment was acknowledged by Leon Olzanowski, the secretary of the Citizens Recruitment Committee, in a speech that he delivered on November 29, 1917:

“There are many . . . fighting in the army of this great nation, the United States, and we cheer them at the same time we send our compatriots out to fight for [Poland]. It is a wonderful and beautiful thing that we thus can align ourselves with our adopted country in its great struggle for freedom and democracy for all the world.”<sup>74</sup>

In particular, Poles fully cooperated in recruitment for America's own military. On June 1, 1917, it was reported that “all the Polish newspapers in the United States today published a message to the Polish people calling on the young Poles to register [for the draft]. On Sunday the pastors of the Polish churches will call for a full registration.”<sup>75</sup> Indeed, parts of Polonia gave its foremost response to calls for service in the armed forces of the United States. For example, Saint Stanislaus was the largest Polish church in Buffalo. Altogether, 323 of its parishioners served in the American military, whereas seven men volunteered for the Polish Blue Army.<sup>76</sup> Like the assistance given to the Polish soldiers at the encampment in Niagara-on-the-Lake, American soldiers of Polish descent received expressions of care. Members of an army unit composed mostly of Polish men acknowledged this support in December of 1917. “Well known Polish Americans

<sup>70</sup> “Laud Poles at Patriotic Feast,” *The Buffalo Times*, December 24, 1917, 13.

<sup>71</sup> “Truckloads of Gifts Sent Poles in Camp,” *Buffalo Evening News*, 22 December 1917, 5.

<sup>72</sup> “Poles Thank Citizens for Splendid Care,” *Buffalo Evening News*, December 15, 1917, 17.

<sup>73</sup> “Polish Recruits Granted Use of Fort Niagara,” *Buffalo Evening News*, December 11, 1917, 18.

<sup>74</sup> “Polish Citizens Honor Recruits for Big Army,” *Buffalo Evening News*, November 30, 1917, 23.

<sup>75</sup> “Polish Newspapers Help the Draft,” *The New York Times*, June 2, 1917, 9.

<sup>76</sup> Mieczysław Haiman, *Historia parafii św. Stanisława B. i M. w Buffalo, New York* (Buffalo: Nakładem Komitetu Wydawniczego, 1923), 180-182.

of Buffalo contributed cigars, tobacco and cigarettes. The Polish Red Cross sent enough milk chocolate to supply every man in the battery, and there were other generous contributions.”<sup>77</sup>

A particularly impressive demonstration of support for the war effort occurred on June 9, 1918. Madame Helen Paderewska returned to Buffalo for a special Mass at Saint Stanislaus Church, where the community dedicated a battle flag that the women of Buffalo had commissioned for use by the Polish army that had trained at Niagara-on-the-Lake. At a Mass attended by 3,000 people, Father Caesar Krzyzan declared: “There is nothing more elegant in the world, nothing that prompts such intense feelings, nothing that moves masses of people so much as the flag, standard or ensign of their country or one dear to them.”<sup>78</sup> Following Mass, the women leaders of Polonia led a procession that marched behind the flag of the United States. A female honor guard called the “Flying Squadron” escorted the newly dedicated battle flag. Then at Dom Polski Hall, Madame Paderewska called upon the Polish women of Buffalo to organize relief efforts. *The Buffalo Evening News* reported that “there was an air of solemnity when the assemblage in Dom Polski Hall arose and pledged itself to ever help the allied cause.” The assembly concluded with a special pledge of allegiance “before Old Glory and the red and white flag of Poland.”<sup>79</sup>

The funding of World War I included liberty loan drives that received broad support from the Polish community of Western New York. In a photo display in its edition for April 24, 1918, *The Buffalo Evening News* showed the packed auditorium of the Polish Union of America on Fillmore Avenue in Buffalo. Everyone in attendance held a small American flag. The caption announced that “Polish Citizens Boost Liberty Loan.”<sup>80</sup> On April 28, 1918, a committee chaired by Maxwell Nowak organized a Polish parade and rally to promote the sale of war bonds.<sup>81</sup> Additional liberty loan drives continued throughout the year. Students at Saint Stanislaus School contributed \$7,814.25 to the purchase of thrift and war savings stamps and ranked first among all parochial schools in Buffalo.<sup>82</sup> Doctor S. M. Borowiak and the Reverend Peter Adamski then chaired another mass meeting at the Polish Union Hall on October 6, 1918, to promote the further sale of liberty bonds.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout the time of American participation in the conflict, the Polish community of Buffalo continued its support for war relief. For example, on May 27,

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<sup>77</sup> “Polish Lads in Camp Well Remembered,” *Buffalo Evening News*, December 31, 1917, 7.

<sup>78</sup> “Poles Urged to Raise Big Relief Fund,” *The Buffalo Evening News*, June 10, 1918, 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>80</sup> “Polish Citizens Boost Liberty Loan,” *Buffalo Evening News*, April 24, 1918, 9.

<sup>81</sup> “Polish and Italian Parade and Concert,” *Buffalo Evening News*, April 25, 1918, 2.

<sup>82</sup> “Parochial School Record,” *Buffalo Evening News*, October 2, 1918, 4.

<sup>83</sup> “Poles Mass Meeting Will Boom Liberty Bonds,” *Buffalo Evening News*, October 4, 1918, 9.

1917, more than 5,000 Poles attended "Polish Day" at a fundraising event held at the city's Broadway auditorium.<sup>84</sup> One can count the number of participants, but the sincerity of their support is much more difficult to evaluate. For this, we might consider a short article published in the *Wall Street Journal* on July 11, 1917, under a headline entitled "The Widow's Mite:"

While the \$100,000,000 Red Cross fund campaign was on, a well known writer and speaker addressed a Polish meeting in Buffalo. After an address delivered in their own language, the audience responded with a liberal collection. Afterwards a Polish woman came to the speaker and after telling that her husband was dead, and that she had seven small children to support by her daily toil, said: 'I only put 10 cents in the collection, for that was all I had. But I thought perhaps you might sell this, and put the money in the fund;' and handed out her wedding ring.<sup>85</sup>

### Conclusion

In a speech to Congress on July 8, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson announced a guide of fourteen points that he proposed as the framework for peace. Included on this list was independence for Poland. Thus, the cause of Polish independence would come to coincide with a patriotic endorsement of America's participation in the First World War. Historians have observed that Polish communities throughout the United States provided a broad base of support to the war effort.<sup>86</sup> Events within Western New York confirm this finding. Buffalo's Polonia gave enthusiastic and constant support to the Allied cause, as well as to humanitarian efforts to assist the people of Poland.

The subjugation of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century had a profound impact on the spirit of the Polish people. A longing for freedom is evident in many dimensions: in the patriotic music of Chopin and Paderewski; in the literature of Mickiewicz and Sienkiewicz; and even in science, as when Marie Skłodowska-Curie gave the name "polonium" to the 84th element on the periodic table. University students helped to precipitate the Polish uprising of 1863. However, the intensity of individual emotion does not necessarily speak to the breadth of feeling. Was the Polish love of liberty an exercise among an elite? To what extent did the entire nation share in the desire for freedom? Historian Adam Zamoyski writes that at the time of Poland's dismemberment, "somewhere around 90 per cent of ethnic Poles were illiterate peasants with no national consciousness."<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> "Buffalo Poles Flock to Big Allied Bazar," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 28, 1917, 5.

<sup>85</sup> "The Widow's Mite," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 1917, 2.

<sup>86</sup> See e.g. James S. Pula, *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (New York: Twayne Publishers 1995), 59; John J. Bukowczyk, *A History of the Polish Americans* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 49.

<sup>87</sup> Adam Zamoyski, *Poland: A History* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2009), 218.

Uprisings against foreign domination in 1830 and 1863 were seriously compromised by a lack of peasant support.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, a half century later, within the confines of an immigrant community in Western New York, the descendants of these same peasants would unify in their support for Polish independence and for what the community perceived as a vehicle to achieve that goal, namely participation in the First World War.

Events during the First World War confirm the establishment of a unique immigrant community that would become known as “Polonia.” Indeed, the organized support of the war effort was possible only due to community investment in the creation of institutions like churches, fraternal societies and cultural clubs. Thus, the response to war was not only a notable phenomenon, but also a reflection of success by Poles in establishing a structured presence in America.

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<sup>88</sup> Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 168.

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## DR. FRANCIS FRONCZAK AND THE RHETORIC OF POLISH INDEPENDENCE

### Abstract

This article deals with the activities during World War I of Dr. Francis Fronczak (1874-1955), who was an important figure in Polonia politics in Buffalo, NY and beyond. During the war years, Fronczak became increasingly connected to political developments in Poland. He became a member of the Polish National Committee in 1918, while simultaneously serving in the United States Army as a major in the Medical Corps. In this study, the author will analyze the rhetoric used by Fronczak to create a positive image of Polish-Americans and to promote the Polish national cause. Fronczak persistently focused on the shared past and common cultural values in the American and Polish historical experiences, thus providing a rationale for non-Poles in America to support Polish independence as a wartime demand.

**Keywords:** Dr. Francis Fronczak, Buffalo, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Polish Central Relief Committee, Polish National Committee

### Introduction

In his exploration of the role of Polonia during World War I, M. B. B. Biskupski describes a tension between “two mentalities [that] coexisted among the Polonia leadership.” One is described as an “émigré consciousness” that enabled a person to regard one’s actions as part of “Polish political culture.” Over time, this perspective was surpassed by a “more pragmatic immigrant outlook” that was focused on community development in America. But on the eve of World War I, these “two dispositions were both powerfully present, sometimes in the same person.”<sup>1</sup> This dynamic tension is evident in the life and activities of Dr. Francis Fronczak (1874-1955), who was an important figure in Polonia politics in Buffalo, NY and beyond. He displayed the complex behavioral patterns of an immigrant leader as described by Biskupski and others.<sup>2</sup> Especially in his role as

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<sup>1</sup> M. B. B. Biskupski, *The United States and the Rebirth of Poland, 1914-1918* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing, 2012), 7.

<sup>2</sup> This “duality” is reflected in the title of an unpublished biography. See Stanisław Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak, 1874-1955. ‘A Loyal Buffalonian.’ Study in Cultural Dualism,” 1980, <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/fronczak-publications/1/>. – accessed: 12 July 2019. Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection, Archives and Special Collections, E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo, NY.

Commissioner of Public Health for the city of Buffalo (1910-1947), Fronczak focused a great deal on the integration and well-being of Polish immigrants in their new communities in Western New York. During the war years (1914-1918), however, Fronczak became increasingly connected to political developments in Poland. Indeed, he became a member of the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski) in 1918, thus sitting on this provisional Polish governing body while simultaneously serving in the United States Army as a major in the Medical Corps.

Fronczak thus presents an important case study for examining the actions of a Polonia leader in the United States who, although he was the son of immigrants, was able to connect in a direct and personal way with Polish political developments during the years leading to national independence. This examination of Fronczak and his actions also provides a response to what scholars have identified as “the ‘Chicago-centric’ inclination” in the historiography of American Polonia.<sup>3</sup> Especially important here is the ability of Fronczak to work broadly among various communities to promote political objectives – in this case, convincing “Americans” to embrace the Polish national cause. William Galush posits that outside of Chicago, in “smaller colonies . . . pragmatic cooperation across institutional lines existed as often as conflict or competition.”<sup>4</sup> Fronczak was a fixture in Polish Catholic organizations and served in the *endecja*<sup>5</sup>-dominated Polish National Committee, yet he also was a prominent member of the Democratic Party in Buffalo and promoted the Polish cause beyond the confines of Polonia. Indeed, as Commissioner of Public Health for the city of Buffalo, Dr. Fronczak proved especially adept at developing “cooperation and inter-ethnic friendships,” which Galush argues “helps to account for the pervasive identification with America” among many immigrants to the United States.<sup>6</sup>

In this study, I will analyze the rhetoric used by Fronczak to create a positive image of Polish immigrants and promote the Polish national cause to the broader American audience – primarily in public lectures and private correspondence. In doing so, Fronczak persistently focused on the shared past and common cultural values in the American and Polish historical experiences. In this way, he contributed to the familiarization of American audiences with Poland and its history in the first decades of the twentieth century, and especially the suffering of Polish civilians during World War I. Most important, Fronczak provided the rationale for non-Poles to support Polish independence as a wartime demand.

<sup>3</sup> William J. Galush, *For More Than Bread: Community and Identity in American Polonia, 1880-1940* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; distributed by Columbia University Press, 2006), viii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> This term refers to National Democracy, which was the leading Polish nationalist movement founded by Roman Dmowski in 1893.

<sup>6</sup> Galush, *For More Than Bread*, ix.

### Francis Fronczak Prior to World War I

Born in Buffalo, NY on 20 September 1874, Francis Fronczak was the son of Polish immigrants from the Poznań region that had been acquired by Prussia as a result of the 18th-century partitioning of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Canisius College in Buffalo, and then earned his medical degree and law degree at the University of Buffalo. While a student at Canisius College, Fronczak worked as a stringer for local newspapers in order to earn money. One of his early assignments was an interview with Ignacy Jan Paderewski, the famous concert pianist who was on an extensive North American tour in 1891-92. The two men forged a lasting relationship in 1905, when Paderewski fell ill while on another concert tour. Now a physician, Fronczak treated Paderewski and accompanied him on his train trip to New York City.<sup>7</sup> Over the years, the two men developed a close friendship, which led Paderewski to support Fronczak as the Polonia representative on the Polish National Committee in 1918.

Fronczak travelled to Poland for the first time in 1900 on his honeymoon. He combined this personal trip with professional development – he attended a major international medical congress in Paris – and a visit to Kraków in June during the 500th anniversary celebration of the restoration of Jagiellonian University. This grand trip exemplifies the ways in which Fronczak's personal and professional lives intersected with his great interest in Polish affairs.<sup>8</sup> Back in Buffalo, Fronczak's role in local Polonia was on the rise. He was the point person for local business leaders in their efforts to connect with Polish-Americans. For example, in 1903 Curt M. Treat (Secretary of the Bureau of Conventions and Industries of the Chamber of Commerce of Buffalo) sought help from Fronczak as “one of the most prominent Buffalo residents in Polish Circles.” Interestingly, Treat opined that “too little prominence has been given the Polish people of Buffalo since coming here in my present capacity, five years ago [1898].”<sup>9</sup>

Fronczak often commented publicly on matters that concerned Polish-Americans. While he sometimes delivered addresses in Polish, he frequently lectured in English as a way to inform “Americans” about developments in Poland. This is evident in an address entitled “Poles and the Prussian Government,” delivered by Fronczak in Rochester, NY in January 1902. In this speech, Fronczak protested

<sup>7</sup> Wanda M. Slawinska, “Dr. Francis Eustace Fronczak and Ignacy Jan Paderewski: The Enduring Friendship,” in *The Polonian Legacy of Western New York: Stories of the lives, accomplishments, and contributions of four prominent Polish-Americans*, ed. Edward R. Szemraj and Wanda Slawinska (Buffalo: Canisius College Press, 2005), 122-26.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Curt M. Treat to Francis Fronczak, 23 July 1903, Box 32, Folder 1, Francis E. Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947. Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection, Archives and Special Collections, E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo, NY (hereafter cited as Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947).

against ongoing Germanization policies. In addition to its attacks on Polish culture and language, Fronczak condemned the German government for its measures to remove “from the Poles the land which for over two thousand years was occupied by their ancestors” through a “colonization commission” that “buys up lands of Poles and settles them exclusively with Germans . . .”<sup>10</sup>

In a message seemingly influenced by the “organic work” approach of Warsaw Positivism, he rejected revolution in favor of gradual transformation as a pathway to liberation. Fronczak advised his audience:

Poland does not demand bloodshed of us, does not demand fight with sword and bayonet in hand, but demands unity, harmony, energy, education, enlightenment and the thorough understanding of our conditions. Thence we should strive: it should make no difference to us whether we should be adjudged by the world to be the Knight among nations, the chevaliers of the Eastern hemisphere, the most heroic of all – but we should endeavor to show that the name of a Pole, everywhere, should represent a man of action, a man as unflinching as the steel, as pure as the tear.<sup>11</sup>

Although Fronczak added handwritten commentary about the military deeds of American revolutionary heroes Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski at the end of the speech, his prepared text made a different sort of appeal to the non-Poles in his audience. He wanted to “call the attention of the American public and all civilized nations to the great danger to the existing social order in the introduction by a great imperial power of measures attacking the inviolability of private property.”<sup>12</sup> He appealed “to the noble American nation, which has so hospitably received us and which in all its history never turned a deaf ear to the cry of the wronged, and to all other nations of the civilized world to raise their powerful voice of indignation at the unparalleled outrageous [sic] perpetrated by the Prussian government upon the Polish people.”<sup>13</sup>

Relying not on calls to military action or violence, but rather on protests and self-strengthening movements, Fronczak advocated action both in Poland and in Polonia. Already we see Fronczak linking Polish values with American values, such as the sanctity of private property. Fronczak clearly was following a pattern identified by scholars by merging “Polish aspirations with Americanism.”<sup>14</sup> Fronczak was a Democrat, and local and state party leaders early on identified Fronczak’s ability to serve as a conduit between “Poles” and “Americans” for broader political purposes. Fronczak was an effective communicator, and his public

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<sup>10</sup> Francis Fronczak, “Poles and the Prussian Government,” 3. January 1902, Box 4, Folder 10, Francis E. Fronczak, M.D., Papers, 1874-1955. Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection, Archives and Special Collections, E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo, NY (hereafter cited as Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>14</sup> Galush, *For More Than Bread*, 134.

speeches – in Polish and in English – sought to galvanize Poles and Americans on key political issues. Over time, the vision of a resurrected Polish state became a matter of more immediate concern for Poles. Fronczak played a leading role in making “Americans” aware of this demand.

In 1910, Poles around the world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald. Donald Pienkos points out that “events of 1910 underscored the rising expectations in both Poland and Polonia that dramatic changes in the country’s partitioned status were likely to occur in the near future.”<sup>15</sup> In the United States, these commemorations were thus also occasions to openly discuss Polish independence. The Polish National Alliance (Związek Narodowy Polski, PNA) hosted a “Polish national congress” in Washington, D.C. in May to coincide with the unveiling in the capital of monuments to Pułaski and Kościuszko. Among the resolutions adopted by the Congress was one promoting Polish independence.<sup>16</sup> Fronczak was also on the local planning committee for a celebration in Buffalo, but he was unable to attend the event. Rather, he travelled to Kraków for ceremonies in July surrounding the new Grunwald memorial. Its construction had been funded by Paderewski, whom Fronczak visited at his home in Switzerland during his visit to Europe. While in Kraków, Fronczak also attended a Polish Falcons convention before he travelled to Lwów (Lviv). Fronczak was interviewed by *Dziennik Polski* (Polish Daily) while in Lwów, and he discussed the situation among Poles in Buffalo at great length. Referring to Polonia in America as the “fourth part of Poland,” Fronczak emphasized that “the Polish peasant in America remains a good Pole . . . in America the Polish peasant becomes nationally enlightened, it is in America that he learns about Polish history; it is in America that he learns that he is not ‘Austrian,’ or ‘Prussian,’ or ‘from under Russia’ – but that he is a Pole.”<sup>17</sup>

Another important episode from the pre-war period relates to the 1912 presidential campaign in the United States. Although Fronczak was a Democrat, he balked at supporting Woodrow Wilson. This was a widespread phenomenon among Polish-Americans, as a result of Wilson’s comments in his 5-volume *History of the American People* that was first published in 1902. In the fifth vol-

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<sup>15</sup> Donald E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish American Efforts On Poland’s Behalf, 1863-1991* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1991), 53.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>17</sup> Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak,” 198-202. This interview was republished broadly in the Polish press. For example, it appeared in *Ziemia: Tygodnik Krajoznawczy Ilustrowany* (Warsaw) 1, no. 35 (27 August 1910): 15-16; and *Gazeta Polska w Brazylii* (Curitiba) 18, no. 35 (2 September 1910): 1. Fronczak discussed Buffalo Polonia extensively in the interview, citing figures that perhaps came from an important study that was completed in that year. Earlier that year, when Fronczak was still the “Acting Health Commissioner” before his formal appointment, John Daniels, Director of the Buffalo Social Survey, sought from him “information, concerning housing and sanitary conditions among the Poles in this city.” Letter from John Daniels to Francis Fronczak, 24 January 1910, Box 22, Folder 4, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

ume, Wilson refers to the census of 1890 and observes that “[i]mmigrants poured steadily in as before, but with an alteration of stock which students of affairs marked with uneasiness.” Rather than immigrants from “the north of Europe” or “men of the Latin-Gallic stocks of France and northern Italy,” Wilson notes with dismay that

now there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meaner sort out of 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 the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population, the men whose standards of life and of work were such as American workmen had never dreamed of hitherto.<sup>18</sup>

Biskupski observes that Wilson’s “patrician racialism” was “widespread in the academic and social world” in the United States at the time, and that it “was exacerbated . . . by the tremendous increase in immigration around the turn of the century – an immigration composed of exotic, suspicious, and largely Catholic peoples instead of the West European Protestants familiar to the American population.”<sup>19</sup>

Fronczak had already privately expressed his concerns about the local Democratic Party and its treatment of Poles in Buffalo. In a letter from November 1911, he vented his frustrations to William E. Robertson, who was then President of the Chamber of Commerce in Buffalo. He was eager to follow up on a conversation they recently had about “the political situation in general and in the Polish section of this city in particular.” He clarified that “I am telling you the situation as it is and not as I wish it to be,” and he explicitly warned that more Poles may vote against Democratic candidates in upcoming elections

in order to show the organization that the Polish vote, as such, cannot be ignored, and their logic is as follows: For over thirty years, the Poles have been voting almost solidly Democratic but have never received any important appointments unless it was a local one. For the first time, last year, the situation was such that one of their men, and unfortunately for me, I was the man, was recognized in a substantial manner when there occurred a vacancy in the Commissioner of Health.<sup>20</sup>

Fronczak pointed out that some Democratic leaders had opposed his appointment and that many Poles were still angry about that – and this would affect their voting behavior.<sup>21</sup> Although he eventually supported Woodrow Wilson for

<sup>18</sup> The typed excerpts of these passages from pp. 212-214 of Wilson’s book were included in a letter from Francis Fronczak to F. Clarkin, 23 May 1912, Box 32, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>19</sup> Biskupski, *United States and Rebirth of Poland*, 183.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to William E. Robertson, 2 November 1911, Box 32, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

President in 1912, Fronczak's frustration was still evident in May 1912, when he responded to a request to campaign actively in Wilson's electoral campaign. Despite Wilson's attempts to publicly explain his past statements, Fronczak wrote that

candidly, I cannot favor Woodrow Wilson for President of these United States of America. . . . Repeated readings of Mr. Wilson's fifth volume on the History of the American people and especially that portion pertaining to Poles, Hungarians and Italians, wherein he compares them unfavorably with the Chinese, does not change my mind as to his meaning: such statements are repulsive and cannot be permitted to go unchallenged . . . I endeavor to be liberal in my views and am ready to be convinced if wrong, and will welcome any explanation you may make to set this matter straight, in the hope that I may be in a position to laud the broadmindedness of Mr. Wilson instead of, as at present, opposing him as a candidate for the Presidency because of his apparent narrow-mindedness.<sup>22</sup>

While Fronczak was especially concerned with matters related to Poland and advocating for the welfare of Poles in America, he was active in broader immigrant advocacy groups, too. For example, he served as a member of the Buffalo Committee of the American Civic League for Immigrants.<sup>23</sup> He frequently exchanged letters with Charles Bennett Smith, a Congressman from Western New York (1911-1919) who was a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. In one exchange from December 1912, Fronczak was advised by Smith that a bill advocating new limits on immigration would be discussed in Congress. Smith requested information from Fronczak about Poles' contributions to the local Buffalo economy, their level of education, their participation in the Spanish-American War, and other matters.<sup>24</sup> Fronczak responded with a letter providing data that are likely drawn from the 1910 Buffalo Social Survey, which he used in his speeches, too. He advised the Congressman:

Limit the immigrant, who though weak on literature and history and scientific knowledge, but strong in arm, healthy in body and mind, willing to work, law abiding in the country, whence he came, anxious to work out the destinies of our beloved Country – and you are injuring the very foundations of our Republic. Let the American melting pot continue to mould from the refugees and emmigrants [sic] of all foreign countries, the future American citizen . . .<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to F. Clarkin, 23 May 1912, Box 32, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Adelbert Moot to Francis Fronczak, 4 March 1912, Box 28, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram from Charles B. Smith to Francis Fronczak, 7 December 1912, Box 28, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Charles B. Smith, n.d. December 1912, Box 28, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

## Francis Fronczak and World War I

When war broke out in 1914, Poles in America sought ways to unify in order to promote the Polish cause. Initially, this focused on relief of war victims, but over time the calls for independence grew louder. An early action was the creation in October 1914 of the Polish Central Relief Committee in America (PCKR, Polski Centralny Komitet Ratunkowy w Ameryce), which aimed to provide aid for Poles affected by the war.<sup>26</sup> Fronczak became chairman of this organization and played a leading role in other relief efforts, too. His prominence in Polonia was such that Fronczak's biographer, Stanisław Dąbrowski, concludes that "Poles, regardless of party affiliation or political orientation, saw in him a symbol of their recognition by the 'native' Americans."<sup>27</sup> According to press reports, Fronczak predicted that "the present struggle will be a revolution out of which will come the liberation of the Slavic nations" and the world would "see Poland regain its independence."<sup>28</sup> Fronczak's sentiment exemplified the excitement stirred by the outbreak of war among Polonia in Buffalo, where the Polish Falcon Alliance (Związek Sokolstwa Polskiego) held its convention from 6-10 September 1914. Fronczak was head of the organizing committee, and he also gave a major address at the gathering.<sup>29</sup> The event made a great impact on the local community, and Falcon military drills in Buffalo a year later led one "American" observer to share with Fronczak that he was

very much impressed . . . Should our own beloved land, The United States, ever become involved in war, there can be no question in any thinking man's mind that the patriotism and fidelity of America's sons of Polish blood and descent would be one of the bulwarks of our nation. . . I know the fidelity and patriotism of our Polish citizens. . . . Knowing of no one more patriotic and influential than yourself I am therefore laying this brief commentary before you . . .<sup>30</sup>

As the war dragged on, and the people of Poland were victimized by military occupations and suffered from naval blockades, Fronczak joined other leaders of Polonia in publicizing Poland's plight and organizing relief efforts. As Biskupski notes, "during the course of 1915, American society as a whole began to become aware of Poland and some aspects of Polish politics. The cause of relief to war-torn Poland spread beyond the confines of Polonia to the attention of non-Polish

<sup>26</sup> John Radziłowski, *The Eagle & The Cross: A History of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, 1873-2000* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; distributed by Columbia University Press, 2003), 151.

<sup>27</sup> Dąbrowski, "Francis Eustachius Fronczak," 207.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-214.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Patrick J. Keeler to Francis Fronczak, 2 November 1915, Box 20, Folder 5, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

America.”<sup>31</sup> Fronczak’s good friend Ignacy Jan Paderewski arrived in the US on 15 April 1915, and from his residence at the Hotel Gotham in New York City he played a key role in bringing attention to the Polish cause.<sup>32</sup> William Galush points out that “American Poles were acutely aware of the destruction and suffering and soon began collecting funds and food for shipment to the homeland. Appeals to humanitarianism were universally acceptable” and a sort of “pragmatic unity” unique to the wartime allowed for a united front in Polish appeals to the broader American population.<sup>33</sup> Fronczak and others often voiced frustration that Belgian relief efforts received far more attention and funding, “outdrawing the Polish cause by twenty to one.”<sup>34</sup> But over time, and thanks to the concerted efforts of Polonia and its friends, the “relief issue resurrected Poland from the obscurity into which it had been long relegated in the American consciousness. Once aware of Poland and sympathetic to its extraordinary wartime suffering, Americans became receptive to appeals for the restoration of Polish statehood. The travails of the Polish people advanced the cause of their national independence.”<sup>35</sup>

Fronczak played an important role in relief efforts in Buffalo and beyond, organizing fund-raising bazaars, benefit concerts, and direct appeals to the public on behalf of war-torn Poland. He also sought to raise public awareness about Poland, especially its long history of relations with America and their shared values. In his public speeches, he predicted “that Poland would ‘appear on the map of Europe as one of the free and independent countries.’”<sup>36</sup> A close analysis of one of Fronczak’s lectures, “The Poles in America and the Polish Question,” offers us some insights into the content and tone of his rhetoric. This 45-minute lecture was part of a program for a “Polish Day” celebration that was held at Convention Hall in Rochester, NY on Sunday, 14 March 1915. The event started “promptly” at 8:15 pm and included four speakers: Fronczak, a historian from the University of Rochester, a “local American” who was regarded by the organizers as “well versed in the situation of present affairs in [the] European war,” and another speaker who would address the audience in Polish.<sup>37</sup> One of the organizers, Joseph E. Maryanski, M.D., pointed out that “this so called ‘Polish Day’ [aimed] to inform the Americans and others present on the ‘History of Poles in America’ combined with the present situation of [the] European war and the effect produced on Poles living in the zone of war.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Biskupski, *United States and Rebirth of Poland*, 65.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>33</sup> Galush, *For More Than Bread*, 138.

<sup>34</sup> Biskupski, *United States and Rebirth of Poland*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>36</sup> Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak,” 228.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Joseph E. Maryanski to Francis E. Fronczak, 16 February 1915, Box 46, Folder 4, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Joseph E. Maryanski to Francis E. Fronczak, 4 February 1915, Box 46, Folder 4, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

Fronczak's task was to extol the virtues of Polish-Americans, thereby mainstreaming them and by extension making their wartime demands about Poland appear to be legitimate concerns for a broader American audience. In keeping with his growing advocacy for Poles within a broader debate about recent immigrants to the United States, Fronczak opened his speech by declaring that "[i]t does not matter much whether the citizen of these United States has but recently been naturalized, or whether he is a member of the 'Sons of the Revolution' and his forefathers have taken part in the War for Independence; the question is, how good a citizen is he, and how does he add to the general welfare of the country by his presence here."<sup>39</sup> His focus, of course, was the contributions of Poles in American history, and he retold the stories of the great Revolutionary War heroes Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski, and also the lesser-known Ursyn Niemcewicz. He made the Polish-American bond seem to be an intrinsic part of the birth of the nation, pointing out that these three Poles "were friends and associates of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and other Americans whom we do justly honor."<sup>40</sup>

Fronczak made room for praising the virtues of everyday Poles, too, noting that 80,000 (of a total population of 425,000) in Buffalo at the time were "of Polish extraction."<sup>41</sup> Drawing on data from the Buffalo Social Survey of 1910, he praised at great length the virtues of the working class Poles in Buffalo and their role in constructing homes, churches, and businesses in thriving neighborhoods.<sup>42</sup> Two years before the United States entered the war, Fronczak promised that Poles in America would fight for their adopted country:

They left beyond the Atlantic their beloved country. They brought with them their customs and traditions, their love for liberty, their patriotism, and their willingness to sacrifice all that is valuable to them for what is truly good and worthy of sacrifice. Aye, even life itself, they are willing to lay down on the altar of their adopted country.<sup>43</sup>

Other cities in Western New York organized similar events, such as the "Polish-American Relief Day" in Batavia's Ellicott Hall on Sunday, 17 October 1915. The program featured a keynote address by "Health Commissioner of Buffalo, Dr. F. E. Fronczak, one of the best known Polish Relief workers and president of the Polish Central Relief Committee in U.S.," who spoke "exhaustibly in English" while another "eloquent speaker, Rev. Dr. Al. Pitass of Buffalo," spoke in Polish. Organizers promised that the "program is short and [they] counted on the

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<sup>39</sup> Francis Fronczak, "The Poles in America and the Polish Question," 1. 14 March 1915, Box 24, Folder 1, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

kind presence of English speaking Batavians, who, we earnestly hope, will recall . . . fair monuments in Washington, D. C. of Kościuszko, the father of American artillery, and of Pułaski, the father of American cavalry, and will lend us their kind co-operation as these heroes did in the days of America's trial."<sup>44</sup> As this flyer exemplifies, publicity for Polish relief efforts went well beyond Polonia during 1915-16, and after a Senate resolution, President Wilson in December 1915 declared that 1 January 1916 would be nationwide "Polish Relief Day."<sup>45</sup> Biskupski cautions, however, that "we should be careful not to exaggerate the depth or significance of American support for the Polish cause . . . the pathetic national response to Polish Relief Day was an embarrassment to the administration."<sup>46</sup>

But it was now clear that Polish lobbying efforts were beginning to have an impact on the American president. While Fronczak and others were proselytizing at local rallies throughout the United States, his friend Ignacy Paderewski was making connections with key American policymakers. Biskupski considers his meetings from the fall of 1915 onward with President Wilson to be "Paderewski's major triumph," which was primed by the ongoing publicity campaign for Polish relief among Americans.<sup>47</sup> Biskupski concludes that

the political phase in the international development of the Polish Question was not caused directly by the relief question preceding it. Nonetheless, historians have been remiss in overlooking the relationship between the two. First, the relief issue gained enormous and sympathetic publicity for Poland throughout the world. . . . Second, American interest in Polish difficulties was of prime significance. It was the relief issue around which the Poles of America coalesced.<sup>48</sup>

Fronczak was tireless in promoting the Polish cause. In a letter of 8 March 1916 to John Foster Carr, Director of the Immigrant Publication Society, Fronczak explained that Poland is an "unfortunate country" that "is certainly a victim of circumstances and a martyr in the cause of eternal peace, which, no doubt, must follow this war, for humanity will never permit a repetition of such needless sacrifice as at the present time." In a direct plea, he concluded his letter with an urgent plea: "As Chairman of the Polish Central Relief Committee, I beg to state that we are certainly in need of finances to prevent millions from starving."<sup>49</sup>

As Polonia developed a new institutional infrastructure to promote Polish national interests, Fronczak's profile continued to grow. In June 1916, the Pol-

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<sup>44</sup> Polish-American Relief Day Flyer, Batavia, NY. 17 October 1915, Box 22, Folder 8, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>45</sup> Biskupski, *United States and Rebirth of Poland*, 139-40.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-32.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to John Foster Carr, 8 March 1916, Box 28, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

ish National Department (Polski Wydział Narodowy, or WN), was created as the political outlet for the PCKR. Chicago Poles dominated the executive committee and John F. Smulski served as its powerful chair.<sup>50</sup> Biskupski observes that “Smulski combined ardent Polish patriotism with a successful adjustment to American life; he was that rare Pole who enjoyed influence within both Polonia and American society.”<sup>51</sup> The same can also be said about the Buffalo leader Fronczak, who served as secretary for the WN. He was one of the signatories of a memo issued by the PCKR on 12 July 1916. Asking the State Department to pressure the United Kingdom and Germany to allow supplies for civilians to pass through naval blockades, the signatories expressed their hope that President Wilson would act: “Into your hands, Mr. President, do we entrust what we believe to be a question of life and death of millions of Polish people.”<sup>52</sup> Fronczak also drafted the later statement by the WN – “A Protest made to the Civilized World by the National Department of the Polish Central Relief Committee” – that was issued in response to the Two Emperors’ Manifesto of 5 November 1916, which called for the creation of a truncated Polish Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> Importantly, this document was also signed by Paderewski in his capacity as “Honorary President” of the PCKR. Paderewski was the most famous and well-regarded Polish spokesperson in America, so his support gave added weight to this protest against the latest “partition of Poland” and the explicit demand that “all Poland must be entirely free and independent” [emphasis in original].<sup>54</sup> This sort of rhetoric seemingly had an influence on President Wilson. In his “Peace without Victory” speech to the Senate on 22 January 1917, Wilson proclaimed that “statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland.”<sup>55</sup>

Wartime events in Europe were increasingly transformative, and Polonia in the United States reacted to each development. The tsarist regime in Russia collapsed in March 1917, and that same month the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government issued declarations promising Polish autonomy. In a private letter to Dr. S. Adolphus Knopf, Fronczak expressed his belief that in Europe “the days of monarchies, empires and autocratic bureaucracy are rapidly coming to an end with the evolution and give democracy – representation for all of us. We are in the making of history so stupendous that we cannot grasp it all.” He also

<sup>50</sup> Biskupski, *United States and Rebirth of Poland*, 166–67.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>52</sup> Polish Central Relief Committee, “Memo to President Woodrow Wilson,” 12 July 1916, Box 21, Folder 7, Fronczak Papers, 1894–1947.

<sup>53</sup> Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak,” 226, 233.

<sup>54</sup> Polish Central Relief Committee, “A Protest Made to the Civilized World by the National Department of the Polish Central Relief Committee,” n.d. [1916], Box 21, Folder 7, Fronczak Papers, 1894–1947.

<sup>55</sup> Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak,” 235.

correctly predicted that America would soon enter the fray: "As to war I think we will do our part in accordance with the very best traditions if we are going into it, and hope seems to be growing fainter every day that we may be kept out of it. I have no doubts as to the result, that the consequences . . . are going to be beneficent for all mankind."<sup>56</sup> The United States declared war on Germany on 6 April, and Fronczak's activities on behalf of Polish independence were now paired with his dedication to the American war effort. He helped organize a "mass meeting of Buffalo's citizens of Polish nativity or descent" in Buffalo on July 4th, which allowed local Polish-Americans "to give expression to their patriotism, loyalty and desire to serve the country in the present emergency."<sup>57</sup>

Patriotic organizations emerged around the U.S. in support of the war effort. In Buffalo, the local "Defense & Security Committee" coordinated with the local "Home Defense Committee" in planning events for the celebrations of "Patriotic Week" in September 1917. The final day of events featured public speeches at a "Wake Up America Mass Meeting" on "Why America is at War," and "The World After the War." The stated purpose was to "reawaken the public zeal and patriotism."<sup>58</sup> Reaching beyond Buffalo, Fronczak exhibited his patriotism in ways that also served Polish national interests. For the Liberty Loan drive of 1917, for example, he wrote an article in August to help spur Polish Americans to buy Liberty Bonds. Fronczak's written rhetoric here borrows from his wartime speeches, but with new twists. He urged Poles in America to

save a little and buy a bond. Help the government, protect the country and aid Poland, your's [sic] or your forefather's native land to regain her freedom, her liberty, her place on the map of Europe among the nations of the world where she belongs. . . . There should be and must be a liberty bond in every American home, and especially in the homes of our Polish speaking citizens . . . Every Polish society and association should hold a meeting . . . supporting our adopted country . . .<sup>59</sup>

### **Fronczak at War: Diplomat and Medical Officer**

Over time, Fronczak's remarkable contributions to the American war effort took on unique dimensions. Especially after President Wilson outlined his "Four-

<sup>56</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to S. Adolphus Knopf, 26 March 1917, Box 3, Folder 8, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Louis P. Fuhrmann, Commissioner of Department of Public Safety, Buffalo NY, 22 June 1917, Box 7, Folder 9, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>58</sup> Letters from Mayor Louis P. Fuhrmann to General E. B. Jewett, 1 September 1917; unknown to General E. B. Jewett, 13 September 1917; and Colonel John B. Weber to General E. B. Jewett, 20 September 1917. W. 127, Vol. I. Manuscript Department, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Home Defense Committee of Erie County, New York, scrapbooks, 1917-1919.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Oscar A. Price, n.d. 1917, Box 22, Folder 8, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

teen Points” (which included his vision for an independent Poland) in a speech of 8 January 1918, Fronczak’s words and deeds served his patriotic dedication to the American war effort while simultaneously promoting Polish independence. In an official report to the military authorities in February 1919, Fronczak explained the timeline for his transition from his peacetime life in Buffalo to his wartime service. Upon the recommendation of Ignacy Paderewski, Fronczak was appointed to the Polish National Committee in February 1918. On 18 March, he was officially recognized as a representative of “the Polish Immigration to the United States” by Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Later that month, he received his appointment at the rank of Major in the Medical Corps.<sup>60</sup> As he prepared to leave for action in France, Fronczak speculated about his future in private correspondence with friends and colleagues. In a letter to Dr. Ladislaus Pawlicki in San Francisco, he broke the news:

You will be interested to know that I have been appointed a member of the Polish Committee in Paris . . . and at a very early day will cross the Atlantic and run the gauntlet of the U-boats in fulfillment of my appointment. Were it not for the conditions in Russia, I should have gone to Paris by way of San Francisco and Japan, and incidentally visited you, all of which would have been a great pleasure to me, and which I regret very, very much I cannot do. I do not know how long I will be on the Western Front in France, nor can I give you any further details at the present time.<sup>61</sup>

In a later letter to Rev. John Grudzinski in Kansas City, KS, he reported that “I have been appointed a Major in the National Army. . . . What my duties are to be, or where I will be sent, whether to France or elsewhere I do not know. I am just waiting.”<sup>62</sup>

While he waited in Buffalo for his mobilization orders, Fronczak continued his publicity campaign on behalf of Poland. More than ever, Fronczak embodied and personified the complete merging of American and Polish national interests. On 2 April 1918, Fronczak delivered a definitive version in Buffalo of his address on “Poles in America.” His presentation at the Hotel Iroquois was part of a series on Poland included in the “Americanization Lectures for Native Americans” [citizens born in the US], which was sponsored by the local Civic Education Association. These lectures were free and open to the public, and featured music by Polish composers. Organizers promoted the lectures as an expression of patriotism: “The Poles of our city are joining the colors by the thousand, a fact that is not appreciated by the community

<sup>60</sup> Francis Fronczak, “Summary of printed report on activities of the Polish National Committee,” 1. 15 February 1919, Box 8, Folder 5, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Dr. L[adislaus] Pawlicki, 13 March 1918, Box 47, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Rev. John Grudzinski, 29 March 1918, Box 47, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

generally and in order that this people who constitute so large a proportion of our city may be better understood, we offer these lectures to the public. It is hoped that the native Americans will avail themselves of this opportunity to learn about this great people within our gates.”<sup>63</sup> In the text of his speech, Fronczak noted that he was originally scheduled to appear on 15 April. He explained that “in view of the fact that my native land (United States) has called me to do my bit, not only for her, but ‘to make the world safe for democracy,’ it was considered that possibly I might not be able to fulfill my engagement, and, therefore, have been asked to open this serious [sic] of lectures on the Polish Questions of to day.”<sup>64</sup>

This important address is one version of a text delivered by Fronczak on several occasions during the war years. Fronczak opened his presentation by connecting Polish and American values, especially mindful of the nativist backlash against immigrant communities that had emerged in the United States during the war.

As a rule, one of Polish descent, no matter how many years he may have spent in this country, is called a foreigner, but, if that is so, it is logical to call the entire American population foreigners, for it's only a question of how recent the immigrant, or one's forefathers, came to this country. . . . I shall endeavor to prove to you that the Pole in America today is as loyal a citizen as there is in this country, and barring none . . . 99% of the Poles of [sic] in America today . . . adhere most closely to the principles laid down by George Washington and the statesmen from his time to the greatest statesman that the world has today – our President, Woodrow Wilson.<sup>65</sup>

Fronczak's rhetoric had long been characterized by drawing attention to shared cultural values. Now that the United States was engaged in a world war that President Wilson promised would bring about Polish independence, Fronczak's oratory resonated with a new sense of urgency. He opined:

There is a startling resemblance between Poland and the United States. We are citizens of a young, powerful, active country. And today we are the bulwarks of freedom. Poland was likewise strong, energetic, restless, every [sic] ready to fight the battles of the weak. Both of these countries, brave and generous to a fault, . . . both tolerant to all creeds; both loving liberty better than life, Washington and Kosciuszko fighting side by side for American independence, friends ever! There is a strong bond of friendship between the two countries. Poland, stricken off the map of Europe, is its battlefield to day; the great United States is looked upon by the nations of the world as the bulwark of all freedom, of all civilization and all progress . . .<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Civic Education Ass'n of Erie County, Buffalo NY. Flyer for “Americanization Lectures for Native Americans,” Box 24, Folder 1, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Fronczak, “Poles in America,” 1. 2 April 1918, Civic Education Association, Americanization Lectures for Native Americans, Buffalo NY, Box 24, Folder 1, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Fronczak's wartime rhetoric increasingly assumed a messianic tone, much different from his message in earlier years. As we saw, in 1902 he was angered by German policies that he believed threatened Polish landowners and Polish culture. Yet at that time he advocated resistance in the form of grassroots activism; through education and self-empowerment, he believed, Poland would regain its societal strength and eventual independence. Now he depicted Polish suffering as a messianic prelude to the resurrection of a Polish state.

In 1800, the Polish people prayed to be allowed to live. In 1918 we know we shall live. Now are the Polish people suffering as never before, and through no fault whatever of their own. Their territory, the battlefield of the war in eastern Europe, is soaked with the blood of the fallen, and millions of innocent women and children are starving. Their plight is worse than that of the Belgians . . . .<sup>67</sup>

Fronczak had been working actively to help the nascent Polish army that was forming at Camp Kościuszko, located just across the border in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Volunteers en route to Canada frequently came through Buffalo, and troops and their commanders paid visits to Buffalo during their training. Fronczak hailed those Poles

who were not able to enter the army of Uncle Sam [but] have entered the ranks of the Polish army and more than twenty-five thousand of these men who have been living in the United States and who were not subject to draft because they come from countries which are enemy countries, or because of other reason provided by law, are now in the ranks of the Polish Army and they hope to see as a result of this war, a free, independent Poland . . . The aim and ideal of the Pole in America is to see not only his adopted country great, but also to see that the country of his forefathers shall resume its proper place among the nations of the world. . . . They will fight with the American soldiers, shoulder to shoulder for the preservation of civilization; the laws of humanity; democracy and liberty for all oppressed nations and they cherish in their hearts the hope of liberty for the land of their own forefathers which we hope they shall obtain with the aid of the American people, and with their benediction carry forth the highest ideals of mankind.<sup>68</sup>

Before his departure to Europe, Fronczak delivered other public lectures, in which he expressed optimism for the outcome of the war. In private correspondence, however, he revealed a more anxious mood. In a letter written just three days after his lecture on "Poles in America," he confessed: "I am getting so many nice things written to me just now that I am beginning to wonder if there is not something sinister about it, in view of the fact that all we see in the papers now adays [sic] in connection with the war, is horror – U-boats and

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 12-13.

the like.”<sup>69</sup> In another letter from April 1918, he detailed a recent “meeting in Carnegie Hall [that] was really a splendid affair and with a large fine responsive audience. Mr. Paderewski spoke on Poland, and as if inspired, and it was a wonderful, masterful address, presenting Poland’s cause in relation to the war, to our own country and to its future.” Fronczak added a further comment that reflects a deep understanding about his new role in the war: “I am sacrificing all I have in order to do my part and to instill into and demonstrate to the boys who have come forward in the war, and who themselves have made sacrifices, that they have back of them and with them the genuine sympathy of those they consider their leaders and look up to and who are likewise sacrificing and doing their part.”<sup>70</sup>

### **Fronczak in France: “From the Abyss of Hell” to the “Galleries of Heaven”**

Major Fronczak arrived in France on 20 May 1918. While in Paris, he resided in the attic of the Polish National Committee (PNC) headquarters, where he lived with Roman Dmowski and other colleagues.<sup>71</sup> He attended his first meeting of the PNC on 23 May. After his appointment as Director of the Department of Public Welfare, he travelled frequently to inspect hospitals and other medical care facilities. While visiting frontline trenches, he was injured on 18 June “by an exploding piece of shrapnel which made extensive lacerations of [his] nose, face and right arm, leaving permanent scars.” His department “also arranged celebrations of various anniversaries relating to [the] history of Poland, United States and France.”<sup>72</sup> In letters back home, Fronczak provided detailed accounts of his experiences in France. His letters help us understand that while the war would reshape the map of Europe, including the creation of a new Polish state, it would also radically alter the lives of its combatants. In a letter dated 9 September from “Somewhere in France” to a colleague in Buffalo, Fronczak offered a glimpse at the horrors of war:

For several days passed I have been searching the hospitals of this vicinity and found about [a] hundred of our Polish soldiers scattered in the hospitals all around here. No one but an egoist and faint hearted could not [be] moved to tears by seeing these young boys with arms and legs torn off, chest and body perforated

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Dr. J. W. Beach, 5 April 1918, Box 47, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to James C. White, 11 April 1918, Box 8, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>71</sup> Dąbrowski, “Francis Eustachius Fronczak,” 260.

<sup>72</sup> Fronczak, “Summary of printed report on activities of the Polish National Committee,” 2-3, 12.

by shot and shell, eyes lost by bullets or gas, and yet happy that they were able to serve their country and all anxious to return to the front and fight the despicable Hun. . . .<sup>73</sup>

The war was omnipresent, as Fronczak revealed in a letter dated 29 September to a friend and clergyman in Western New York. He explained that his “work begins at 6 o’clock in the morning, ends often after midnight,” and described his life in Paris in the following way:

I am really giving all that is best in me to make my work in the [Polish National] Committee a success. I often wonder at the directions of the Omnipotent who bids us follow certain ways most unexpectedly. . . . We had a beautiful raid a short time ago. We spent the night until the early dawn watching from our windows and listening to the working of the planes, the cannonading of the defence and the bursting of the enemy bombs. The bright starlike lights of the bursting shrapnel, high up in the air, the searchlights trying to locate the enemy planes, presented a sight awing in its magnitude and brutality. The nearest bomb fell a couple of blocks from where I live, quite close to the Arc de Triomphe [sic].<sup>74</sup>

Over time, the war took its toll on Fronczak. In a letter from 29 November to a friend in Chicago, he confessed that

[t]he last six months were full of worrying, anxiety, joy, excitement, disgust; take your choice, if you wish, I passed them all. I have been during that time in the **abyss of hell and in the galleries of heaven** [emphasis added] and am now walking on solid ground again. . . . I am in no position to write all I would like to; one of the reasons is that my mind is going through some chaotic phase where good and bad, fortitude and crime, pleasure and disgust are in a melting pot out of which is to come out some new mentality. I do not know what it will look like, but I am very much afraid that it will be some time before I will be considered by my fellow men as having complete equilibrium, but that is part of the war and the results thereof. . . . The world is certainly going through a great revolution which I hope will bring to mankind a greater conception of right, equality, brotherhood and justice.<sup>75</sup>

### Conclusion: Fronczak and the Rhetoric of Independence

Francis Fronczak’s service as a member of the Polish National Committee and the US Army Medical Corps ended shortly after the war. In early 1919, he travelled to Poland as “Physician Consultant of the American Red Cross,”

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Charles Armitage, 9 September 1918, Box 8, Folder 3, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Rev. J. Wojcik, 29 September 1918, Box 8, Folder 1, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to Con De Pree, 29 November 1918, Box 9, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

and he had offers to continue service to the new Polish state. He was “asked to do a dozen different things,” but he longed to “come back to dear old Buffalo.”<sup>76</sup> Back in Buffalo, Fronczak continued to celebrate the creation of an independent Poland and its historic mission. This is clearly evident in an unpublished manuscript that he wrote after the war. In this text, Fronczak manifests a more robust messianism that evolved over the years, shaped by his activities on behalf of Polonia in Buffalo and beyond, his diplomatic service in pursuit of Polish independence, and the transformative effect of his wartime experiences. In “The Polish Nation: The Knight among Nations,” Fronczak exclaims:

Poland – “the knight among nations” – is living again! . . . Indeed, the history knows no greater triumph of justice as it does not know a greater crime than the partitioning of Poland. A living nation enchained for 150 years is free again! . . . And we see Poland again – Poland, a champion of liberty and democracy; Poland, a haven of all oppressed; Poland, a breakwall of Europe against the hordes of barbarians: Tartars, Turks and Muscovites [~~crossed out~~ – *and, lately, Bolsheviks*].<sup>77</sup>

In sharp contrast to his youthful Positivist perspective, he now quotes Mickiewicz’s *Books of the Polish Nation and Pilgrimage* at length. Fronczak attests that

[t]he poet’s prayer has been answered. His prophetic dreams have come true. The great war has come. It brought independence, integrity, and freedom. But the great war also brought the greatest suffering to Poland. Her plight during the years of the war was the most deplorable and pitiable in history. For years the armed hordes of modern barbarism have added daily new pages of blood, of ruin, of devastation to the long book ‘The Tragedy of Poland.’<sup>78</sup>

Referring to a common complaint of Polonia during the war, he adds that “[t]he civilized world was profoundly shocked by the horrors inflicted on Belgium. But the plight of Poland was even more pitiable than that of Belgium. In fact, it was the greatest tragedy of mankind! It was the assassination of a nation!”<sup>79</sup> An independent Poland was resurrected as a result of the war, and Fronczak was convinced that Poland would join the United States as “one of the great power-houses of light and progress in regenerated humanity.”<sup>80</sup> Fronczak continued to promote the Polish cause among Americans during the interwar period. Devastated by the horrors of World War II, he returned to Poland as a medical advisor with

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Francis Fronczak to George Staniland, 9 December 1918, Box 9, Folder 2, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>77</sup> Francis Fronczak, “The Polish Nation: The Knight among Nations,” 1. N.d., Box 4, Folder 11, Fronczak Papers, 1874-1955.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in 1946. Despite his age (71 years old), he once again sought to serve his fellow Poles during their time of need.

JOSEPH HAPAK (*Oak Lawn, IL.*)

## THE BUFFALO POLONIA AND THE POLISH ARMY CAMP AT NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONTARIO

### Abstract

In October 1917, the United States War Department authorized recruitment of Polish immigrants not subject to the draft for the Polish Army in France. This culminated the Polish Falcon effort since the Great War began to become militarily engaged in it. The Polish Army Camp in Canada trained 20,720 men prior to their transport to France, where they formed the first significant complement to the Polish Army in France, often called Haller's Army.

**Keywords:** Buffalo, Niagara-on-the-Lake/Polish Army Camp, Polish Falcons, Polish National Alliance/PNA, Komitet Obrony Narodowej/KON, Two-Emperor Manifesto, Paderewski, Polish Army in France

In September, 1914, one month into the Great War, Buffalo hosted the 11th Polish Falcon Convention. The Falcons were a physical culture association with a strong patriotic and militaristic orientation. Developments in 19th-century Austrian Poland inspired the establishment of nests, as Falcon lodges were designated in Poland and America. In 1894 the American nests formed the Polish Falcon Alliance based in Chicago. The movement slowly spread to Polish settlements throughout North America.<sup>1</sup>

The convention began with a Field Mass at Boss Park celebrated by Bishop Charles Colton of Buffalo. The city's Polish clergy assisted in the solemn High Mass, and the homilist, selecting verse 21 from the 17th chapter of the Gospel according to John, preached on the need for unity. In 1912 the Falcons had reunited after a split in the previous decade over the Alliance's relationship to the Polish National Alliance (PNA).<sup>2</sup>

Most significant to the homilist at the Buffalo convention was the need for Falcon unity. In the previous decade the Alliance had undergone trials which disturbed its membership. In 1905 it negotiated an agreement with the PNA where-

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<sup>1</sup> Marek Szczerbiński, "Zarys rozwoju organizacyjnego Związku Sokolstwa Polskiego w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki w latach 1887-1918," *Przegląd Polonijny*, 11, no. 2 (1976), 102; Artur L. Waldo, *Sokolstwo, Przednia Straż Narodu: Dzieje idei i organizacji w Ameryce*, 5 vols. (Pittsburgh: Nakładem Sokolstwa Polskiego w Ameryce, 1953-1984), 4: 214-238.

<sup>2</sup> Waldo, *Sokolstwo*, 4: 214-216.

by Falcons would constitute an autonomous unit within the larger group. From the start some nests refused to submit to the arrangement. In New England they eventually organized a Falcon Union, which refused subordination to the PNA.<sup>3</sup>

The Alliance instructed its members to join the PNA which would provide insurance and subsidies. Younger Falcons, many of them single men, rejected this directive. Falcons with families were less likely to object to it. In 1909 a split over this issue as well as the PNA's withholding of subsidies led to a walkout from the convention in Cleveland of the Falcon president Bolesław Zaleski and nests resentful of PNA dictation. The secessionists reconstituted themselves as the legitimate convention, adding the designation free to the fraternal name. Until the reunification convention in 1912 each organization claimed to be the legitimate Falcon presence in America.<sup>4</sup>

The Buffalo convention and the simultaneous *Zlot* (rally), proceeded without incident. The Zlot was at the same time a track meet and collective exercises. The war and its effect on Poland concerned the 379 delegates. Some Falcons had actually sailed to Europe when the war began. The former Falcon instructor (*naczelnik*) Witold Ryłski led a group, half of whom were interned in Britain on arrival. Ryłski himself reached Galicja where he became an officer in the Polish Legion which Józef Piłsudski led.<sup>5</sup>

The convention voted to draft a memorial concerning the Polish situation for presentation to the United States and the western powers. Ignacy Werwiński, a Falcon from South Bend, IN, arranged for an audience with President Woodrow Wilson in the White House at which Falcon President Teofil Starzyński presented the memorial to the President who spent a half hour with the delegation.<sup>6</sup>

The Falcons were eager to fight for Polish independence. The leadership of the major fraternal organizations, especially the PNA, responded to appeals from France for volunteers with a question: Was there a guarantee of a free Poland in return? When it received a negative response, the organization declined to commit Polish American manpower to the Foreign Legion units known as the *Bajończycy* and *Rueilczycy*.<sup>7</sup> A group of young Falcons sailed to France on their own to join the Polish Legion which the Polish American press reported was being formed. Upon arrival one of them wrote to Starzyński, describing the confusion there and disappointment at the reality he encountered.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 215. Also Joseph T. Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army in the United States, 1917-1919" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1985), 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Donald E Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young: The History of the Polish Falcons of America, 1887-1987* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1987), 51-73.

<sup>5</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 24.

<sup>6</sup> Waldo, *Sokolstwo*, 4: 246-256.

<sup>7</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 24-25. Joseph T. Hapak, "Prelude to Arms: Polonia and the Struggle for Polish Independence in World War I, *The Polish Review* 61, no.1 (2016), 85.

<sup>8</sup> Waldo, *Sokolstwo*, 4: 199-200. Jerzy Walter, Jacek Praga, Zbigniew Kumoś, ed. *Czyn Zbrojny Wychodźstwa Polskiego w Ameryce: Zbiór dokumentów i materiałów historycznych* (New York: Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenia Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce, 1957), 130-131.

The Falcon leadership recognized that many members, having trained to fight for Polish independence, were ready to sail to Europe. Starzyński issued an order that the membership “stand and wait in readiness.” He then went to Canada with PNA Censor Antoni Karabas and John Smulski, a banker from Chicago, to determine whether Ottawa would authorize a Polish unit within its Expeditionary Force. Canada declined, citing American neutrality as its reason.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, reports from Russia noted the formation of a Polish Legion within the czarist army. The situation there posed a challenge to the Falcon leadership. The Grand Duke Nicholas had issued a statement on August 14 which promised a reunified Poland within the Russian Empire. This encouraged Witold Gorczyński to undertake organization of a Polish unit within the Russian army. Two Falcons offered to investigate and report back to Pittsburgh. Their optimistic reports led a hesitant Starzyński to dispatch another agent to confirm the earlier information. By the time he was able to report what he found on arrival, the unit had lost its Polish character. The Falcons, who were preparing to send an 800-man medical unit, halted this effort.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to this the Falcons were confidentially searching for candidates for this unit. The national instructor Jan Bartmański consulted nest instructors about which of their members were suitable for the proposed unit. During the Buffalo convention a delegate had informed the assembly that the Polish National Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Narodowej, KON) sought to exploit the Falcons in order to send volunteers to Poland. This provoked a dispute over KON’s role within the Falcon Alliance.<sup>11</sup>

Reaching Poland surreptitiously, the KON recruits joined the Polish Legion in Galicia. The socialist orientation of the Commission of Confederated Independence Parties (Komisja Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych), which sponsored the Legion, disturbed the Falcons in the United States, who had already in 1914 come under attack from KON in the press. These charges eventually led the Falcons to withdraw from KON.<sup>12</sup>

Buffalo had one of the major Polish settlements in the United States. Dr Francis Fronczak, the city’s health commissioner, was active in the major Polish fraternal organizations which established the Polish Central Relief Committee (Polski Centralny Komitet Ratunkowy) to help victims of the fighting in Poland. He became

<sup>9</sup> Hapak, “Recruiting a Polish Army,” 25; Hapak, “Prelude to Arms,” 85.

<sup>10</sup> Hapak, “Recruiting a Polish Army,” 25-26. Hapak, “Prelude to Arms,” 85.

<sup>11</sup> Waldo, *Sokolstwo*, 4: 232-233. Immediately after Falcon reunification in Pittsburgh in 1912 KON was organized in response to news of the creation in Vienna of KTSSN (Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; Jerzy Walter, *Sons of One Nation: The War Effort of the Polish Emigration in America, 1914-1920* (Opole: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia Świętego Krzyża, 2017). This is an amplified translation of *Czyn Zbrojny* (see above). Mirosław Francić, *Komitet Obrony Narodowej w Ameryce, 1912-1918* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1983), 83.

its first president.<sup>13</sup> Given its proximity to Canada, the city figured in recurring rumors that the Dominion would raise a Polish Army. In October, 1916, five Falcons, responding to one such report, went to suburban Niagara Falls only to learn that no such unit existed. Word of this incident soon appeared in papers sympathetic to KON, along with denunciation of the Falcons for alignment with Russia, accusing them of wasting lives for one of the states that partitioned Poland.<sup>14</sup>

A month later the Central Powers issued a manifesto promising a Poland of vague borders after the war. A week after its issuance the Germans, who with Austria-Hungary had occupied what had been Russian Poland in 1915, opened a recruiting center for a Polish Army there. At this point, in response to this move, Canada, with approval from Britain, agreed to train 30 Falcon officers for an as yet nonexistent Polish Army. Russia's response to the Two-Emperor Manifesto came on Christmas Day according to the Julian calendar, actually January 7, 1917, when Nicholas II repeated the statement of the Grand Duke Nicholas at the start of the war that a united Poland would result from a Russian victory.<sup>15</sup> In early January, 1917, 23 selected Falcons secretly crossed the Canadian border to train at the University of Toronto. KON suspected that something was up and increased its criticism of the Falcons and the fraternal organizations aligned with them. What was happening remained a secret until the course ended in April, 1917.<sup>16</sup>

By 1917 both sides in the war were experiencing strains in the effort. Furthermore, resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare caused the United States to sever diplomatic relations with Germany in February. By April President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. At a special convention, meeting as Congress debated whether to enter the war, the Falcons heard Ignacy Jan Paderewski propose that the organization offer the United States a unit of 100,000 men to be called the Kosciuszko Army. The delegates ratified this proposal. It appeared that the Falcon dream of fielding a force that would liberate Poland was at hand.<sup>17</sup> Revolution in Russia produced a promise of Polish independence from the Provisional Government. Within the space of four

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<sup>13</sup> Waldo, *Sokolstwo*, 4: 286.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 331-332; Hapak, "Prelude to Arms," 86.

<sup>15</sup> Hapak, "Prelude to Arms," 87; Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 32-33; Jan Molenda, *Piłsudzczyca a Narodowi Demokraci 1908-1918* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1980). *Historia Polski* t. III 1850/1864-1918, Cz. 3 1914-1918, red. Żanna Kormanowa i Walentyna Najdus (Warszawa: PWN, 1974), 292-293.

<sup>16</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 32-33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-48; August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 427-441. In February, 1915, Gustav Hervé, probably influenced by Wacław Gąsiorowski, wrote an article asserting that Poles could form a military unit of 100,000 men drawing on immigrants in North America. That number became a mantra in subsequent discussions of Polish military activity. See Wiesław Śladkowski, *Opinia publiczna we Francji wobec sprawy polskiej w latach 1914-1918* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1976), 91.

months all three partitioning powers publicly declared for a reconstituted Poland, though the details remained vague.<sup>18</sup>

The War department acknowledged, but declined the Falcon offer. This dissipated the expectation of swift involvement in the war. Two months later Falcon enthusiasm rekindled with the French presidential decree establishing the Polish Army in France. The delay in authorizing recruitment in the United States, on which the French were counting, led many Falcons to volunteer for the American Expeditionary Force. In August the French sent a Military Mission to the States to arrange for recruitment. Within six weeks it negotiated with the National Department (Wydział Narodowy) an agreement to subsidize the effort.<sup>19</sup>

In late September Lt. Col. Arthur D'Orr LePan, who supervised the study of the Falcon officer candidates, was ordered to go with his charges, some 150 men, to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario and prepare for an influx of Polish Army volunteers. The United States agreed to allow recruitment of Polish immigrants not subject to the draft. The British acquiesced, perhaps reluctantly, in the French action. The Provisional Government in Russia no longer insisted that Poland was solely a matter of internal Russian concern.<sup>20</sup>

In early October the War Department issued a statement confirming the decision to allow recruitment in the United States. At this point the National Department created a Military Commission to supervise the process. Twelve recruiting centers, one of which was Buffalo, were established in the districts into which the Falcon Alliance was divided. At last the Falcons, who had long trained for this day, could apply for induction into the Polish Army.<sup>21</sup>

Buffalo, one of the Falcon districts, was closest to the Polish Army Camp that developed at Niagara-on-the-Lake. It served as a transit point for many volunteers on their way to Canada. By early November the camp had 3150 recruits and a staff of 240 officers and NCOs. Most were sheltered in tents and larger structures in the town, but construction of the first of four barracks was completed on November 7.<sup>22</sup> The volunteers came from all over the United States. Elizabeth Ascher, a reporter for the *St. Catharines Standard*, wrote on November 1 that a transport of 125 men from Buffalo arrived at Niagara-on-the-Lake. It most likely consolidated the groups headed for the camp, including some from the city.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 33; Hapak, "Prelude to Arms," 87.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph T. Hapak, "Selective Service and Polish Army Recruitment during World War I," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 4 (1991), 41-42.

<sup>20</sup> LePan Diary, 22-28 1917, Arthur D. LePan Papers, Public Archives of Canada. Used with permission from Professor Douglas LePan of the University of Toronto, the son of Colonel LePan. See also Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 91.

<sup>21</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 96.

<sup>22</sup> LePan Diary, 23 September 1917. Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 109.

<sup>23</sup> Stan Skrzyszewski, ed. *The Daily Life Of Polish Soldiers, Niagara Camp, 1917-1919. The Newspaper Columns of Elizabeth Ascher, St. Catharines Standard, 1917-1919* (Mississauga, CA: Museum and Archives of the Polish Armed Forces, 2015), 25.

The citizens committee of Buffalo, headed by Maksymilian Nowak, a businessman, coordinated the steady transit to the camp. In addition to the volunteers a large crowd gathered at Niagara-on-the-Lake on the first Sunday of November to witness the presentation of colors to the first two battalions formed from the volunteers. Mrs. Ascher noted that the visitors came "by train, street car and auto," some even from Chicago.<sup>24</sup>

The citizens committee cooperated with the recruiting officer assigned to the center. Recruiting sergeants subordinate to it directed stations which handled the paperwork associated with volunteering for the army, including a medical exam. It was the station's responsibility to determine that the volunteer was suitable and eligible to join the army. Many stations were located in parishes, though not all pastors supported recruitment. Saloons also functioned as stations.<sup>25</sup>

By November it was apparent that sufficient accommodations for the recruits were not available at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Canada expected the volunteers to be sent to France after brief training at the camp. But suitable shipping was not available until mid-December. Meanwhile, the problem was where to house the troops ready for transport. Some were sent to St. Johns, Quebec, until shipping could be arranged. Others were quartered at Fort Niagara, New York.<sup>26</sup> The first transport sailed from New York and reached Bordeaux on December 27. A second transport left from Halifax, Nova Scotia, before New Year's Day. In January, 1918, regular transports began to sail, making room at Niagara-on-the-Lake for new volunteers. This allowed the Canadian authorities to close St. Johns in February.<sup>27</sup>

Another problem affected recruitment. The Military Commission expected to open twenty recruiting centers by the end of October, 1917. By February, 1918, there were 46. The recruits were simultaneously subject to the Polish Military Mission from France, as well as the Polish Military Commission. The resulting confusion led to a meeting in Cleveland in mid-February to resolve it. The Mission that arrived the previous August was led by Waław Gąsiorowski who had antagonized Paderewski. The French recalled Gąsiorowski and sent a new Mission headed by Major Józef Kozłowski. Meanwhile, the Cleveland meeting reduced the number of centers to thirty, attaching former centers as stations subject to the surviving centers. This simplified the operation of the Mission and Commission, but dual control still complicated recruitment and management.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Walter, *Sons of One Nation*, 269. In English Mr. Nowak preferred to be addressed as Maxwell. See Skrzyszewski, 37-38. See also LePan Diary, 5 November 1917.

<sup>25</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 137-42.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 107-112. Skrzyszewski, 53.

<sup>27</sup> LePan Diary, 20 February 1918; Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 148.

<sup>28</sup> Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 97, 146-49.

The interaction between the camp and the Buffalo citizens committee was constant. On December 12, 1917, Colonel LePan recorded in his journal that Maxwell (Maksymilian) Nowak notified him of the arrival by special train of 450 men. A week later the journal simply noted: "350 men from Buffalo." These men came from all over the United States, but undoubtedly included men from the Buffalo center.<sup>29</sup> In early February, 1918, Nowak visited Niagara-on-the-Lake "for a meeting of Poles." Two weeks later he accompanied the Military Commission on its visit following the reorganization of the centers. Major Kozłowski, the new head of the Mission, arrived at camp on February 19.<sup>30</sup> The volunteers arriving in Buffalo were often held there until a number sufficient to fill a train had come. The men boarded with Polish families in the city until they could go to Niagara-on-the-Lake. A similar situation existed in Chicago for volunteers passing through the city from the west. These men probably experienced this hospitality in Buffalo, too. The citizens committee consulted Colonel LePan before sending the recruits to the camp.<sup>31</sup> On occasion the camp band took part in parades in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. On April 13 the band marched in the city's Liberty Loan parade. On April 28 a delegation including Colonel LePan attended another Liberty Loan parade. Mr. and Mrs. Nowak were at the camp on May 3 to commemorate the Polish Constitution when camp routine was suspended for the day.<sup>32</sup>

Training and dispatch of recruits continued even after the armistice. In January, 1919, the decision to close the camp was made. As the final transports departed, the Polish Army Camp prepared to close. Colonel LePan submitted his report on the activity of the camp. He reported that 20,720 men were sent to France. Of this number the Buffalo recruiting center provided 1082 volunteers.<sup>33</sup> This fell short of Paderewski's proposal in April, 1917, of 100,000 men in Kościuszko's Army. Had recruitment started then, the North American component of the future army in France may have reached the number Paderewski announced. Many Falcons, dismayed over the delay, volunteered for the United States army before creation of the Polish Army in France on June 4, 1917.

After the closing formalities were completed, the National Department organized a banquet in Buffalo on March 4 to thank the Canadian staff. In remarks he made at it Colonel LePan summarized what he and his staff did over the year and

<sup>29</sup> LePan Diary, 19 December 1917; Skrzyszewski, 38-39.

<sup>30</sup> LePan Diary, 3, 19 February 1918; Skrzyszewski, 50-52.

<sup>31</sup> Skrzyszewski, 37-38. Three hundred thirty-five men from Milwaukee, Kansas City, MO, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Schenectady, Holyoke, Scranton, and Wilkes-Barre were housed at Holy Rosary and St Luke parish halls and the Falcon hall (sokolnia) in Buffalo. The Polish Military Commission reimbursed the expenses of hosting the volunteers before transfer to the Polish Army Camp. *Dziennik Narodowy*, 14 December 1917.

<sup>32</sup> LePan Diary, 28, 30 April 1918; Hapak, "Recruiting a Polish Army," 187.

<sup>33</sup> Col. A. D. LePan, "Polish Army Camp," *Niagara Historical Society* 35 (1923), 48-60.

a half the camp operated. He highlighted the service of the American Red Cross, especially the Niagara Falls chapter, the Canadian YMCA, the Polish White Cross and Polish organizations. Thanking Polonia for its support, he wrote in his journal: "The Poles do not seem to be able to do enough for us, and seem to be most appreciative of any little we may have been able to do."<sup>34</sup>

Buffalo's proximity to Niagara-on-the-Lake made its work on behalf of the Army especially noteworthy. All the recruiting centers generously fostered the growth of the Polish Army in France, but visitors from the city and across the United States came to the camp on a daily basis. They were impressed by what they witnessed, while their presence encouraged the volunteers to persevere in their goal. In 1919, when the force, then called Haller's Army, reached Poland, it was the best trained and equipped unit of the future Polish Army. The American volunteers comprised 30% of the troops that transferred from France to Poland. This remarkable accomplishment has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

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<sup>34</sup> Remarks of Lt-Col LePan at Banquet given by Polish National Department, Buffalo, NY, March 4th/19 in connection with the closing of the Polish Army Camp, Niagara-on-the-Lake, LePan papers, Public Archives.

*RAFAŁ SIERCHUŁA (Poznań)*

## POLISH-AMERICANS IN HALLER'S ARMY. OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

### **Abstract**

The article presents efforts aimed at restoring an independent Poland made by the Polish expatriate community in America and their contribution to that process. It also discusses the participation of Polish volunteers from America in the creation of Polish military units, mostly the Polish Army in France under the command of General Józef Haller.

**Keywords:** military efforts of Polish expatriates; ZSP – Polish Falcons of America, Polish Army in France, Józef Haller, Polish diaspora in America.

### **Introduction**

The support of the Polish community in America is a unique proof that Poles all over the world have retained a spiritual and material connection with their country. In this context, Poles who moved to the United States are of particular significance due to their especially strong involvement in the work for the benefit of their motherland. The recent hundredth anniversary of Poland's independence reminds us of the role Poles abroad played in that grand event and the support they provided. The contribution of Poles of American origin to the creation of a reborn state was quickly forgotten. During the inter-war period, especially after the May Coup, Polish history focused on commemorating first and foremost what Piłsudski's Legions had done. During the Polish People's Republic period, the issue of the impact of Polonia on the fate of Poland was not openly discussed. However, memories of those events were still vivid among expatriate Poles in America and in organisations which had taken a direct part in those events and whose continuity had not been disrupted. It is thanks to their research into the history of emigration and their resources that an outlined history of volunteer soldiers from the two Americas fighting for Polish independence may be drawn in this publication.

## Poles in America

The hundred years of enslavement and loss of Poland's independence was a very difficult period as well as a time of complex activities aimed at restoring its sovereignty and of uprisings and work of many people and groups aimed at keeping the spirit of Poland alive. The memory of what it meant to be Polish was maintained not only in the country itself, torn apart as it was during the partitioning, but also outside of its borders.

A considerable part of Poles who ended up in North America due to economic considerations felt a strong bond with Poland. People of Polish origin gathered between the east coast of the USA and the great lakes on its border with Canada. The states they moved to included: New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Polish emigrants thrived in those areas, their life focused around Polish Catholic parishes, which had played a very important part in instilling patriotic and religious ideals in Poles abroad. Religious and social associations and unions were formed by them which, in time (the 19th and 20th centuries), evolved into a network of organisations shaping the opinions of Poles on an inter-state level. Among them, there were the Polish National Alliance (Związek Narodowy Polski), the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie), the Polish Women's Alliance of America (Związek Polek w Ameryce), and Polish Falcons of America (Związek Sokolstwa Polskiego, ZSP).<sup>1</sup>

Many such organisations made efforts aimed at restoring Poland's independence to it a crucial point of their statutes. One of the most extraordinary tokens of devotion to Poland was when around 100,000 expatriate Poles in America gathered on the occasion of the unveiling of monuments to Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski in May 1910 in Washington, D.C. During the Polish National Congress taking place at the time, representatives of expatriate Poles have prepared the following address: "We, Poles, have the right to an independent national existence and we believe it our sacred duty to strive towards ensuring political independence for our motherland."<sup>2</sup>

The Polish Falcons of America (ZSP) was one of the most important organisations involved in activities promoting Polish independence close to the beginning of the 20th century. It was a paramilitary organisation which created a number of autonomous structures during its extraordinary meeting in Pittsburgh in December 1912, thus establishing ZSP's presence in America. Doctor Teofil Starzyński (the first Pole to graduate from a medical university in Pennsylvania) became its

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Czyn zbrojny wychodźstwa polskiego w Ameryce. Zbiór dokumentów i materiałów historycznych* (New York, Chicago: Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce 1957); Teofil Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy w Ameryce do 1939 roku* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Rytm” 2002).

<sup>2</sup> *Czyn zbrojny*, 58.

president. As of 1912, the movement had 344 nests (its local units bore that name) and 11,551 members. It organised its own military drills.<sup>3</sup>

### Activities of Polish Americans during World War I

When the Great War broke out in Europe, the opinions of Poles in America gravitated towards two extremes. Some activists hoped that Poland would be able to regain its independence by allying itself with the Central Powers, mostly Austro-Hungary and the Legions created by Józef Piłsudski. They were the driving force behind the creation of the National Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Narodowej) and considered the Imperial Russia Poland's greatest enemy. The opinions held by the second group of activists abroad were decidedly anti-German and anti-Austrian – they stood in clear support of the military activity of France and Great Britain. The National Department of the Polish Central Relief Committee of America (Wydział Narodowy Polskiego Centralnego Komitetu Ratunkowego w Ameryce) represented that political option.<sup>4</sup>

In 1915, representatives of ZSP in America carried out an extensive campaign aimed at drawing the interest of American authorities to the issue of Poland's independence. As a result of such efforts, a delegation of ZSP, headed by Teofil Starzyński, met with President Woodrow Wilson at the White House on 10 February 1915. During the meeting, President Wilson swore that if the American government was to take part in a peace congress, its delegate would act to the benefit of Poland. The years 1914-1917 saw a number of small groups of Poles leave America for Europe to fight either in Piłsudski's Legions or in Polish military units created by Russia.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the USA maintained neutrality during the war made it more difficult for ZSP to carry out military preparations openly. With a view to training future officers, leaders of the organisation started negotiations with the military authorities of Canada, whose soldiers fought side by side British troops in the war. As a result of such talks, permission was granted to open up a Polish officer school in 1916. On 1 January 1917, 23 Falcons from the USA arrived at the school and formed the 1st Officer Training Course in Canada. Around the same time, President Wilson, in his speech given to the Senate on 22 January 1917, stated that "there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland."<sup>6</sup> That declaration, which received plenty of publicity all over the world, served to even further intensify militaristic efforts made by Polish expatriates in America. March 1917 saw the opening of an Officer Cadet School in Cambridge

<sup>3</sup> *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Dwudziestego i Złotu Szesnastego Sokolstwa Polskiego w Ameryce w dniach 7-12 lipca 1933 roku* (Chicago: Komitet Złotu i Zjazdu 33), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Lachowicz, 88-89.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

Springs in Pennsylvania. It was organised and then headed for several months by Franciszek Dziób, the head of ZSP. The American authorities favoured such activities.<sup>7</sup>

Close to the beginning of April 1917, during an extraordinary general meeting of ZSP in Pittsburgh, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, a prominent Polish pianist and community leader, proposed that a Kościuszko Polish Army of one hundred thousand men subordinate to the American army be created. That plan, which was widely commented upon among Poles, was not approved by the American authorities. Soon afterwards, the USA joined the World War as part of the alliance against Germany. This made open ZSP military activity in the USA and Canada possible. Close to the end of May 1917, the Officer Cadet School in Cambridge Springs hired the most talented graduates of the 1st Officer Course from Toronto as military instructors. Over the course of several months, the school trained 389 students, most of whom subsequently went to Canada to complete their officer education at a training camp in Camp Borden. It should be emphasised here that students paid for: travel expenses for the trip from Pennsylvania to Camp Borden, a field uniform, and room and board with their own money (a three-month course cost around USD 150. For comparison, a labourer in steelworks earned 3 dollars per day).<sup>8</sup>

Soon after declaring war, the United States announced a recruitment of volunteers for its army. In the words of Józef Sierociński: “over 38,000 Poles volunteered to join the American Army in the first three months – they were the flower of ZSP and of Polish young people, holding honest beliefs.” There are no exact figures regarding the losses suffered by Poles fighting in the units of General Joseph Pershing in Europe. According to Karol Wachtl, a Polish-American historian, out of 225 soldiers from Chicago on whom fighting had taken its toll (i.e. wounded, killed, or missing), 36 (16%) were Poles. The same historian has found out that the first American soldier to be killed was a Pole under the name of Wojtalewicz from Chicago.<sup>9</sup> Other sources indicate that this was Sergeant Czajka from Milwaukee.

The events of 1917 – the February Revolution in Russia, the activity of the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski), and the favourable attitude of Raymond Poincaré, the President of France, towards Poles had made it possible to create an autonomous Polish Army in France under the command of the French. (A decree of 4 June 1917).<sup>10</sup> In the August of 1917, a Polish military delegation headed by Lieutenant Waław Gąsiorowski and Duke Stanisław Poni-

<sup>7</sup> Wincenty Skarżyński, *Armja Polska we Francji w świetle faktów* (Warszawa: Zakłady Graficzne Straszewiczów 1929), 20-23.

<sup>8</sup> Lachowicz, 96-98.

<sup>9</sup> Karol Wachtl, *Polonia w Ameryce* (Philadelphia 1944), 302.

<sup>10</sup> „Błękitna Armia” i jej dowódca gen. Józef Haller, ed. by B. Kopka and J. Tarczyński (Warszawa 2017), 33-45.

atowski arrived in the USA from France in order to gather support among Polish expatriates in America for the idea of creating a Polish Army in France. The project was fully supported by the National Department of the Polish Central Relief Committee of America. During a session on 21 September 1917 in Chicago, it decided to recruit people for the Polish Army in France. To this end, the permission of the American government was asked. The USA approved the recruitment in the decision of 6 October 1917 with the proviso that prospective recruits had to be past military age (18-30) or without American citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

Recruitment Centres started operating under instructions from the Military Committee created as part of the National Department. They were established in the largest centres of Polish expatriates in the USA. In the period when they operated, from October 1917 until February 1919, 47 such centres were created and 38,018 people came to them as volunteers. They were then sent to a military camp near Lake Ontario in Niagara on the Lake in Canada. There the Canadian authorities provided officers and officer cadets needed for training. Canadians were aided in their efforts by Polish officers – graduates of the schools in Toronto and Camp Borden. Colonel A. D. LePan was the camp's commander.<sup>12</sup>

The sheer number of volunteers caused additional temporary camps to be created in St. John near Montreal and in the American Fort Niagara in addition to the one in Niagara on the Lake. In the end, 22,395 volunteers were deemed fit to go to Europe; there was an additional medical support in the form of 42 nurses from the Polish Red Cross and 20 girls who came to be known as Grey Samaritans.<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted here that recruitment was sabotaged by the above-mentioned National Defence Committee whose activity was disrupted by orders from the American authorities.

Having undergone training, volunteers were transported by rail to New York starting in December 1917. From there, they travelled to Europe on board ships.

The inflow of volunteers to the Polish Army from America – who were sometimes also referred to as the Blue Army because of the colour of their uniforms – had played a crucial part in its creation. Due to the fact that few recruits were found in France, the arrival of a large number of ideologically motivated Poles of American origin encouraged other Poles dispersed all over the world to join the Blue Army.

The arrival of soldiers from America also sped up the forming of the Polish Army. The First Regiment of Polish Riflemen was created as early as close to the beginning of January 1918. In its ranks, younger officers were from America – 48 of them out of 72 were educated in the schools in Toronto, Camp Borden, and

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<sup>11</sup> *Czyn zbrojny*, 370-436.

<sup>12</sup> Lachowicz, 100-101.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

Niagara on the Lake; 70% of privates were from America. As for religious guidance, 19 out of 23 military priests were from Canada and the USA.<sup>14</sup>

In June 1918, the Polish Army was made subordinate to the Polish National Committee headed by Roman Dmowski. The same month, the First Regiment of Polish Riflemen went to the front and had its baptism of fire near Reims. The first Polish officer of American origin to die in battle in the night of 10/11 July 1918 was Lieutenant Lucjan Chwałkowski. Out of the 106 people who were killed, who died because of their wounds, or who had gone missing after the fighting that took place in the July and August of 1918, 75 were from the USA. After those skirmishes, the Polish unit was withdrawn from the front.<sup>15</sup>

In July 1918, Józef Haller, the former commander of the Second Brigade of Polish Legions, who had become a legend on account of his participation in fighting against the three oppressors of Poland, reached France via Murmansk. On 4 October, asked to do so by the Polish National Committee, he officially took over the command of the emerging Polish Army in France from L. Archinard, a French General. From that time onwards, countries of the Triple Entente considered him the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish armed forces and his soldiers came to be referred to as "*Hallerczycy*" ("Hallermen"). After Germany capitulated on 11 November 1918, the Polish Army started getting ready for entering Poland where there was fighting aimed at setting the borders of the newly independent Poland. Right before leaving for Poland in the April of 1919, there were around 100,000 soldiers in that army.<sup>16</sup>

Having arrived in Poland, Haller's soldiers were directed to the southern front where they fought against Ukrainians. After that, they faced Bolsheviks in Volhynia in June 1919. On 1 September 1919, the Blue Army was officially merged with the Polish Army. After the reorganisation, Polish volunteers from America ended up in the 13th Division of Borderland Riflemen (13 Dywizja Strzelców Kresowych) – 43rd, 44th, and 45th infantry regiments.<sup>17</sup>

Some of them, sent to infantry regiment 48, were stationed in Upper Silesia, protecting the border between Poland and Germany; they were transferred in the February of 1920 to the northern front due to the taking over of Eastern Pomerania, an area awarded to Poland under a decision of the peace conference in Paris.

In the meantime, the autumn of 1919 saw the central command of the Polish Army decide to demobilise some volunteers from America and transfer them to a camp in Skierniewice until their departure for the USA. Another such demobilisation, affecting 12,000 soldiers, was ordered in March 1920. Many volunteers

<sup>14</sup> *Czyn zbrojny*, 555-580.; „*Błękitna Armia*,” 70-73; Lachowicz, 107.

<sup>15</sup> „*Błękitna Armia*,” 70-73.

<sup>16</sup> K. Kaczmarek, W. Muszyński, R. Sierchuła, *General Józef Haller 1873-1960* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej 2017), 43-46.

<sup>17</sup> Lachowicz, 112-113; Tomasz J. Kopański, *Wojna polsko-ukraińska 1918-1919 i jej bohaterowie* (Warszawa: Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej 2013), 285.

were shocked by those decisions, especially in view of the fact that military activity had not yet ceased.<sup>18</sup>

The Poles of American origin who remained in the Polish Army took part in subsequent fighting with Bolsheviks during the Kiev campaign and the great Bolshevik onslaught. The above-indicated nurses served Poland with devotion who, as part of the Polish Red Cross or American Red Cross, worked at Helena Paderewska Hospital in Warsaw and at other hospitals. In addition to engaging in military and first-aid activities, Polish-Americans collected USD 4.5 million for facilitating independence-related activities between August 1918 and September 1919.

### **Return to America**

In order to send Polish volunteers back to America, the Polish government asked the American government, via its diplomatic mission in Washington, for assistance in transporting them by ship from Gdańsk on board American governmental vessels. Such a decision had to be authorised by the U.S. Congress. The relevant proposed resolution was put forward to the United States House of Representatives by Congressman Jan C. Kleczka of Milwaukee and Senator Wadsworth of New York presented it to the Senate. As a result of those activities, the relevant resolutions were passed in April 1920<sup>19</sup>.

Between April 1920 and February 1921, 12,500 demobilised soldiers were returned from Poland to the United States in eight large transports. The first ship, carrying 1,165 soldiers on board, reached New York on 18 April. The men left the ship not at the New York harbour but from the nearby Hoboken in New Jersey. They found temporary accommodation at Camp Dix. The Polish diplomatic mission, acting on behalf of the Polish government, undertook to bear the costs connected with those soldiers staying at the camp, pay for travel costs from Camp Dix to their place of residence, and award every soldier with a bonus of USD 10 (USD 20 for officers). The National Department took it upon itself to pay a bonus of USD 15 to every soldier (USD 30 for officers). In line with understandings concluded with the American Red Cross, it organised a small meal for soldiers upon their arrival in the USA, canteen divisions of the Red Cross provided soldiers with food at train stations, and two other organisations – Knights of Columbus and Y.M.C.A. – ensured cigarettes and treats for those men. After arriving at Camp Dix, soldiers were disinfected with gas and then received clean underwear and socks from American army supplies. The Polish government paid for that. Military equipment – uniforms, blankets, tins, and utensils – were cleaned, packed into boxes and shipped back to Poland. Due to the fact that some soldiers'

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<sup>18</sup> Lachowicz, 113-116.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 124

clothing was in a terrible condition after their return, the National Department concluded an agreement with a New York wholesale clothes dealer for delivering suits at the price of USD 12 per piece. After the arrival of the fourth transport on 16 June 1920, the National Department gave every soldier a frock coat, a vest, a pair of trousers, a shirt, a tie, and, if need be, also shoes from American army supplies. All in all, returning volunteers to America and making it easier for them to resume their lives there cost the Polish government USD 310,000 between April and August 1920, while the Polish Department bore USD 192,700 of such expenses.<sup>20</sup>

General Józef Haller presented the situation and mental condition of volunteers in his farewell speech given to a group of soldiers who took part in the battle of Warsaw on 20 January 1921. Addressing them with a note of bitterness in his voice, he said: “. . . I know you have been through a lot of distress here and that certain people have treated you wrongly, but you need to leave all that behind for you decided to become soldiers of your own free will. Poland has given you nothing for it is a war-torn country. You only take scars, wounds of war, and deteriorated health with you to America but bear in mind once and for all that soldiers are people who are there to suffer for others.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 126-130.

<sup>21</sup> J. Chojnacki, „Jak nas żegnał Józef Haller,” *Weteran*, March 1940, 2.

KRZYSZTOF KACZMARSKI (*Rzeszów*)

## THE POLISH NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THE POLISH ARMY IN FRANCE (1917-1919)

### Abstract

The article presents the actions of the Polish National Committee, led by Roman Dmowski, aimed at ensuring that the Polish Army established in France by the decree of President Raymond Poincaré of 4 June 1917 was actually an “autonomous, allied and co-belligerent” entity under the supreme authority of the Committee and the Commander-in-Chief appointed by it on 4 October 1918 – General Józef Haller.

**Keywords:** Polish Army in France, Polish National Committee, Roman Dmowski, Józef Haller

The Polish Army in France (1917-1919) used to be commonly called the Army of General Haller (from the surname of the commander-in-chief), or the Blue Army (from the colour of uniforms). However, in fact – as it is usually forgotten – it was an army of the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski, KNP). This is what this article is about.

On 4 June 1917, French President Raymond Poincaré issued a decree stating that “an autonomous Polish Army subordinate to the French supreme command and fighting under the Polish flag is to be established in France for the duration of the war.”<sup>1</sup> The establishment of the Polish Army in France was a French endeavour made in consultation with the Russian military mission in Paris. It was the responsibility of the Polish-French Military Mission (*Mission Militaire Franco-Polonaise*), established two weeks before (on 20 May) and headed by Gen. Louis Archinard.

The decision to establish a Polish Army came as a surprise to Roman Dmowski, who was in London at the time. It is thus no wonder that when the Polish National Committee was established in Lausanne two months later

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<sup>1</sup> “Il est créé en France pour la guerre, une armée polonaise autonome, placée sous les ordres du haut commandement français et combattant sous le drapeau polonais.” The decree was also published in “*Journal Officiel de la République Française*” (no. 150) the next day. See also the full content of the decree: Stanisław Filasiewicz, *La question polonaise pendant la guerre mondiale* (Paris: Section d’Etudes et de Publications Politiques du Comité National Polonais 1920), 183-184.

on 15 August with Dmowski as its head, one of its tasks was to “manage the political affairs of the Polish Army in France and provide it with moral and material care.”<sup>2</sup>

The KNP, which was based in Paris (at Avenue Kleber 11 bis) was quickly recognised by France (20 September), Great Britain (15 October), Italy (30 October) and the United States (10 November) as the official and – importantly – sole representative Polish political body.<sup>3</sup>

Dmowski was fully aware of the significance of the military factor in politics, the need to “establish in the West at least a minor military formation which could be considered an allied army, necessary for Poland to be treated as an ally.”<sup>4</sup> Though he remarked in his memoirs that President Poincaré’s decree was “an internal act of France” which “made the Polish cause into a French one, not the cause of all allies,” he also admitted that France, as a country which was “most threatened by the dissolution of Russia,” until that time an ally against Germany, was “most out of all the allied states” interested in creating new states in Central Europe. The leader of the National Democrats continued to say that “if the establishment of a Polish Army were not to be the responsibility of all allies, but only one of them, then it undoubtedly was the role of France.” From the moment the army was established, Dmowski emphasised one particular, in his eyes indispensable, condition – “competent and cautious recruitment which does not sacrifice the quality of volunteers in favour of their quantity, and which does not allow into the army uncertain personalities contributing an air of decay.”<sup>5</sup> He was also consistent in his efforts aimed at convincing the French government to grant the KNP political authority over the army.

On 23 August 1917, a scant several days after the establishment of the Committee, in his letter to Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Dmowski wrote: “The creation of the Polish Army cannot have serious consequences if the Army is not composed of all available Polish forces, and if its independence is not politically secured by the existence of a political body recognised by the allied governments and entitled to contribute to organising the Army and deciding its fate.”<sup>6</sup> Dmowski

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<sup>2</sup> Roman Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowania państwa*, vol. 2 (Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1988), 30.

<sup>3</sup> The Committee’s responsibilities also included policymaking and representing Poland in the allied states and providing consular support to Poles on the territory of the Entente. The committee thus acted in the capacity of the Polish government insofar as foreign and (partially) military affairs were concerned (Dmowski, 30–32).

<sup>4</sup> President of the Polish National Committee’s note on the establishment of the Polish Army in France, analysed and adapted by Piotr Stawecki, *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, vol. 26, 1983, 325.

<sup>5</sup> Dmowski, 27–28.

<sup>6</sup> Dmowski’s letter to Paderewski, Paris, 23 August 1917, in: Mariusz Kułakowski [actual author: J. Zieliński], *Roman Dmowski w świetle listów i wspomnień*, vol. II (London: Gryf Publications Ltd. 1972), 72.

expounded on his view of the matter in another letter to the famous pianist, written in early December 1917, describing his efforts to make the Polish Army truly autonomous, for which the Committee will be able to bear full responsibility:

We, after the publication of the decree on the Polish Army, even before the establishment of the [Polish] National Committee, submitted a note to the French government in which we thanked them for the decree and declared ourselves ready to contribute to the organisation of the army the moment an accord on the matter is reached between the French, British and American authorities. We also expressed our wish for it not to be a Polish Army under France, but *interalliée*. After the establishment of the Committee, we were informed that we were expected to work in tandem with the Polish-French [Military] Mission, to which we responded that we were in full support of the army's establishment, but we could only begin working together when the French government, or rather the allied governments, reached an accord regarding the conditions of the Polish Army's existence and the rights of the National Committee in relation to it, as well as pointing out the fact that the first thing which required doing was to draft a charter of the Polish Army, which could be accepted both by us and the allied governments. Without a charter, no autonomous Polish Army could exist in actuality, only a potential army under the authority of the French military command, which is why we demanded a postponement of the standard granting ceremony, which had already been scheduled by the Mission, based on the principle that a standard could only be granted if the army existed legally and swore a Polish oath.<sup>7</sup>

In his memoirs, he also noted:

The French government expected the Committee to begin by completely supporting the recruitment of volunteers into the Polish Army, particularly from the United States.<sup>8</sup> Obviously, we were incapable of that as long as the Army's formation was underway independently of the Committee. We declared that we would support recruitment into an Army for which we could bear full responsibility, that is, whose composition would be determined by us.<sup>9</sup>

In this context, the initially moderate enthusiasm of the head of the KNP towards the French-supported recruitment efforts among the Polish diaspora in the US is completely understandable. Dmowski expressed his feelings on a number of occasions, including in a conversation with several Polish officers – volunteers from the US who visited him in Paris in February 1918. He criticised – to the surprise of his listeners – the activity of Waław Gąsiorowski, a well-known writer, who arrived in the United States in August 1917 as part

<sup>7</sup> Dmowski's letter to Paderewski, 6 December 1917, *ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>8</sup> The first transport, comprising approx. 1000 Polish volunteers, arrived in Bordeaux on 27 December 1917. By 15 May 1918, 15 ships had arrived in France from the USA, carrying approx. 15,000 Polish volunteers. In total, 22,329 Polish recruits were trained in Canada and the USA by the end of March 1919, 20,720 of which were sent to France (Marian Zgórnjak, *1914-1918. Studia i szkice z dziejów I wojny światowej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1987), 204-205.

<sup>9</sup> Dmowski, 34.

of the French-Polish Military Mission to promote volunteering with the Polish Army in France.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after, the efforts of the KNP bore fruit in the form of its first major success. On 22 February 1918, an agreement was concluded between the KNP (Dmowski), the Slavonic Armed Forces Committee (Senator Paul Doumer) and the French-Polish Military Mission (Gen. Archinard), which was recognised by the authorities of the Republic of France on 22 March. In accordance with the agreement, the KNP was supposed to have "authority over the autonomous Polish Army in all military matters of political nature." These were described as follows:

1. The Committee is appointed to select the standard under which the Polish Army is to fight, as well as the military badges worn by its members.
2. It specifies the content of the oath sworn to the Polish Nation.
3. It is entitled to determine the Polish identity (*de la qualité de Polonais*) of those who call upon it when applying (*s'en prévalent*) for acceptance into the ranks of the Polish Army, be it as officers or soldiers; it is also entitled to permit Polish prisoners of war [from the German Army, taken prisoner on the Western Front] to enlist and to decide their assignment in the Polish Army.
4. Matters related to the material and moral needs of soldiers and propaganda shall be considered jointly with the KNP.
5. Sending [military] missions for the purpose of organising [the enlistment of] volunteers shall be carried out in consultation with the Committee.
6. All official publications of the Polish Army, if published, shall be subject to its political control.
7. Every member of the Polish National Committee or delegate appointed by it shall have the right to, when accompanied by the commander of the Polish Army or an officer appointed by him, inspect the Polish Army's barracks, camps and schools, as well as being present during the landings of Polish volunteers [e.g. from the USA] in France if the above condition is met.
8. Polish commanders who will lead the Polish field units shall be appointed in consultation with the Polish National Committee.
9. The Polish armed forces shall not be sent to the front before being combined into organised units (e.g. regiments or divisions), and their use on a front other than the Western Front shall require the consent of the Polish National Committee and the French-Polish Military Mission.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Dmowski was of the opinion that Gąsiorowski "acts too recklessly, disregarding the consequences. He needlessly dragged you to France and pushes you to the front, even though a sea of Polish blood has been spilled in the partitioners' armies. You must realise that, after the war, the amount of Poland left will equal the number of Poles left alive. I believe in the final victory of the Entente and that a free Poland can be established, provided that our policies are competent; provided that our diplomatic efforts are successful. . . . Now that you are in France, it is necessary that the Polish Army be under the political command of the Polish National Committee. I am already conferring with members of the French government, but the matter is not simple," in: Witold Trawiński, *Odyseja Polskiej Armii Błękitnej* (Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1989), 188-189.

<sup>11</sup> Filasiewicz, 535-536; Kazimierz Władysław Kumaniecki, *Odbudowa państwowości polskiej. Najważniejsze dokumenty 1912 – styczeń 1924* (Warszawa-Kraków: Nakładem Księgarni J. Czerneckiego 1924), 107-108.

The performance of this agreement was the responsibility of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stephen Pichon, and the head of the KNP. "I put a great deal of work into the matters of the Polish Army in France, and they required of me a significant amount of effort," Dmowski recalled. "Every officer reporting to join the army during that period was judged by a committee, chaired by me, and I would personally assess them to form an opinion. Only then would I decide whether to accept them and what roles to assign them. I frequently visited Polish Army barracks scattered across France,<sup>12</sup> conversed a great deal with troopers and officers and cleared misunderstandings resulting from differences in the personalities comprising the small army, I advised the military authorities regarding the people's values and how they should be treated, and effected the elimination of personalities I considered to be a detriment."<sup>13</sup>

By mid-1918, the Polish Army in France numbered approximately 16,000 soldiers. This made it possible to organise a three-regiment infantry division, as well as artillery, cavalry, air and auxiliary units. In early June 1918, the 1st Polish Riflemen Regiment, comprising primarily American volunteers, headed out to the front line near Reims, fighting as part of the 4th French Army. In his letter to Paderewski from 14 June, Dmowski did not hide his satisfaction with the Polish force:

The soldiers are excellent and quick to be trained, and I am certain that they will bring Poland no shame. The officer corps will surely get there as well, especially if

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<sup>12</sup> The first camp was granted to the French-Polish Military Mission as early as 27 June 1917 – it was barracks in Sillé-le-Guillaume, Sarthe. More camps were opened in 1918, including in Laval, Mayenne, Saint-Tanche, Mailly, Alençon, Le Mans and Angers.

<sup>13</sup> Dmowski, 34-36. When referring to eliminating "detrimental personalities" from the Polish Army, Dmowski primarily meant French Jews who were accepted into the force posing as Poles, "even though they had nothing in common with Poland," as well as those individuals who were "morally uncertain." In the latter case, he primarily meant the so-called "Dutchmen," i.e. Polish deserters from the German Army who had fled to the Netherlands. That Dmowski's actions did not stem from his anti-Jewish prejudice is evident when we look at an excerpt from the memoirs of Lt. Witold Trawiński, who has already been quoted in this article and who arrived in France from the United States with a transport of Polish volunteers in late January, and was delegated to the barracks in Laval, Mayenne Department. Recalling his first weeks in Laval, he wrote that, apart from "Americans," i.e. Poles from the US, who constituted an overwhelming majority, several dozen "Dutchmen" and a handful of "Russians," that is Poles from the Russian corps which fought on the French front in 1916, the Polish Army also accepted "a whole range of volunteers transferred from the French army." The group "comprised primarily young French Jews who posed as Poles, though their command of the Polish language was weak or they only began to learn Polish among themselves after joining the Polish Army. They, with the exception of a small number of Polish Jews, constituted a separate, privileged caste of those who treated with contempt anyone who joined the Polish ranks not by evading the front lines, but with the intention of fighting at the forefront to win freedom for the nation. In their honesty, those young Jews would even openly pride themselves on their 'wisdom' – that is having cunningly avoided serving in the French army by joining the newly-forming Polish army, safe at the rear, with opportunities to hide in the administrative services . . . at least for a time. Their reasoning was that those from the faraway United States who enlisted to serve at the front line were fools . . . it was impossible to understand" (Trawiński, 177-178; Rough draft of Dmowski's memorandum in: Kułakowski, 127).

we properly even out the varied personalities it is made up of. The French authorities are certainly supportive, and it is their wish that the army be truly Polish. They recognise its independence (autonomy), not only in principle, but also in practice (with only the French bureaucracy being a hindrance on occasion). I shall give you proof of that. You are aware of how Catholicism is looked down upon in the French Army. In the Polish Army, it is completely the opposite. Every battalion is assigned a chaplain (provided there are enough candidates), the oath is sworn with reference to the Catholic tradition (the French Army has no oath) . . . The President of the Republic [R. Poincaré] decided to be present at the mass during the standard granting ceremony, which has been postponed slightly because of the war situation. . . . The French authorities openly declared their wish for the Committee to act as a provisional government and assume control of the army in this capacity.<sup>14</sup>

The official ceremony where the 1st Polish Riflemen Division was granted its standards by the cities of Paris, Nancy, Verdun and Belfort took place several days later. On 18 June, at the front lines near Reims (on Point l'Issus near Sept-Saulx), "to the din of enemy cannon fire," Dmowski and Gen. Henri Gouraud, commander of the 4th Army, granted the 1st Polish Riflemen Regiment a standard gifted by the Paris city council. The ceremony proper took place on 22 June in Briene-le-Château (a place known for its military academy, which had in the past been attended by Napoleon Bonaparte for several years). Attendees included President Poincaré, Foreign Minister Pichon, French Generals Archinard and Gouraud, as well as high-ranking representatives of allied forces, delegates from cities providing the standards, several members of the Polish diaspora in France (e.g. old Władysław Mickiewicz, son of writer Adam Mickiewicz), as well as members of the KNP led by Dmowski. The following formations received their standards: 3 infantry regiments, one artillery regiment, one cavalry regiment, one sapper regiment and one air force regiment. The French president also decorated with the *Croix de Guerre* the standard of the Bayonne Legion (subunit of the Foreign Legion, which comprised Polish volunteers who fought in Champagne between 1914 and 1915).<sup>15</sup>

Dmowski recalled that "the mayors handed the standards for the National committee to me, and I handed them over to the President of the Republic [of France], who in turn gave them to the regiments. The Polish state existed in that ceremony, though without a sovereign authority; that authority was represented by the president of France. The Committee participated as the provisional government of Poland." Dmowski was correct in writing that the Polish Army in

<sup>14</sup> Dmowski's letter to Paderewski, 14 June 1918, in: Kułakowski, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Trawiński, 231-250. The celebrations on 18 and 22 June were, as noted by Dmowski in his letter to Paderewski, highly religious in nature. They began with an outdoor mass, after which the standards were sanctified and the soldiers swore the following oath of service: "I swear before God Almighty in the Holy Trinity, by my loyalty to my Homeland, Poland single and indivisible; I swear that I am ready to give my life for the sacred cause of her unification and liberation, to defend my standard to the last drop of blood, to remain obedient and dutiful to my military authorities and to defend the honour of Polish soldiers. So help me God!"

France was “actually the army of the National Committee,” that Poland “was a party fighting alongside other allies,” and that the KNP “was in a position of political power and in command of a military force.”<sup>16</sup>

The Committee was formally granted complete political authority over the Polish Army three months later. An agreement was signed on 28 September 1918 between the KNP and the French authorities. It was the crowning achievement of the Committee, whose goal was for Poland to be recognised as an ally. The first three most important articles of the agreement were as follows:

1. The Polish Armed Forces, wherever they are formed to fight alongside the allies against the central powers, shall constitute a singular independent, autonomous, allied army fighting under sole Polish command (*armée autonome, alliée et belligérante sous un commandement polonais unique*).
2. The Army shall be subject to the supreme political authority of the Polish National Committee, with its seat in Paris.
3. The commander-in-chief of the Polish Army shall be appointed by the Polish National Committee, with the consent of the government of France (and possibly other allied governments).

According to the agreement, the Chief of Staff, who was to be a French officer, was appointed by the Commander-in-Chief from a list provided by the French ministry of war. All other appointments in the army were to be made by the Commander-in-Chief, and appointments from regimental commander and up required the consent of the KNP. As Dmowski was in the US at the time, the agreement was signed on behalf of the KNP by: its Vice-President, Count Maurycy Zamoyski, Erazm Piltz (Committee Delegate to the French government) and Józef Wielowieyski (General Secretary of the Committee), and by French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, Foreign Minister S. Pichon and Senator P. Doumer.<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately enough, the Committee had a good candidate for the position of the Army's commander. The candidate in question was Józef Haller, formerly in command of the 2nd Brigade of the Polish Legions, who had gained fame for his exploits against the Russians in the Eastern Carpathians, as well as for breaking through the German-Austrian-Russian front near Rarańcza (15/16 February 1918) and fighting the Germans at Kaniów (11 May 1918) as part of the 2nd Polish Corps, which reached Great Britain via Murmansk before making its way to France. He arrived in Paris on 13 July. In the evening of that day, he visited the Committee's headquarters on Avenue Kleber, and was welcomed by Dmowski with these joyful words: “Welcome, General! You are a godsend! You are exactly the type of commander our army needs!”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Dmowski, 71.

<sup>17</sup> Filasiewicz, 415-416; Dmowski, 74-76; Kumaniecki, 108; Jan Zamoyski, *Powrót na mapę. Polski Komitet Narodowy w Paryżu 1914-1919* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991), 109.

<sup>18</sup> Józef Haller, *Pamiętniki z wyborem zdjęć i dokumentów* (Łomianki 2015), 193.

Haller was unanimously accepted into the KNP on 17 July, taking control of the Military Division. On 3 October, the Committee contacted the French government, requesting permission to appoint General Haller as the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army. The candidate was of course approved by the French authorities.<sup>19</sup>

On 4 October, on the porch of the Paris headquarters of the KNP, Maurycy Zamoyski, who acted in the capacity of the Committee's president during Dmowski's absence in Europe, presented General Haller with his nomination. The document stated that General Haller was "appointed by the Polish National Committee in consultation with the governments of the allied states as Commander-in-Chief of all Polish forces fighting for the independence and unification of the entire Homeland and against the partitioning monarchs, who held the stolen Polish lands with violence" (he was thus also in command of the Polish military formations stationed in the northern part of Russia and Siberia). Two days later, Gen. Haller swore an oath before the 1st Polish Riflemen Division in the meadows of the Nancy region in Lorraine.<sup>20</sup> The ceremony was attended by representatives of the French, British, American and Italian armies.

The KNP also made efforts to ensure that the remaining allies acknowledged the Polish Army as an allied force. These efforts proved successful.

On 12 October 1918, Giorgio S. Sonnino, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Italy, informed Konstanty Skirmunt, the Committee's representative in Rome, that the Italian government "*reconnait les troupes polonaises, combattantes aux côtés des alliés contre les Puissances centrales, comme faisant partie d'une armée polonaise autonome, allée et belligérante.*"<sup>21</sup>

Three days later, a similar letter arrived from the British Foreign Office to Władysław Sobański, the Committee's delegate to London. In it, Arthur J. Balfour, Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, stated that Her Majesty's Government "recognise the Polish Army as autonomous, allied and co-belligerent."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, on 25 October, US Secretary of State Robert Lansing – whom Dmowski met in person in Washington and to whom he sent two letters (on 18 and 20 October) asking for the US government to join the governments of France, Italy and Great Britain in recognising "the Polish Army under the supreme authority of the National Committee as autonomous, allied and co-belligerent" – in his letter to the president of the KNP, communicated that the "[US] Government

<sup>19</sup> Filasiewicz, 543.

<sup>20</sup> Haller, 200-203; General Józef Haller's letter of appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army, 4 October 1918, *ibid.*, 432-433.

<sup>21</sup> Filasiewicz, 562.

<sup>22</sup> *Polonia Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1910-1918. Wybór dokumentów*. Introduction and analysis by M. M. Drozdowski (Warszawa 1989: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza), 381-382 (R. Dmowski's letter to Robert Lansing of 18 October 1918); *ibid.*, 385-386 (R. Dmowski's letter to R. Lansing of 20 October 1918, in which he quotes *in extenso* Arthur Balfour's letter to Władysław Sobański of 15 October 1918).

experiences a feeling of genuine satisfaction in being able to comply with your request by recognizing the Polish Army, under the supreme political authority of the Polish National Committee, as autonomous and co-belligerent.”<sup>23</sup>

An undisputed achievement of the Polish National Committee was securing for the Polish Army in France (as well as all other Polish military units fighting alongside the Entente) the position of an autonomous army under the supreme command of General Haller.

In the closing months of World War I, Polish Army units, known as the Blue Army due to the colour of their uniforms, fought against the Germans on the Western Front. In the summer of 1918, the 1st Polish Riflemen Regiment fought in the Second Battle of the Marne. In the autumn, the entire 1st Polish Riflemen Division was first moved to Lorraine, before being relocated to the Vosges front, where, together with the 10th French Army and the 2nd American Army, it was supposed to storm the city of Metz. On 11 November, after the attack order had already been issued, news broke of a truce.<sup>24</sup> Though minor, the above constituted the Polish military contribution to the defeat of Germany.

It was of primarily symbolic importance and was the primary reason for including Poland among the 27 “allied and associated” states of the victorious Entente at the peace conference which took place in Paris on 18 January 1919, and for Poland’s delegates (R. Dmowski and I. J. Paderewski) to be invited to participate in that conference and put their signatures on the peace treaty with Germany, which restored Poland as an independent European state, on 28 June 1919.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 385-386 (R. Lansing’s letter to R. Dmowski of 25 December 1918).

<sup>24</sup> Małgorzata Gwara, Grzegorz Kuba, „Pierwsze walki Armii Polskiej we Francji i jej dyslokacja do Polski,” in *„Błękitna Armia” i jej dowódca*, ed. by B. Kopka, J. Tarczyński (Warszawa: Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, 2017), 60-75.

<sup>25</sup> Dmowski recalled that, when President Poincaré inaugurated the peace talks in the Clock Room of the French Foreign Ministry on 18 January 1919, he listed the contributions to the final victory of every nation and state represented in the room. When it came to Poland, he mentioned the contribution of the Blue Army, which fought alongside France on the Western Front (ibid., 119-120).



ANITTA MAKSYMOWICZ (*Zielona Góra*)

## AGNES WISLA'S AND POLISH WOMEN'S ACTIVITY FOR POLISH VOLUNTEERS AND VETERANS IN THE U.S.A. AND IN EUROPE 1917-1921

### Abstract

The article presents the activity of the Polish migrant – Agnes Wisła (Polish: Agnieszka Wisła) – as a member of several Polish-American organizations (i.e. The Polish Falcons of America, The Polish White Cross). Wisła lived in Chicago and was involved in many patriotic actions, especially in the recruitment campaign among the Poles from the USA and Canada to the Polish Army in France (the Blue Army). Her activity for the Kosciuszko Training Camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake is presented as well as her co-operation with Helena Paderewska. During World War I she worked as a nurse in France assisting Polish volunteers (1918) and after the war she supported soldiers who fought with Ukrainians and then Bolsheviks on the Polish eastern borders (1919-1920). She came back to the USA in 1921 and was co-founder of the Polish Army Veterans' Association (1921) and founder of the Ladies Auxiliary Corps (1925) – charity and humanitarian organizations working on behalf of the veterans of the Blue Army.

**Keywords:** Polish Army in France, the Blue Army, Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Kosciuszko Camp, World War I, Poland's independence, veterans, history of women, Polish White Cross, Polish Falcons of America.

Agnieszka Wisła (she used an anglicized name: Agnes Wisła<sup>1</sup>) was an extraordinary woman of spirit, an excellent organizer, committed and meritorious in the efforts for the Polish independence. She spent almost entire life participating in many organizations whose purpose was to serve the so-called Polish cause. She herself was founder or co-founder of some of them. Her social activism began with the recruitment of volunteers in Canada and the United States to the Blue Army. Toward the end of World War I, and later during the Polish-Bolshevik War,

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<sup>1</sup> After arriving in the US, she used mainly the English form of her name – Agnes Wisła. This form was also included in official American documents. However, among the Polonia and Polish diaspora organizations she still functioned as and signed her name Agnieszka Wisła. Therefore, in the further part of the article, where it refers to the original archival documents, the Polish version of her surname was left.

she was a field nurse of the Polish White Cross, first in France and subsequently in Poland. In her long life she helped countless number of Polish volunteers, soldiers and then veterans living in the United States. This article is aimed at presenting the most significant achievements of Wisla as one of the most active Polish activists in the early stage of her activity. Her attitude became inspiration for many Polish women in the United States, and Wisla herself was one of the key female leaders in creating Polish-American self-help organizations.

She was born on January 10, 1887 in Szlachcin, district of Środa Wielkopolska,<sup>2</sup> as a daughter of an agrarian worker Mathias and his wife Franciska. Mathias' profession makes it possible to assume that he might have worked on the farm belonging to the Stablewski family, which was adjacent to the manor house of its owners. As a young girl she emigrated to the United States in 1906 and took up permanent residence in Chicago, Illinois. She was active in the Polish Falcons of America (PFA) since 1914 where at the beginning of 1915 she completed a paramedic course, and in April, 1917, she was the vice president of the Special Convention of the Polish Falcons of America.<sup>3</sup>

Agnes Wisla lived with the family of her elder sister in Chicago, which was at that time a city with the largest concentration of Poles outside the Polish lands. There were numerous Polish organizations there. One of them was the Association of Polish Falcons of America founded in 1887 by Polish immigrant Feliks Z. Pietrowicz. This organization, adapted on American ground, cultivated the same principles as its equivalent of the *Sokół* (Falcon) organization from Lviv: healthy and sporty lifestyle, as well as patriotic ideals.<sup>4</sup> Both boys and girls joined the Falcons and it was Falcons' organizations (so called: *nests*) that most of the soldiers of the future Polish Army in France originated from.<sup>5</sup> The girls were known as Falconettes and their tasks included organizing cultural and educational affairs, physical education and military training, as well as sanitary service.<sup>6</sup>

The outbreak of World War I in 1914, raised hopes of Poles and Polish émigrés around the world for changing the political situation, which was considered to be a chance for the rebirth of the Polish state.

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<sup>2</sup> State Archives in Poznań (hereafter: SAP), Szlachcin Registry Office (the Środa Wielkopolska district), label 1960/0/1/40, Birth Register 1887-1887, item 4.

<sup>3</sup> Archives of the National Headquarters of PAVA (hereafter: ANH PAVA). Agnieszka Wisła's personal file, label A-XXVII, vol. 17, A.E. Wisła's biography together with a copy of the order of the Supreme Command of the Polish Army in France, no date.

<sup>4</sup> Artur Leonard Waldo, *The Falcon Ideology of Felix L. Pietrowicz: Creator of the Polish Falcons of America in 1887* (Pittsburgh: Polish Falcons of America 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Marian Zgórnjak, "Rola Polonii w walce zbrojnej o niepodległość Polski w latach 1914-1918," in: *Polonia wobec niepodległości Polski w czasie I wojny światowej*, H. Florkowska-Francić, M. Francić, H. Kubiak, eds., (Wrocław: Ossolineum 1979), 30.

<sup>6</sup> *Regulaminy organizacji Sokolic* (Związek Towarzystw Gimnastycznych "Sokół" w Polsce, Warszawa, 1927).

Wisla joined the Falcons in November 1914 and immediately took part in a first-aid course, which was aimed to prepare women for service during the war. The courses were conducted in several centers in America by medical doctors of Polish heritage. The exact number of girls who were schooled then is not known, but it is known that many of them hailed from the Falcons. They did their training, among others, in New York hospitals.<sup>7</sup>

The Falcons had already conducted military courses a few years before, but the event of a great moral importance was a statement expressed by U.S. President Thomas Woodrow Wilson, who in January, 1917, as the President of the (then still neutral) United States, talked about the need to rebuild Polish state (this is the famous quote): "I assume . . . that statesmen are all agreed that it should be united, independent and autonomous Poland." One of the consequences of this address was a Special Convention of the Falcons, which took place in April 1917, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Wisla served as a Vice-President. A honorary member of the Falcons who also took part in the Congress was Ignacy Jan Paderewski – famous Polish pianist, statesman and spokesman for Polish independence. Paderewski's idea was to form a 100-thousand Polish Army in the USA (he wanted it to be called Kosciuszko Army). So, it was then that the decision was made by the Falcons to respond more actively to the calls of President Wilson and Paderewski, namely to start a recruitment action in the USA and in Canada, for the Polish Army meant to be founded in America.

In the meantime, in June 1917 French President Raymond Poincaré called to life the autonomous Polish Army on the territory of France (Polish Army in France), so-called Blue Army (because of the color of the uniforms). This decision was a big surprise for some of the Poles in America, because their efforts and hopes were rather connected with the United States and Canada.

A majority of volunteer recruits for the army in France were either Poles serving in the French Army or the Polish POWs from the armies of the Central Powers. Another big group were Polish emigrants from different parts of the world, like England and Italy, moreover volunteers from Holland and Belgium, Poles from Brazil and other South American countries, and from such faraway lands as China.<sup>8</sup> But mainly there were Poles from North America: actually about 22 thousand recruits were Polish Americans from the USA and Canada.

As a result of the agreement between the American and French authorities the Canadian government agreed in September 1917 to organize a training camp in Canada for volunteers from America, who were to become the nucleus of the Polish Army forming in France. There was a good reason why that camp was established in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Near that locality there are two famous and by

<sup>7</sup> Artur Waldo, *Sokolstwo – przednia straż narodu. Dzieje idei i organizacji w Ameryce*, vol. 4 (Pittsburgh: Sokolstwo Polskie w Ameryce, 1974), 470.

<sup>8</sup> B. Zieliński, *O Armii Polskiej we Francji* (Pittsburgh: Komenda Wojskowa Armii Polskiej we Francji, 1918), 7.

then already a hundred-year-old fortresses, Fort George and Fort Mississauga, and moreover Niagara-on-the-Lake is situated by Lake Ontario, by the Canadian-American border. What is more, Fort Niagara on American shore is located nearby and it was later used to host Polish recruits as well. This was crucial because the largest contingent of volunteers, as mentioned above, was expected from the United States and this location made it easier for them to reach the camp. On September 27, 1917 Commandant Colonel Arthur D'Orr LePan together with his Canadian officers and 180 Polish cadets left Camp Borden (where they had been trained earlier) and arrived at Niagara-on-the-Lake the following day. Their assignment was to establish a training camp, named the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Polish Army Training Camp. Although a summer training camp existed there, it was not adapted for activities with volunteers during the approaching winter.

Agnes Wisla was strongly involved in the recruitment for the Polish Army in France. She, with other Falconettes worked as a volunteer for recruiting Poles from the USA. She took part in the recruitment campaign and raised money for the Polish Army.

Recruitment, mainly led by the Polish Falcons of America, was one of the most important efforts of this kind and was carried out on the widest scale. It was among others thanks to the Falconettes working among men of Polish descent in such cities as Chicago, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Detroit, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, New York, Boston or Bridgeport, that hundreds of volunteers started to arrive at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Women formed in fact a kind of recruitment PR departments.

Agnes Wisla worked in the recruitment office of the Polish Army, and her active participation is evidenced, among others, by the fact that she was the author of an instruction manual for female volunteers helping to recruit volunteers for the Polish Army.

The future of the soldier joining the formation as presented in that document looked very attractive – he was offered an opportunity to become an airplane pilot, sailor or a professional mechanic or technician, he could also count on promotions. It was also emphasized that every soldier would receive pay for his service. The food will be “very good, tasty, plentiful and nutritious,” the uniform will be “strong and nice-looking” with Polish insignia, and the quarters in the Polish Army camps in Canada will be “clean, large, comfortable and modern.”<sup>9</sup>

The first contingent of volunteers have arrived from Buffalo to Niagara-on-the-Lake on October 10, 1917, and almost every day there were coming more and more of them.

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<sup>9</sup> ANH PAVA, The Ladies Auxiliary, Agnieszka Wisla File, label XXVII, vol. 18, Instructions: Useful in Informing Volunteers to the Polish Army in Canada, p.2. Unfortunately the declarations about the equality of both – Polish and American – armies and the protection of the future of the volunteers from America, especially war invalids, were not fulfilled after the war.

Apart from recruiting, one of Agnes Wisla's main tasks was the production of emblems and pennants for the forming Polish detachments. For the inauguration of the Niagara-on-the-Lake camp Agnes Wisla made a flag for the Polish Army in France, which she gave on behalf of the Polish Women of America to the volunteers on October 14, 1917. The great many flags and insignia created by her attests to her dedication:

I am a worker, I devoted myself to recruitment for the Polish Army in 1914 and I paid my own expenses everywhere, I only got a rail ticket for the opening of the Camp in Canada, where I took along a big picture of the Polish Eagle for them. I made a Polish Eagle for all the Polish officers which they wore on their caps, because I took with me only several of them for friends, and Commandant LePan (because he also got one) said that if they all would have one, they can wear them on their caps. So I sat up nights and made enough for everyone.<sup>10</sup>

Agnes Wisla presented the flag to the representatives of the Polish Army, offering it into the hands of colleague Teodor M. Heliński, President of the Military Commission and saying the following words:

The Falconettes of District II of the Polish Falcons Alliance of America, give this Battle Flag as a symbol of the nation and faith in victory, to the Polish knighthood, which is forming its ranks for battle for the unexpired rights of Poland with its age-old enemy, at the side of the leader of civilization, heroic France and its distinguished allies. May this dear, holy and eternal emblem, the White Eagle, lead our soldiers in and lead them out victoriously from the blizzard of battle to a United, Free and Independent Poland. So help you and us God.<sup>11</sup>

The young Falconette also organized fundraisers in Chicago and participated in them herself; moreover, she supplied the volunteers with warm sweaters, socks and scarves made by herself and other female members of the Falcons. Knitting warm clothes for the volunteers was a very popular occupation among Polish women. This is attested to, among others, by a report of the Helena Paderewska (wife of the Polish pianist and statesman Ignacy Jan Paderewski) Polish Women's Alliance wherein one can read:

Items sent to the camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake on January 5, 1918: 114 scarves, 84 pair of socks, 80 pairs of gloves, 62 sweaters, 41 ½ dozen machine-made socks, 55 shirts, 49 pyjamas. By December 20, 1917 the following was sent to the camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake: 500 pairs of warm socks, 37 pairs of mittens, 1 helmet (a cap). Ready to send: 8 sweaters, 6 caps, 58 pairs of mittens, 2 scarves, 4 pairs of socks. From November 1, 1917 to January 8, 1918, 758 pounds of wool was

<sup>10</sup> ANH PAVA, Personal file of Agnieszka Wisła, label A-XXVII, vol. 17 [letter of] Agnieszka Wisła to PAVA of November 1, 1979. All quotations from Wisła's letters translated into English by Albert Juszczak.

<sup>11</sup> ANH PAVA, File of Agnieszka Wisła – President of the PAVA Ladies' Auxiliary, postcard concerning the flag which was presented by the Falconettes of Post No. 2, no date.

received. From November 1, 1917 to January 8, 1918, 743 pounds of wool had been distributed.<sup>12</sup>

While the Polish volunteers were training in the camp in Canada before departing for the war in France, many ideas were constantly being enacted to support the volunteers. In the "Polish" cities in the U.S.A., such as Chicago or Detroit, parades were held almost every week, as were meetings and Catholic services with special sermons, during which Poles were encouraged to enlist in the Polish Army. Contemporary newspapers documented the mood of great excitement that accompanied the recruitment from 1918 on, and which united various groups of the Polish American community.

Apart from the official – Canadian and French – support, volunteers at the Polish training camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake were supported by various organizations, as well as many private people – Canadians, Americans and Polish Americans.

The recruits, though initially not fully accepted by local community, quickly gained the trust of the town's residents. The result was a warm relationship between Canadians and Poles. Canadians and Americans, both those from the town and the neighborhood (St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Buffalo) organized fundraising and any other help for Polish volunteers (here the American Red Cross, and YMCA must be mentioned). The Polonia from the whole United States also provided help, which was organized mostly by women.

From Arthur D'Orr LePan's report it appears that during the sixteen months of the functioning of Camp Kosciuszko, 22,395 recruits arrived there, and 20,720 of them departed for France.<sup>13</sup> This happened because 1,004 recruits were sent home as unqualified for military service, others were let go due to circumstantial reasons, or were subjects to recruitment to the U.S. Army, or determined to be unwanted individuals, and 41 died.

Apart from Agnes Wisla, an important role, especially for the Kosciuszko Camp, was also played by other women, including those who were not of Polish descent, like Janet Carnochan and Elizabeth Ascher – both Canadians and residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Elizabeth Ascher (1869-1941) should be mentioned in this place because of her great merit for the Polish cause. She was a journalist and philanthropist and as such she organized many actions for volunteers of the Polish Camp. Being a correspondent for the newspaper *St. Catharines Standard* and the local journal *The Niagara Advance*, in the years 1917-1919, she promoted among Canadians the idea of helping Poles from

<sup>12</sup> *Biuletyn*, New York, January 19, 1918, no. 2, 8; after: Jerzy Walter, *Czyn zbrojny wychodźstwa polskiego w Ameryce: zbiór dokumentów i materiałów historycznych* (New York – Chicago, 1957), 1st Polish Edition, J. Praga, Z. B. Kumoś, eds. (Warszawa: Comandor 2001), 237.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur D'Orr LePan, "Polish Army Camp, Polish Relief Work at Niagara," *Ducit Amor Patriae. Niagara Historical Society* no. 35, 1923.

the Camp Kosciuszko. During the Spanish flu pandemic Elizabeth Ascher got involved in the care of sick volunteers, earning the titles of the Angel of Mercy and the Canadian Florence Nightingale. She was the first civilian Canadian person decorated with the Chevalier's Cross of the Polish Order of Polonia Restituta. She was also the initiator of the creation of the Polish military cemetery St. Vincent de Paul in Niagara-on-the-Lake. She took care of this cemetery until her death.

Another significant Polish woman who also had a lot of merits in the formation of the Polish Army was Helena Paderewska. She supported her husband in his actions for the so-called Polish cause, organizing charity and relief activities on a large scale, both in Europe and in the USA. It was Helena Paderewska who intended to bring to life the Polish Red Cross organization for supporting the Polish soldiers in France. Unfortunately, as national Red Cross organizations could only be formed in independent countries, there were no legal grounds to establish a Polish branch of the Red Cross. So, in January 1918 in New York Paderewska decided to bring into being a civic equivalent of the organization – the Polish White Cross (Polski Biały Krzyż).

The first members of the Polish White Cross came from Chicago, from the Polish Women's Alliance. This is how Agnes Wisla and Helena Paderewska started to cooperate closer. The main objectives of the Polish White Cross was to help volunteers from Niagara-on-the-Lake, to organize proper equipment for them while they left for France and to care for their families.

Moreover, members of the Polish White Cross sent to France medicines, dressing bandage and other items, like nearly 10,000 books, Polish and American newspapers, board games, and gifts for Christmas and Easter. The Polish White Cross also donated a few ambulances. A very appreciated form of support were letters written by women from the White Cross and sent to Polish soldiers in France.

However, it soon turned out that the material and moral assistance, although much needed and appreciated, was not enough. From France came more and more requests for sending Polish nurses. The reason was a growing number of wounded Polish soldiers who could not communicate in French hospitals. In order to train the nurses, Mrs. Paderewska organized and financed courses in Chicago and in New York for volunteer women who were ready to go to France. Agnes Wisla was one of them; she was trained in Chicago and she became one of 42 nurses, a group created by Helena Paderewska. All 42 women were sent to France and, after passing the exams before a French Commission, assigned to work in several hospitals and houses for convalescents.

In the meantime, at the turn of 1918/1919 demobilization after the Great War had already started, and so had gradual winding up of the nurse unit of the Polish White Cross in France. 18 out of 42 nurses returned to the USA. Although World War I was over, in Poland war continued on the Eastern Front (Polish-Soviet war). Therefore, soldiers of the Blue Army were transported from France to Po-

land. 24 nurses of the Polish White Cross who had stayed in France, went with them. 12 of them were included in the mission of the American Red Cross in Poland (along with the Polish Grey Samaritans) and the remaining 12 – still as Polish White Cross nurses – worked in hospitals during the 1919-1920 war.

In the second half of 1919 Agnes Wisla was sent to the Eastern Front, to the Polish-Soviet war. There Wisla dealt with organizing and supervising transports of medicines and medical equipment sent by Polish Americans or received from the Red Cross. She also organized the distribution of Christmas and Easter gifts for soldiers.

There are many letters by Wisla, where she described the conditions which Polish soldiers had to face on the Eastern Front. This is a fragment of one, which proves how much the support for soldiers was needed:

I delivered medical supplies, warm clothes, cigarettes and other things sent from America and other countries for the soldiers at the fronts in the fight with the Bolsheviks, because after regaining freedom in 1918 Poland was so exhausted that the soldiers fought in paper clothes, in many instances their legs were wrapped in rags instead of shoes, and they wrapped their wounds with newspapers.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1921, Wisla returned to the USA with the last contingent of the Blue Army soldiers. To this date, altogether about 15 out of 22 thousand of Polish soldiers from the USA had returned to America. Wisla worked almost till the end of her life on behalf of the Polish veterans who – back in America – found themselves in a dramatic economic situation.

After returning to the United States she was the first and for a long time the only woman belonging to the Polish Army Veterans' Association of America (PAVA) which was founded by Polish soldiers together with her. Later she was the first president of the Auxiliary Corps of the PAVA, which was founded on her initiative – a women's organization assisting Polish veterans not just in the United States, but also in Poland. In recognition of her contribution that organization conferred on her the lifetime title of honorary president.

The role of the Polish Army in France, including the recruitment actions and the training of volunteers in the Niagara-on-the-Lake camp were of fundamental importance in the process of regaining independence by Poland. Roman Dmowski of the Polish National Committee admitted it in 1920, after Poland regained its independence:

Poland would not have regained in the war what it now possesses, if millions of Poles had not existed in the United States and had it not been for your cooperation. . . . Your volunteer enlistments for the Polish Army in France allowed that army to be created, and thanks to its existence we were recognized as allies and

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<sup>14</sup> ANH PAVA, Personal file of Agnieszka Wisła, label A-XXVII, vol. 17, *Życiorys pracy społecznej Agnieszki Emilji Wisły podczas I wojny Światowej, po powrocie i do obecnej chwili*, p. 1.

allowed to join the peace conference; finally your strong support for the demands of the Polish Delegation at the conference influenced to a great degree that we had the President of the United States on our side and the entire American delegation. This meritorious contribution of yours for the Fatherland at a great historical moment shall never be forgotten and every future conscientious historian, speaking of Poland's resurrection, will have to emphasize the role that the Polish Emigration in America played.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the recruitment among the Polish Americans was crucial for the Polish Army in France. In France, which was naturally recognized as the base of the emerging army, the interest in joining this formation was initially so small that it actually made the whole undertaking a failure: from 4 June to 1 October 1917, only a few hundred volunteers registered there. This situation posed the further formation of the Blue Army in question. And it was only the systematic inflow of Polish volunteers from America (which began at the end of December 1917) that saved the idea of creating the Polish Army in France.

By the end of May 1918, fifteen transports of about 15,000 trained Polish volunteers had been transported from America to France. By March 1919, more than 5,000 volunteers had arrived from across the ocean. These numbers indicate the huge role that Poles from America played, especially in the initial phase of recruitment to the Polish Army. In the following months, the formation was also joined by Poles serving in the Russian army, Polish prisoners of war from the German and Austro-Hungarian armies, as well as Poles from other European countries (from the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Switzerland), from Brazil and Argentina, and even from distant China.

Agnes Wisla was one of thousands of Polish women from the USA who helped to organize support for the Polish volunteers from America who were going to Europe to fight for Poland's independence. She was successful in winning many people over to her ideas and in creating a network of women working together. She is an example of the fate of thousands of women of Polish descent in America, and she embodies the cooperation of Polish women in America, France and Poland. She and thousands of other women were crucial for the recruitment action. They organized and promoted recruitment and fundraising – organizing balls, contests, charity actions. They also worked as nurses supporting the Polish volunteers and soldiers fighting for Poland's independence.

She died in Chicago on December 18, 1980 but her work and heritage – like the Polish Army Veterans' Association and the Ladies Auxiliary Corps (funded after Poland regained independence, in 1925) – continues.

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<sup>15</sup> Walter, 793.



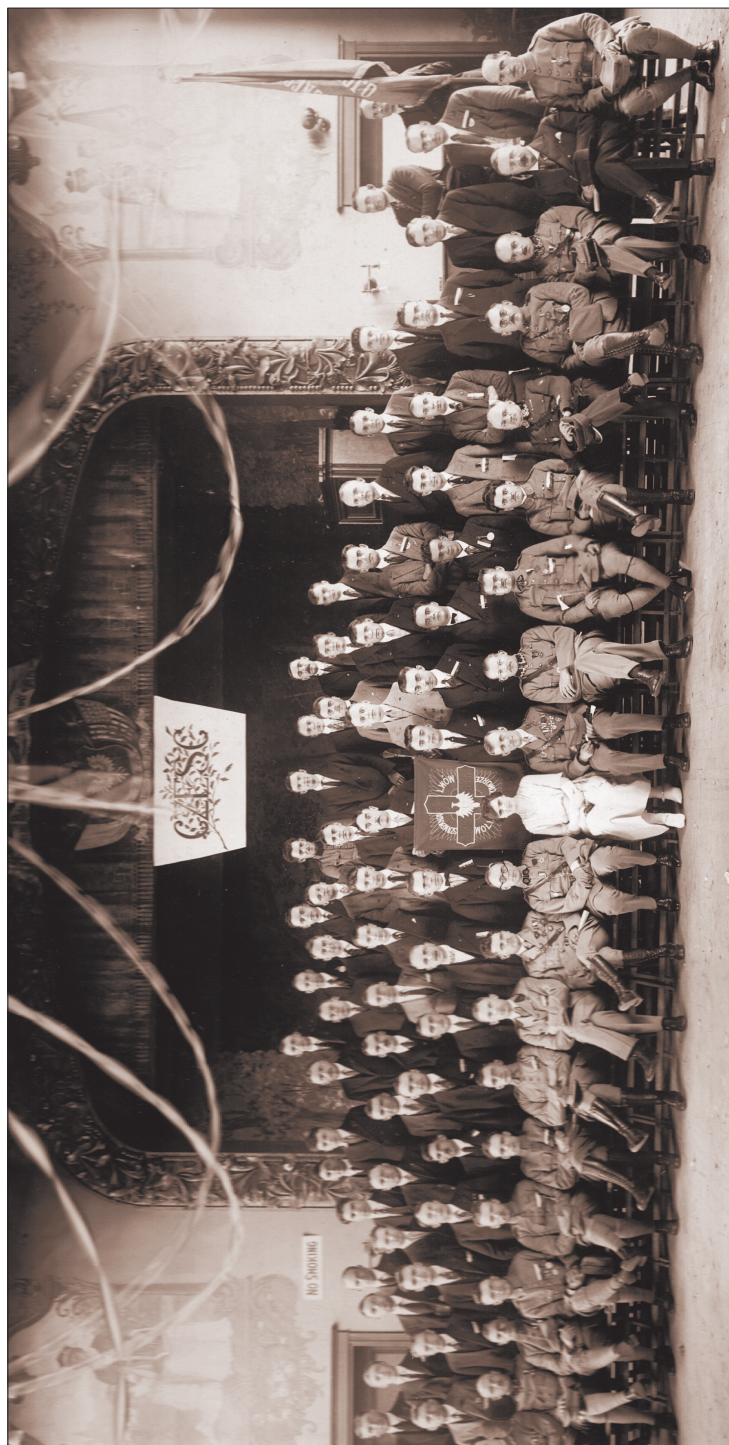
Agnes Wisla with the banner she made for the Volunteers, 1917 (ANH PAVA)



Farewell reception for the Buffalo Volunteers, 1918 (ANH PAVA)



Nurses of the Polish White Cross, 1918 (ANH PAVA)



PAVA Convention, Chicago, May 28 – 30, 1922. In the center the only woman present – Agnieszka Wisła (ANH PAVA)



Recruitment leaflet from Buffalo (ANH PAVA)



The convention of the Falcon's leaders, Buffalo, Aug. 1914 (ANH PAVA)



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## POLAND IN 1919 IN THE EYES OF EDITH BRAHMALL CULLIS-WILLIAMS

### Abstract

This paper presents an image of Poland in the letters of Edith Brahmall Cullis-Williams (1875-1955), an American Red Cross medical orderly at the end of World War I. She wrote a series of letters to her mother Lucretia Ann Brahmall (1832-1921), describing Warsaw, Lublin and Volhynia in the spring of 1919. The time spent in Poland was a crucial point in Edith's life: what she had experienced there, later made her one of the ambassadors of Polish culture in the USA. Her correspondence is currently kept at the Archives of the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York.

**Keywords:** Edith Brahmall Cullis-Williams, American Red Cross, Poland, 1919

The effort of many thousands of Poles residing in the USA and Canada to revive their home state in Europe during the Great War is a subject which has fascinated a lot of generations of historians.<sup>1</sup> Despite abundant literature on the subject, every now and then new cases are discovered of people who joined the Polish Army and fought in France and then in Poland at the end of World War I.<sup>2</sup> Then there are hundreds of people who did not take part in the fighting but organized relief assistance and raised funds for the reviving Polish state. A good example here is the Przemyśl-born Edward Stefan Witkowski (1880-1970), one

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<sup>1</sup> See: Tadeusz Radzik, „Amerykańscy ochotnicy ‘Błękitnej Armii,’” in *Polonia w walce o granice Rzeczypospolitej 1914–1921*, ed. A. Kossecki (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna w Pułtusku, 1999), 143-184; Teofil Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy w Ameryce do 1939 roku* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2002); Paul S. Valasek, *Haller's Polish Army in France* (Chicago: Whitehall Printing 2006); Józef Smoliński, „Ochotnicy Polonii amerykańskiej podczas wojen światowych – problemy i niepowodzenia,” *Echa Przeszłości* vol. 9 (2008): 197–207. The most extensive and complete monograph on US attitude to the Polish question is the book by Mieczysław B.B. Biskupski – *The United States and the Rebirth of Poland, 1914–1918* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2012). A must-read here is also the book by Danuta Płygawko, *Polonia Devastata. Polonia i Amerykanie z pomocą dla Polski (1914–1918)* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie 2003).

<sup>2</sup> See documentary movie *Sokoły wolności*, dir. by R.N. Wachowiak, produced by FilMOTEKA Narodowa – Instytut Audiowizualny, Telewizja Polska 2017.

of the major leaders of the Poles from New York, who came to Poland with Ignacy Jan Paderewski in 1919 to help with the distribution of gifts and money.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the Poles there also came many Americans – members of Allied committees,<sup>4</sup> charity missions, or soldiers of the Blue Army. The latter consisted of young people who, having met Polish soldiers in France, did not want to return to the USA in November 1918, but felt tempted to discover unknown areas in Europe emerging from the wartime turmoil. Enticed with the tales and idealistic attitudes of their Polish mates, they headed eastwards, without realizing that for many of them the trip would be a turning point in their life. A good example here is the case of Eric P. Kelly (1884-1960), later professor of Dartmouth College, in American Hannover, who, through his novels for children, became one of the greatest promoters of the Polish question in the USA between the wars.<sup>5</sup>

The basis for this paper have been materials collected at the Archives of the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York, deposited after the death of Edith Bramhall Cullis-Williams. The collection is fragmentary and incomplete, but at least one part of it constitutes a certain whole. They are typewritten copies of over a dozen letters which Edith wrote to her mother and which she later edited herself, correcting minor inaccuracies, probably made while copying. It is not known what happened to the originals. It is also hard to say if the preserved copies, containing the correspondence from between 2 March and 1 June 1919, are complete. Moreover, it is not known whether there were any more letters or not. All that is known is that Cullis left Poland in August 1919.<sup>6</sup> However, it is not the biography of the author of those letters that is the main theme of this paper; it is merely a starting point for the analysis of what she wanted to tell her mother.

In this article I would like to take a look at the image of Poland which appears in Edith Cullis-Williams' letters to her mother. I do realize she was

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<sup>3</sup> Tomasz Pudłocki, „Edward Stefan Witkowski: lider polonijny w USA,” *Nasz Przemysł* no. 7 (165/2018): 41.

<sup>4</sup> A good example here is Prof. Robert Howard Lord (1885–1954) of Harvard University – a historian specializing in Polish matters and a member of the Inter-Allied Commission for Poland appointed by the Supreme War Council on 22 Jan 1919. The representatives of the Commission stayed in Poland from 13 Feb to 28 March 1919; it was dissolved on 24 April 1919. Its members were: Joseph Noulens, president – representing France, Henri Albert Niessel – representing France, Francis Joseph Kernan and R.H. Lord – representing the USA, Esme Howard and Gen. Adrian Carton de Wiart – representing Great Britain, Giulio Cesare Montagna and Romei Longhena – representing Italy. Lord was featured in newspapers of that time (see the article by Lviv historian Prof. Bronisław Dembiński – idem, “Robert Howard Lord,” *Kurier Warszawski* 61, March 2, 1919, 4–5; that text was discussed in *Gazeta Warszawska* 62, March 4, 1919, 1). See more in: Jerzy Łojek, “Robert Howard Lord as Historian and Diplomat,” *Polish-American Studies* vol. 1 (1976): 21–39.

<sup>5</sup> See: Tomasz Pudłocki, „Eric P. Kelly, czyli jak dotrzeć z Polską do najmłodszych,” *Kurier Plus* (Nowy Jork), no. 956 (1256) (December 29, 2012): 11.

<sup>6</sup> A recognition of her work has been preserved in the French, English and Polish Commissions of The American National Red Cross, where August 1919 was marked as the finishing date of the work in the commissions - The Kosciuszko Foundation Archives in New York City (hereafter cited as KFA), Acc. 12.22 Edith Cullis-Williams.

no leading figure while staying in Poland but this is not what determines the value of her correspondence. The fact that she stayed outside the major circles, allowed her to discern the elements of reality which were indiscernible to decision-makers as more down-to-earth. On the other hand, the group of people she socialized with and the places she attended were unique and in a sense, limited: she did not speak Polish, therefore she had problems communicating and also comprehending Polish culture and way of thinking. Moreover, on account of her nationality, she belonged to the privileged group, and as a woman, she was treated differently from men. I am therefore interested to find out whether the roles she played (a middle-aged upper-class white woman, a representative of a nation perceived as an ally, rendering services for Poland) can be seen in her personal narrative addressed to one of loved ones. At the same time, I realize that the letters were written by a younger, if mature, woman, to another woman, and women's written impressions of Poland in 1919 are few and far between; male narration dominates, particularly as regards foreigners who came to Poland at the time.<sup>7</sup> Thus, I am aware of the convention in which the letters were written, yet, any attempt to break the convention and get beyond the accepted pattern was for me very intriguing from the research point of view, as at those moments the author allowed herself to be more open and direct in describing her experience of Poland.

### Edith Brahmall Cullis-Williams – Some Basic Information

There is little one can say about Edith Brahmall Cullis-Williams' life and work; the little information there is, gives us an incomplete image. She was born on 12 September 1875 in Boston, Massachusetts, as a daughter of Dr. Charles Cullis (1833-1892) and his second wife Lucretia Ann Brahmall (1832-1921). She was the youngest child in the family, after Marie Caroline Reed Mallory (1853-1919), Frederic Huntington (1867-1868), Charles Franklin (1869-1895) and Elizabeth Richardson Cullis (1873-1929). Her father was a renowned physician and community worker in Boston, where the family lived; he died when Edith was in her teens.<sup>8</sup> On 10 October 1903 at Grace Church Chantry Edith married Charles Edmund Wark (1877-1954), a Canadian residing in New York.<sup>9</sup> Her husband was a piano teacher and a talented instrumentalist.<sup>10</sup> The marriage was not successful and a few years later, in 1908, they both decided to get divorced. Wark was already having an affair with a singer Clara Lonhorne Clemens (daughter of the

<sup>7</sup> See Anitta Maksymowicz, *Agnieszka Wisła i działalność Polek w Ameryce na rzecz ochotników i weteranów Błękitnej Armii*, Nowy Jork – Opole: Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> <https://healingandrevival.com/BioCCullis.htm> (accessed: 28 June 2019).

<sup>9</sup> *The New York Times*, October 11, 1903, 7.

<sup>10</sup> *The New Music Review and Church Music Review* 5, no. 49 (1905): 1328.

famous writer Mark Twain), whom he accompanied during her concerts in Europe in 1908; their relation was widely discussed in New York social circles.<sup>11</sup> We can learn from Cullis' letters that she had spent some time in Europe; for sure she had lived in Great Britain, she also travelled around Italy and Spain. On 3 March 1916 she completed a massage course run by The Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses in London.<sup>12</sup>

It is hard to say what made her decide to become a medical orderly during the Great War. Was it a result of her family medical traditions or a need to test herself outside her New York circle? Or was it an attempt to find her own place in the war-stricken world, where many people redefined their lives? After all, Edith was forty years old then, and had an unsuccessful marriage on her scorecard. It seemed to be the best time for a change.

Based on the beautiful photo album preserved at the Archives of the Kosciuszko Foundation, one can reconstruct some elements of Edith Cullis' work at the Hôpital Complementary n°2 in Evreux, France. The album contains descriptions of people and photographs documenting the work at that hospital. From the autumn of 1917 Cullis' patients wrote in it, expressing their gratitude for her assistance and care during their hospitalization. They were usually men, much younger than her, to whom Edith often was like a big sister or mother.<sup>13</sup> In what circumstances did Edith come across Polish people? What was her motivation to go to the country she could not have known much about before February 1919? We can only speculate now.

Whatever made Cullis travel into the unknown, the time spent in Poland was crucial for her later life. In 1922 Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, in charge of renovation works at the Wawel Castle, sent a thank-you letter to her Boston address for the donation of 30,000 Polish marks.<sup>14</sup> Since 1932 she was a director of the Polish Institute of Art and Culture in New York, which she founded, located in the building of Roerich Museum at 310, Riverside Drive.<sup>15</sup> The activity of the institute was inaugurated on 7 April 1932 with a concert of the pianist and composer Zygmunt Stojowski. The institute was ceremoniously opened by the Polish ambassador in the USA, Tytus Filipowicz.<sup>16</sup> Cullis organized various meetings, lectures, exhibitions and concerts; for instance, on 23 January 1935 – a night devoted to Marie Skłodowska Curie, co-organized with Robert C. Urey, a Nobel prize winner of 1934 and professor of

<sup>11</sup> *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, vol. 3, eds. B. Griffin and H.E. Smith (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2015), 586.

<sup>12</sup> KFA, Acc, 12.22 Edith Cullis-Williams.

<sup>13</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.2 Cullis Photo Album.

<sup>14</sup> KFA, Acc, 12.22 Edith Cullis-Williams.

<sup>15</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.6 E.B. Cullis, Miscellaneous correspondence re: The Polish Institute of Arts and Letters (1932–1933); KF XXXVIII.10 E.B. Cullis, Press clippings (a clipping from *Nowy Świat* of December 29, 1934).

<sup>16</sup> *Roerich Museum Bulletin* 2, no. 5–6 (1932): 12.

chemistry at Columbia University in New York.<sup>17</sup> The appreciation for Cullis' activity found reflection in the fragmentary correspondence addressed to her. It includes letters from such people as Roman Dyboski (professor of English studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow), countess Maria Zamoyska, Paul Super (organizer and General Director of Polish Y.M.C.A.), Eileen Markley Znaniecka (wife of the famous sociologist, Professor Florian Znaniecki), Jane Arctowska (wife of the famous geophysicist and traveller Henryk Arctowski) and the already mentioned Eric P. Kelly. From time to time Cullis would come to Poland – it is known that she spent the whole summer and September of 1934 in Morshyn near Stryi (today in Ukraine) in a boarding house called Światowid. She stayed in various places in Europe: in April 1937 in Venice, in February 1938 in London.<sup>18</sup>

On 14 April 1942 Cullis married a rich widower, Dr. Charles Williams (1872-1951) – dermatologist and member of the American Medical Association, and the president of the American Dermatological Association.<sup>19</sup> In 1947, she handed over her whole collection of Polish books to the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York and made a generous donation of money to build suitable shelves for these books. She was one of the donors to the foundation; she gave it a beautiful old kilim and a watercolour by Wyspiański (an angel from the polychromy in St. Mary's Church in Kraków, originally painted by Jan Matejko). In 1950 she contributed to The Kosciuszko Foundation Silver Anniversary Fund and her name – together with Dr. Williams' – was carved on a special plaque "Benefactors of the Kosciuszko Foundation House. October 22, 1950."<sup>20</sup> Charles Williams died on 12 November 1951 in Stonington, Connecticut; Edith died in the same town four years later, on 29 November 1955.<sup>21</sup>

### On the Way to Poland

Cullis decided to travel from Paris to Warsaw in mid-February 1919, with the mission of the American Red Cross. The mission included 45 people, in that

<sup>17</sup> J. W. Wiczerzak, "Marie Curie Avenue, New York: A Street That Was," *The Polish Review* 44, no. 2 (1999): 144. Cullis was quite active and in the 1930s the Institute she ran was one of the major organizations bringing Polish culture closer to Americans. For instance, on 13 January 1933 she arranged a concert of the famous pianist Aleksander Brachocki, on 1 February 1933 – a recital of an excellent bass singer Adam Didur, which was opened by the composer and pianist Zygmunt Stojowski, on 10 March 1933 – a lecture on Poland by the Slavonic scholar and lecturer of Columbia University, Clarence A. Manning (see *Nowy Świat* 14, January 15, 1933), 2; *Nowy Świat* 33, February 3, 1933, 3; *Nowy Świat* 70, March 12, 1933, 3).

<sup>18</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.4 E.B. Cullis correspondence – letters by various people, 1919–1951.

<sup>19</sup> *Obituary Record of Graduates of the Undergraduate Schools Deceased During the Year 1951–1952*, 133 [http://mssa.library.yale.edu/obituary\\_record/1925\\_1952/1951-52.pdf](http://mssa.library.yale.edu/obituary_record/1925_1952/1951-52.pdf) (accessed: 26 June 2019).

<sup>20</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.11 E.B. Cullis, The KF Silver Anniversary Certificate given to Edith Cullis Williams.

<sup>21</sup> *The Kosciuszko Foundation Monthly News Letter* 6, no. 5 (1952): 2; *ibid.* 10, no. 5 (1956): 3.

32 medical orderlies (12 American Poles). A special train bound for Poland conveyed 31 carriages; the freight ones carried food, concentrated milk and dressings.<sup>22</sup> The mission was the outcome of Wacław Janasz's talks in Paris with the American Red Cross and with Hugh Gibson – a newly appointed representative of the US government in Poland.<sup>23</sup> Janasz, a representative of the Warsaw city management, handed an extensive memorandum to the Americans, concerning the economic and social situation in Poland, asking them to delegate a rescue mission. The memorandum was signed by a lot of personages representing large organizations and associations from various parts of the country, as well as by Major Dr. Franciszek Fronczak<sup>24</sup> – on behalf of the Polish National Committee in Paris. Due to that effort, a Polish department of American Red Cross was set up, which under Colonel Walter C. Bailey sent a mission to examine Poland's needs on the spot.<sup>25</sup>

By that time (since 3 January 1919) members of the American Food Mission to Poland had been staying in Warsaw: Alexander Znamięcki, Colonel William R. Grove, Vernon Kellog, Lt. Chauncey McCormick, Captain Leo M. Czaja. In a special report to Herbert Hoover, the Mission found that out of 27 million people inhabiting the territory controlled by the Paderewski cabinet, 4 million were affected by hunger and 10 million lived in poverty. Hoover understood that unemployment, poverty and hunger were cynically exploited by communist propaganda, which proclaimed the vision of solving all social problems with the means of social revolution. Thanks to his persistence, with the support of many people, from 17 February 1919 first ships with food started getting to Poland via Gdańsk.<sup>26</sup>

The first record of Cullis' participation in the mission's work is her letter of 2 March 1919 from Vienna. She informed her mother that she had just arrived from Switzerland. She wrote:

Living in a sleeping car is not a luxury, especially when the water-works are out of order and we have to use about a tea-cupful for a wash. But it is easier to sleep here in the station than when jiggling along and stopping everywhere.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 63, March 4, 1919, 1.

<sup>23</sup> See: H. Parafianowicz, "Hugh S. Gibson's diplomatic service in Poland after the First World War," *Białostockie Teki Historyczne* vol. 12 (2014): 159–174; H.S. Gibson, *Amerykanin w Warszawie, 1919–1924. Niepodległa Rzeczypospolita oczami pierwszego ambasadora Stanów Zjednoczonych*, transl. by A. Ehrlich (Kraków: Znak Horyzont, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> For more on him see: Andrew Kier Wise, "Dr. Francis Fronczak and the Rhetoric of Polish Independence," in this book.

<sup>25</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 68, March 9, 1919, 12.

<sup>26</sup> See more in: *Amerykańska Przyjaźń. Herbert Hoover a Polska. Wystawa w Zamku Królewskim w Warszawie, 12 listopada 2004 – 16 stycznia 2005/ American Friendship. Herbert Hoover and Poland. Exhibition in the Royal Castle in Warsaw. November 12, 2004 – January 16, 2005* (Warszawa: Hoover Institution 2004), 40–48.

<sup>27</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1 E.B. Cullis, copy of letters to mother, March 2, 1919 – June 1, 1919, letter from March 2.

She was not impressed with the city. It was full of begging soldiers, the museums were closed and the people complained about the end of the passport procedures which allowed to travel through Czechoslovakia. During the few days in the capital of the Austrian Republic she met Prince Andrzej Lubomirski and some other Poles who travelled with her through Czechoslovakia. The journey across that country resembled „an opéra bouffe – the Swiss guarding the train, our men guarding the Swiss and the Czecho-Slovaks guarding us.” It was an opportunity to listen to stories about the unknown country she was going to. The one who shared them with her was the wife of Prince Andrzej, Eleonora Lubomirska née Husarzewska.<sup>28</sup>

It is unbelievable. The Bolsheviki burn villages unless people join their ranks, or they take their wives and children, and if they finally refuse they burn them alive, bury them alive, or cut off their members – never did such things happen before. And we made an armistice, and think that the war is over and still don't send out the Polish Army from Paris or our men, thus letting Bolshevism spread.<sup>29</sup>

The princess told Cullis about Lwów (Lviv) and the need for Americans to go there and support the Polish military effort. Edith was not very knowledgeable about what was happening in the east, therefore she described the war with Ukrainians as a war with Bolsheviks. The stories must have made an impression on her, as she wrote to her mother that due to a shortage of men, it was women and children who had to defend the city and no-one really knew what the situation was.<sup>30</sup> The Lubomirskis complained about the diplomats gathered in Paris; in their opinion, instead of debating, they ought to send troops and money to fight the Bolsheviks.

Despite the complaints, they spent the journey in very good moods. It was perhaps the first time in her life that Cullis had travelled in the company of aristocrats; it was not only the Lubomirskis that drank tea and talked with her but also Aleksander Szembek and Prince Paweł Sapieha – “a very distinguished-looking old gentleman.”<sup>31</sup> Szembek, who had had his share in the success of Janosz's mission, a few days later became the official delegate, intermediary between the Polish and American Red Crosses, coordinating the works and enhancing their efficiency.<sup>32</sup> Cullis was clearly satisfied with being able to discover Poland among the *crème de la crème* of her new country.

On the Polish-Czechoslovakian border Cullis saw Polish soldiers. They seemed amazingly young to her, even though she had been used to seeing the military. She was also surprised by the poor quality of their uniforms and their inconsistent style, as

<sup>28</sup> In the letters she is referred to as Princess L. or Princess A. L. Since according to the habit of that time Eleonora would have been introduced as Princess Andrzej Lubomirski, and judging by the context, of all the Lubomirskis only she and her husband match the descriptions.

<sup>29</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 2.

<sup>30</sup> That was an obvious reference to the situation in Lviv in November 1918.

<sup>31</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 71, March 12, 1919, 4.

if patched together from parts of uniforms of other armies. In that particular case she was right – it was just the first months of the new Polish state and the Polish uniforms were far from homogeneous. On the train journey to Warsaw she found the country quite flat and the view through the window – full of poetic mysticism and sadness. She ended her letter on a very romantic note: “It is unlike any other country in Europe.”<sup>33</sup>

### In Warsaw

On 3 March, with a two-hour delay, the mission arrived at Vienna Station in Warsaw. Cullis was very surprised by the pomposity they were greeted with. People shouted in French: “Vive l’Amerique!”, the Polish anthem was played and everyone was extremely friendly. This is how the *Kurier Warszawski* daily reported the greeting ceremony:

At the train station the mission was greeted with speeches in English by Mayor Piotr Dziewicki and Dr. [Wacław] Dobrowolski on behalf of the Polish Red Cross. Among those present there were representatives of the Ministry of Health (Dr. Władysław Szenajch), the RGO (Central Welfare Council) (President Stanisławski),<sup>34</sup> the Polish Red Cross and a lot of rescue institutions. The fire brigade orchestra gave a performance. Together with the delegation there came the American Pole Colonel [Franciszek] Fronczak.<sup>35</sup>

There were also other people at the station, whom Cullis was soon going to know better, particularly through their charity work, like Margravine Elżbieta Wielopolska, Princess Franciszka Woroniecka née Krasieńska and Count Władysław Tyszkiewicz. The speeches were reciprocated by the president of the mission, Colonel Walter C. Bailey of Boston (in English) and Dr. Franciszek Fronczak of Buffalo (in Polish).<sup>36</sup> The third most important person in the mission was Major H. W. Taylor of Mobile. In the next days they were going to participate in numerous meetings and debates on economic, health and food situation in Warsaw.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 2.

<sup>34</sup> Stanisław Zygmunt Stanisławski (1864–1925), president of the Central Welfare Council, the largest Polish mutual-aid organization during World War I, operating in the German-occupied part of the Kingdom of Poland and from 1919 in the majority of Polish territories.

<sup>35</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 62, March 3, 1919, 9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, March 4, 1919, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Fronczak, member of the mission and The Polish National Committee in Paris, invited by the Council of Hygiene Association, on 12 March delivered a lecture titled „Sanitary, material and medical care of the Haller’s Army”, and on 19 March - „On hygienic situation in American cities”. The lectures met with enormous interest; the first one was attended by, among others, Colonel Bailey, H. Paderewska, H. Bisping, the minister of public health Prof. Tomasz Janiszewski, Mayor Drzewiecki, and also „the medical orderlies from America in their charming uniforms with the US (United States) initials and the Red Cross emblems” – Cullis might actually have been among them (see: *Kurier Warszawski* 69, March 10, 1919, evening edition, p. 3; *ibid.* 72, March 13, 1919, 3; *Gazeta Warszawska* 66, March 8, 1919, 6). See also the report from one of the lectures: “Armia Hallera (Referat majora dr. Fronczaka),” *Kurier Warszawski* 72, March 13, 1919, evening edition, p. 3.).

That, however, remained beyond Cullis' reach. She was just one of the many medical orderlies who ended up in a strange environment. She jotted down some remarks on what she saw:

The streets are full of miserable looking people, it is the exception to see prosperous ones. There are soldiers who look twelve years old. Beggars in rags – yet they look happier than the Austrians did, because the Poles live more the spirit and their country is free for the first time. The Polish eagle is in many windows and flags also, but all their decorations are so pitifully small.<sup>38</sup>

The general poverty and poor appearance of the streets were a consequence of what Warsaw had experienced during the Great War. Cullis was soon to understand the recent dramatic situation of the city.<sup>39</sup>

In order to alleviate the first shock and the hardships of the journey, the Americans were treated to dinner by Helena Paderewska and then they could eventually rest. The mission was situated in Count Przeździecki Palace at 10, Foksal St. Cullis got a bed in a former ballroom, and she shared it with 18 nurses, which she was not too happy about. She was offered help by Helena Bisping née Hołyńska, who, together with Paderewska, was in charge of the Red Cross as well as many other charity institutions in Warsaw. Already during their second meeting she offered Edith lodgings at her place; it might have been due to the fact that Cullis was much older than her fellow orderlies and Bisping wanted to make her daily life easier. Edith was very happy.

. . . she looks like Queen Alexandra<sup>40</sup> only with more intelligence. . . . She seems very capable and at the same time has much heart and sympathy.<sup>41</sup>

A few days later she added:

I enjoy my life with Madame de B., and shall hate leaving. There is so much to talk about and breakfast with the steaming samovar is very cosy. She is a woman of many interests and activities, and has no rest. Telephone begins before breakfast and there is scarcely time to look at the paper. Polish is a beautiful language and if it weren't for the grammar there might be some hope of making rapid progress. I speak interchangeably French and English.

In Cullis' letters to her mother, Bisping appears to be a woman always busy with charity work, who was rarely at home. Cullis might not have realized the extent of

<sup>38</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1 E.B. Cullis, copy of letters to mother, March 2, 1919 – June 1, 1919, letter from March 3.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the situation of Warsaw during the FWW see: R. Blobaum, *A Minor Apocalypse. Warsaw During the First World War* (Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> This refers to Alexandra of Denmark (1844–1925), Queen consort of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions and Empress consort of India (1901–1910) as the wife of King Edward VII.

<sup>41</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 6.

the issues Warsaw charity organizations struggled with, hence her slightly naïve observations on her landlady not having time to have breakfast or afternoon tea.<sup>42</sup> At the same time she apologized to her mother for jotting down her impressions hastily and without attention to form: she had to send the letters whenever there was a chance, not when she chose to.

Cullis spent the first days in Warsaw sightseeing and going to parties. She did not try to conceal her bewitchment with Polish aristocracy and their hospitality. She repeatedly said that the Poles were so polite she did not miss home as much as she had feared. “I have been kissed and hugged more in the last two days than for years,” she wrote to her mother on 5 March, adding her reflections on a walk with Princess Lubomirska.

We went to the Russian church built in 1901<sup>43</sup> directly opposite the Royal Park, the most conspicuous place in town, built as an expression of their power, and forced upon the people as a sacrilege. But it is now a Polish Church. It is pure Byzantine, filled with frescos and quite one if not the most beautiful churches I have ever seen. The wall is entirely covered by scenes from the life of Christ, the rest of the spaces filled with Slavic madonnas with most expressive faces, prophets and angels.<sup>44</sup>

Cullis accompanied the princess to the picture gallery, where Jan Matejko’s paintings were being displayed. „These things are awfully interesting if one knows a bit of Polish history, and legendary, and I often come across events I know. Also everyone’s relations are always in these pictures and one can recognize the family traits.”<sup>45</sup> Obviously, the “family” look at Matejko’s works depended on who Cullis saw them with and who explained to her the meaning of the paintings and the figures in them. She instantly took over the Polish point of view on things, complaining about the Russians having stolen many pictures from Warsaw collections before 1915, and the Germans – a lot of everyday articles. A much more serious problem she faced were the shortages at the Red Cross hospital which lacked almost everything – from basic medicines to bandages and soap. Everything had to be obtained on one’s own or with the help of aristocratic families.<sup>46</sup>

Princess Lubomirska saw to that Edith met the Warsaw elite. Thanks to her Cullis met Róża Tyszkiewicz-Łohojska née Branicka, and Helena Paderewska

<sup>42</sup> For more on charity work of Polish women in Warsaw during the FWW, see: R. Blobaum, *op. cit.*, 171–198.

<sup>43</sup> It ought to be: 1912. The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral – the Russian Orthodox cathedral built between 1894 and 1912.

<sup>44</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letters from March, 6, 13.

several times.<sup>47</sup> This was how she described her meeting with Princess Maria Karolina Zamoyska who came from the family of Sicilian Bourbons:

I was taken to see Princess Z., such a sweet old lady. She is the grand-daughter of the king of Naples and Sicily. She made me sit on the sofa beside her and when I kissed her hand on leaving she kissed me which is the Polish custom. The Bolsheviks are now devastating their estates in the country.<sup>48</sup>

As she put it, „All these ladies have the same indescribable look in their eyes.”<sup>49</sup> What impressed her a lot was the Potocki Palace and its décor, including the paintings by Jacques-Louis David. Wherever she went, she listened to various stories people shared with her – about their experience with the Bolsheviks, their cruelty and barbarity.<sup>50</sup>

It was not only individual people but also the authorities that did their best to make the Americans feel welcome. Already on 5 March 1919 a gala was organized in their honour at the Grand Theatre. Twelve box seats were booked for the guests and Puccini's *La Bohème* starred Maria Mokrzycka, Adam Dobosz and Wacław Brzeziński, the best Warsaw voices at the time.<sup>51</sup> No wonder Cullis was delighted.

This social whirl is very exciting. . . . The opera was great fun. They played our national hymn and then the Polish. We had all the centre boxes on the first tier. The opera was *La Bohème*, very well given, good orchestra and singers who are excellent actors as well. They certainly are artistic people and everything is done with grace and delicacy. Afterwards there was a charming ballet: first an American one of sailors with American and English flags, then a national and fascinating Polish peasant dance.<sup>52</sup>

On 11 March Cullis went to see Stanisław Moniuszko's *Halka*, also performed at the Grand Theatre in honour of the members of the American mission.<sup>53</sup> For her it was an opportunity to have a better look at Poland's Chief of State Józef Piłsudski. This is how she described him:

Piłsudski's box, formerly the royal box, was decorated with flags and greens, with the Polish eagle above – it is always there now. Of course he came late and the opera had to wait for him and his entourage of officers. He is the strangest person, all

<sup>47</sup> In her memoirs Helena Paderewska does refer to the Americans staying in Warsaw and a lot of parties in their honour; however, she does not mean the members of the American Red Cross, but the members of the Inter-Allied Mission, sent from Paris through France, Great Britain, Italy and the USA. See: Helena Paderewska, *Memoirs, 1910–1920*, ed. by M. Sikiński (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press, 2015), 145–154.

<sup>48</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 64, March 5, 1919, 4.

<sup>52</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 6.

<sup>53</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 70, March 11, 1919, 3.

his movements are sudden and sharp, and eyes pierce like bullets even from a distance, he has none of the gentleness of the modern Pole. His features are aquiline and he wears the long moustache drooping at the ends, like ancient warriors. The sympathetic Paderewski in his box is his usual charming self.<sup>54</sup>

Cullis did not think much of *Halka*; instead, she focused on describing the costumes and Polish national dances. On the other hand, she very much liked fragments of *Eros and Psyche*, a modern opera by Ludomir Różycki, and she said she would like to listen to the whole of it, if an occasion arose. A day later at the Resource Association a banquet was organized in honour of the members of the National Committee in Paris, i. e. Count Maurycy Zamojski and Dr. Fronczak, to which Cullis was invited.<sup>55</sup>

In her letters to her mother Cullis hardly ever described her everyday activities in Warsaw. She did devote a small fragment to describing the children's hospital and shortages in its supplies. She wrote only one paragraph about her patients, who – in her own words – were great; affected by the war but still eager to fight on despite their wounds. Referring to those who fought on the front and who she happened to meet in Warsaw, she wrote that they were people of great patriotism, heroism and eagerness in the fight for the newly regained homeland.<sup>56</sup> She wrote in superlatives about the girls from “good families,” who, according to her, were impeccably dressed, extremely well-behaved and entirely focused on the war effort.<sup>57</sup>

For Cullis, Warsaw was a city of contrasts. In the letter of 12 March she wrote the following to her mother:

It's lovely, but the poor dirty refugees and the filthy Jews are more conspicuous than ever in the brilliant sunshine. Warsaw is crowded, one can hardly get along the pavement, with men, women and children in rags, looking pale and haggard; and those distinguishing Jews who are not poor, but are speculating and storing up money at everyone's expense are a loathsome sight in their long whiskers, noses, and coats and little black caps; they save their pocket-handkerchiefs to the nauseating discomfort and menace of public health.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 13.

<sup>55</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 72, March 13, 1919, 3. Obviously, Cullis did not take part in the “summit” meetings between Col. Bailey and Fronczak and delegates of Polish charities and Warsaw authorities. For instance, on 8 March 1919 at the Warsaw city hall, Bailey emphasized the significance of Polish soldiers' health, and Fronczak reported on the issue of spotted fever, which, according to him, was not found in the USA and in Western Europe, whereas in Poland it was a plague that should be fought more efficiently. The floor was also taken by Dr. Bronisław Świejkowski, deputy president of the National Department in America and delegate of the American food mission, who promised to enhance the further and the permanent aid for Poland on the part of Polish community abroad – see *Kurier Warszawski* 67, March 9, 1919, 12–13.

<sup>56</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 6.

<sup>57</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 13.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Descriptions of Jews, spoiling her aesthetic impressions, perceived by her in the worst possible way, appeared also elsewhere in the letters. It is hard to say what her negative attitude towards the Jews stemmed from. She must have heard accusations of Poles arranging pogroms in many places. Cullis actually fully adopted the Polish perspective and she became an ardent defender of the Polish *raison d'état*. In the letter of 14 March Cullis wrote to her mother with indignation:

Do write to the papers and say that no Jewish massacre ever took place in Poland, but that it is the Jews who are massacring the Poles financially and morally. It's a pity the public knows so little of the Polish character, thereby asking it possible [sic] to believe such things. Fancy putting Poles on the same level as the Turks! There are forty percent Jews in Warsaw alone. What a pity Germany can't have them.<sup>59</sup>

Cullis was not entirely right. A lot of Poles were suspicious towards the Jews, particularly the non-assimilated ones (of which there were a majority) or even the Russianized ones. There were excesses on the part of Polish soldiers who, often without a reason, regarded Jews as accomplices of Bolsheviks, and the controversial pogroms were an opportunity for the badly equipped soldiers to plunder Jewish stores. It was often local people that accompanied them in those actions. Still, the scale of the riots was much smaller than the anti-Polish propaganda in the West tried to present.<sup>60</sup>

### In Volhynia

On 13 March 1919 in the evening, the first part of the Red Cross expedition went to Kovel and Pinsk in Volhynia by train. Cullis knew she should have gone with her mates but – she did not. She stressed that the situation of the civilians and the military in Volhynia was terrible and the symbol of the Polish-Ukrainian fights was the merely 22-year-old Colonel Leopold Lis-Kula who had only just died in battle on 7 March 1919.<sup>61</sup> The train carried medicines, dressings, tights, soap and cigarettes. There were also two assistant physicians, Dr. Wade Wright and Dr. Liam Davis. The expedition was led by Count Józef Stadion-Rzyszczeński from the Ministry of War.<sup>62</sup> This is how Cullis described the count:

<sup>59</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 14.

<sup>60</sup> See: M.B.B. Biskupski, J. Böhler, J.-R. Potocki, V. Hux Reed, "Wprowadzenie," in: H.S. Gibson, *op. cit.*, 62–74; W.W. Hagen, "The Moral Economy of Popular Violence: The Pogrom in Lwów, November 1918," in: *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. by R. Blobaum (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press 2005), 124–147; T. Pućłocki, *Ambasadorzy idei. Wkład intelektualistów w promowanie pozytywnego wizerunku Polski w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1918–1939* (Kraków 2015), 70–72.

<sup>61</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 72, March 13, 1919, 3, *ibid.* 74, March 15, 1919, 5.

He had patriotic fire in his eyes and one could believe all the things one has heard of him. . . . Count R. who is so intense and strung-up, partly from all he has been through and partly native temperament, that he is nearly at the bursting point. He is very elegant and wears the close side whiskers of Joseph Poniatowski.

The expedition returned on 22 March, visiting on their way Kovel, Brest-Litowsk, Pinsk, Rava-Ruska, and stopping at refugee camps and hospitals for the contagiously ill in Dorohusk, Liuboml and Volodymyr-Volynskyi.<sup>63</sup> Cullis spent all that time in Warsaw. Perhaps she wanted to enjoy her new contacts, especially as the head of her mission, Walter C. Bailey, was in Paris in mid-March, which allowed for more independence.<sup>64</sup>

It was only after nearly a month of staying in Warsaw that Edith attempted to join another mission. As she wrote to her mother on 29 March:

Our plan is to form units of relief work in the east, where the Bolshevik have followed the Russian and German in work of devastation and by saying that our work is done in the name of Poland; the hope is to prevent further Bolshevik feeling in Poland by making the peasants realize that the country has their interest at heart. When Count S.<sup>65</sup> heard this, he was so touched that he gave a large sum of money. His son is in our Red Cross.<sup>66</sup> When our expedition of inspection returned from the east, I can only describe the expression of their faces by saying that they looked as if they had been through hell, especially young Count S. who was white and drawn. No wonder, for they had found people dying from starvation, their only bread being made from the bark of trees.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, on 3 April the mission set out eastwards. The first city they reached was Lublin, where, however, the Americans had to wait for the permission to leave their train for many hours. Cullis described her impressions in a poetic way:

As we drove out of Lublin, the city looked like a mirage because it was surrounded by a pale blue mist, and there were quaintly shaped spires and turrets against the sky, the cathedral making a summit in the middle, and at one end a little separated from the city itself, is the old palace. The whole effect was like an Arabian Night's tale, or something unearthly with a fiery sunset behind. Never have I seen anything to equal it, not even in Spain or Italy, because there is a certain atmosphere here surrounding everything, which must be the outgrowth of their years of valour, and suffering and their wonderful imagination.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 82, March 23, 1919, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 88, March 29, 1919, evening edition, 4.

<sup>65</sup> I.e. Count Michał Sobański, who, during Count Władysław Tyszkiewicz's (the government's commissioner for the Red Cross) stay in the Poznań region handed 100,000 marks to the Red Cross – *Kurier Warszawski* 88, March 29, 1919, morning edition, p. 5, *ibid.* 92, April 2, 1919, morning edition, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Meaning either Count Feliks Sobański (1890–1965) or – more probably – his younger brother, Antoni (1898–1941), a landowner dealing with journalism and literature, a well-known Anglophile.

<sup>67</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 29 (wrongly dated to March 14).

<sup>68</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 4.

Cullis enthused about the Polish villages seen from the train – the cottages, the colourful folk dress, the flat landscape, the abundance of greenery and the fields sown with grain. The Bug River they passed on 5 April was for her a symbolic border between the Polish and the unknown. From the stories told by Count Rzyszczeński she knew that the local peasants had not yet developed national identity, hence they were so prone to accepting Bolshevik slogans.<sup>69</sup>

A morning spent in Chełm was for her an opportunity to enthuse about the picturesque cathedral hill. Generally, she described the town as “a filthy Jewish place where the Jews speak no Polish, only German.”<sup>70</sup> Obviously, Cullis could not tell Yiddish from German, yet her severe opinions on Polish Jews make one think. She must have been surprised by the fact that whereas the Jews she knew in the USA were mostly well-off and assimilated, Polish Jews were in stark contrast to them: most were orthodox and poor, and stood out in their outfits against other Poles.

After reaching Maciejów in Volhynia on 6 April, Cullis admired the local peasants’ dress, the service in the local church and nature. She wrote to her mother that she had not been ready to see as many birds, especially crows and storks. She found the linden avenues in front of the Międzyński Palace charming. Along with them came Tekla Skomorowska née Bałaban, the pre-war owner, and “the peasants wept at seeing her.”<sup>71</sup>

However, Cullis had not come to Volhynia in order to stroll around and rest. The Americans set up makeshift hospitals in Maciejów and Dolsk; she was assigned to the latter. There was a palace there, owned by Count Rzyszczeński, who she knew. It was probably then that she could for the first time register the effects of war in the Polish countryside, particularly as it was the property of a person she knew and was fond of:

... a long white building. Back of it is the big quadrangle with gardens and out-building, the chapel is attached to one end of the chateau and another building called the pavilion is to be our house. I cannot tell you how sad it is, and what it must be for the owners I cannot imagine. Most of the peasant cottages nearby are only charred remains: the palace itself has gone to seed entirely. The interior of the chateau is an indescribable chaos, every speck of furniture having been smashed and then heaped together in ruins. All the pictures have been taken away, the frames left broken, only two or three portraits remain and they are spoiled. The piano was in bits, as well as everything else. Only the books seem to have meant nothing to the vandals as they are mostly intact.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 5.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1 E.B. Cullis, letter from April 6 and April 7.

<sup>72</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1 E.B. Cullis, letter from April 8.

Cullis did not try to hide her shock at the tremendous destruction she found in the palace and adjacent buildings. In the room she got and which she shared with a third-year medical student, an American, there were actually no beds.

Apart from them, in Dolsk there were ten medical orderlies, a few Polish women and a doctor who would arrive every few days. However, from the very beginning medical assistance was needed: right from the start Cullis had to take care of four new patients and order the cleaning of the necessary rooms. Luckily, a dispensary set up before the war by the count's mother, Emilia Stacion-Rzyszczevska née Orzeszko, was fit for use and a few days later it could admit over 80 people a day.

What Cullis saw was not only damaged equipment but above all, poverty. Every day a lot of begging people came to the hospital. Owing to the presence of Polish women, it was decided to start a school for children, so that they were kept busy and had regular meals. She wrote to her mother that part of the mission was to help the local people "and to make them into good Poles, before Bolshevik influence arrives,"<sup>73</sup> and on the other hand to relieve some work of Polish charities, which could not cope with the scale of the problems afflicting post-war Poland. She also warned her mother not to listen to anti-Polish propaganda:

When people say that Poles cannot govern themselves, tell them how they began at once as soon as they were free, after centuries of prevention in any lines of governing. Three days after the Germans left, the railways were working – such things were never done in any country before.<sup>74</sup>

Travelling on foot between local villages, Cullis would talk to Poles, Ruthenians and Jews. She was not favourably disposed towards the latter, considering them to be dirty; even when they did use the mission's help in order to eat their fill and have a wash, they still would not shave their beards. Cullis could not understand the religious and family reasons they gave as an excuse.<sup>75</sup> Moving around, she could see cases of typhoid and tuberculosis, emaciated and hungry people. She was not surprised then that the canteen they opened was an enormous success among the children and adults alike. Already on the second day over two hundred people came, and in consecutive days the number doubled. There also came a lot of beggars whom the mission also tried to cater for.<sup>76</sup> Cullis made it clear in her letters that this kind of help required close cooperation with the local starost in order to regularly replenish the supplies brought by the mission, as well as the help of a professional cook and baker – luckily, there were ones among the orderlies.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from May 6.

<sup>76</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 25.

<sup>77</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 14.

In the afternoons, whenever the duties allowed for that, all the children from the neighbourhood were invited to eat and play. After one such events, Edith wrote to her mother: „If you could see their rags – there is seldom a whole garment without many patches, but they are always picturesque, walking barefoot as they always do, they are erect and well built, even when emaciated.”<sup>78</sup> On Easter Sunday 20 April 1919, after the mass in the church, about two hundred children and almost as many adults from Dolsk gathered in the palace. Cullis was surprised with their appearance – the clean and colourful outfits. She wrote with passion: “This is a country for painters and poets!”<sup>79</sup>

Edith’s correspondence shows evident satisfaction with the results of the work, and joy because the Red Cross opened more and more facilities in Volhynia. She would sometimes travel around the neighbourhood with field kitchen – such was the demand for hot meals. She also tried to encourage local peasants to organize themselves and set up eating places in their villages.<sup>80</sup> The only nuisance was that letters were sent and delivered irregularly: the mission members would take advantage of the fact that the doctor on call shuttled between Volhynia and Warsaw, as the postal services did not function.<sup>81</sup>

Dolsk admitted different travellers, mainly soldiers, officers and civilians. Cullis would listen to their stories with curiosity, amazed at how much those people had gone through in recent years. She had a weakness for the officers travelling around due to the ongoing battles with Ukrainians and Bolsheviks.

I could not help thinking of the difference in the way the English soldiers and officers used to be loaded up with every imaginable comfort when they went off at the beginning of the war, and these poor people are not even half fed or half clothed. I wish we could work for them instead of the peasants.<sup>82</sup>

The soldiers were to her young heroes fighting for their country and also in defence of civilization. Any news on the fate of the Haller’s Army and Polish victories on the front in the spring of 1919 was welcomed by her with enthusiasm.<sup>83</sup>

At the end of May her work in Dolsk came to an end. She was happy to see local peasants come and express their gratitude to the members of the mission. What is more, in one of the last letters preserved there is a short fragment of a de-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 22.

<sup>80</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 25.

<sup>81</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 16, April 22, May 6.

<sup>82</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 22.

<sup>83</sup> KFA, KF XXXVIII.1, letter from April 27, May 31.

scription of a wedding they had been invited to.<sup>84</sup> That expedition ended in a success: it turned out that in the conditions of work in the rear of warfare, a dozen weeks or so were enough for the strangers to stop being treated with mistrust and become part of the local community. Of course, there was a great intellectual divide between the two worlds, but their shared experience allowed to forget about the differences at least for a while.

### Conclusion

In the letters to her mother Edith Cullis tried to describe her time in Poland as a kind of an adventure. And to some extent that expedition was just that. One of the several dozen medical orderlies appears in her letters as one who was friends with Polish aristocrats, had a busy social life, and finally devoted herself to charity work among peasants in the war-stricken Volhynia. During the described events Cullis was forty-four years old and it is clear that she tried to get from life the best she could in the circumstances. On the other hand, she stressed that the uniform of a Red Cross nurse stirred a sensation everywhere and opened a lot of doors – as if she tried to signal to her aging mother that she was fulfilled, felt part of an important mission and was much more successful in the remote countries than in her native Massachusetts.<sup>85</sup> We need to remember that the addressee was a lady of advanced age – perhaps that is why there were more romantic descriptions of nature, outfits and social events than drastic ones of the hospital work. It is a different matter that the Polish expedition looked a bit like Edith's life adventure; after all, Americans were filmed wherever they appeared.<sup>86</sup> In the first days Cullis had a right to feel absolutely special. When in May 1919 another group of medical orderlies from the Polish White Cross arrived from France, led by the famous Agnieszka Wiśła, the American women did not stir such a sensation any longer.<sup>87</sup>

Was therefore Cullis' time here mainly an adventure, not having much to do with reliable charity work? Definitely not. Her Warsaw impressions are different than the letters from Volhynia. In the second part of her stay Cullis fulfilled typical roles of the Red Cross orderlies in the field: she took care of the kitchen, feeding the local peasants, and attended to the patients. The descriptions of the places she visited, however, even if sometimes a little naïve, bear out the main thesis of this paper. In Cullis' eyes, Poland was a country coming back to life after years of captivity, with plenty of problems but also full of people with great ideals. It was those people (aristocrats, soldiers, nurses, peasants), working and

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<sup>84</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from June 1.

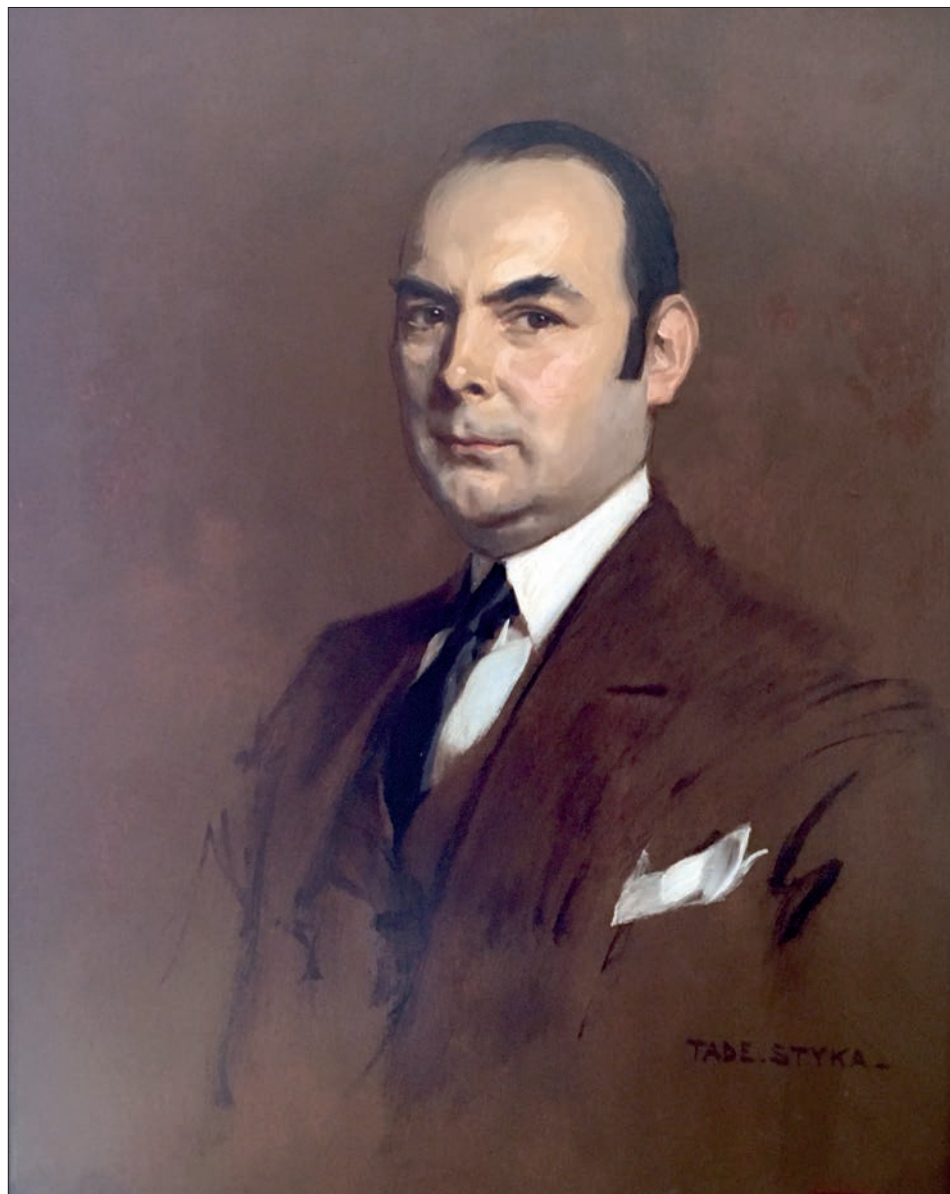
<sup>85</sup> KF XXXVIII.1, letter from March 13.

<sup>86</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* 74, March 15, 1919, morning edition, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> Maksymowicz, 84–103.

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fighting for Poland's independence, that became an inspiration for her to discover the unknown country and years later – to become one of the ambassadors of Polish culture in New York.



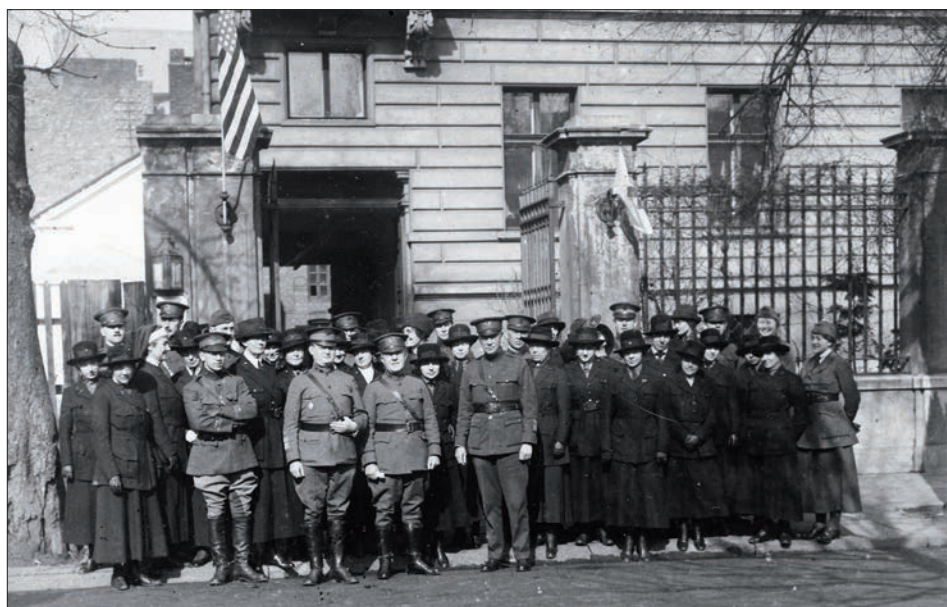
Tadeusz Styka, Portait of Edward S. Witkowski. Courtesy of Rita Laccetti.



A happy reunion. On the left Jeanette Witkowski, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Edward S. Witkowski and Paderewski's sister, Antonina Paderewski Wilkonska. The photo was taken at Riond Bosson sometime in the early to middle 1930s. Courtesy of Rita Laccetti.



Personnel of A.R.C. Mission to Poland on their arrival to Warsaw train station, March 3, 1919. Courtesy of the Kosciuszko Foundation, NYC.



Personnel of A.R.C. Mission to Poland on day of their arrival at their home in Warsaw. In front row from right are Col. Walter C. Bailey of Boston, head of the Mission; Major H.W. Taylor of Mobile, and Colonel Francis E. Fronczak of Buffalo. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



Personnel of A.R.C. Mission to Poland in Warsaw. In front row from right are Col. Walter C. Bailey of Boston, head of the Mission; Major H.W. Taylor of Mobile, and Colonel Francis E. Froneczak of Buffalo. Courtesy of the Kosciuszko Foundation, NYC.



Portrait of Prof. Robert. H. Lord around 1919.  
Courtesy of the Boston Archdiocese Archives.



Edith Cullis in France with two unknown soldiers, 1917 or 1918. Courtesy of the Kosciuszko Foundation, NYC.

## II. DOCUMENTS

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*FRANCIS E. FRONCZAK (Buffalo, NY)*

### POLES IN AMERICA. A SPEECH DELIVERED ON 2 APRIL 1918

**Introduced and edited by Wanda Slawinska**

When Francis E. Fronczak, M. D. joined the war effort, he was not in the American Army. With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Poles saw their opportunity to liberate their country from foreign occupation and to unite in a democracy which had eluded them for 123 years. This was possible through the great diplomatic skills of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who put his very successful piano career on hold for 10 years, as well as the Polish diaspora in the United States and Europe which was willing to fight “for your freedom and ours.” Seeking the support of President Woodrow Wilson, Paderewski laid out the reasons why Poland deserved to regain its nearly thousand-year-old homeland with a free access to the sea. These facts he also shared with the President’s friend and advisor, Col. E. M. House.

Paderewski, having developed a relationship over many years with Dr. Fronczak, was perceptive enough to realize that the Buffalonian was a man of good standing in his community. In Paris, there was another able statesman, Roman Dmowski, who organized the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski). Humble of name, the Committee was of paramount importance. It was recognized by the French as the legitimate representative of Poland to gain support for an independent Poland. It was formed as a quasi-government, and one of its tasks was to act as an embassy for the Poles. Of paramount importance was its mission to create a Polish Army in France to fight alongside the Entente. Paderewski, who was the delegate representing Poles in the United States, nominated Fronczak to this Committee. Dr. Fronczak was the only American, the only foreigner on the Committee. Dr. Fronczak simultaneously had the rank of Major in the US Army Medical Corps. His duty was the physical and the moral care of the Polish soldiers in the twenty-two camps in France.

Before departing for France in May 1918, Major Fronczak delivered an important address in Buffalo as part of a series of "Americanization Lectures For Native Americans." These lectures under the sponsorship of the Civic Education Association were one of the ways to demonstrate that Polish immigrants had become productive citizens of their new country. In giving lectures such as the one below, Dr. Fronczak describes the social milieu of the United States in his day while, at the same time, he gives us historical glimpses of Poland. The hostilities of the war made many Americans more aware of the aliens and "foreigners" in their midst, and Fronczak addresses these concerns in his speech by demonstrating that Polish immigrants have become "good Americans." Moreover, Fronczak highlights historic ties between Poland and America as a way to promote the Polish national cause of independence.

**Poles in America III**  
**Hotel Iroquois**  
**Buffalo, NY**  
**April 2, 1918<sup>1</sup>**

I surely consider it a great privilege to be able to take part in the Americanization lectures for native Americans given under the auspices of the Civic Education Association of this county. According to program I was to appear before this organization two weeks later but in view of this fact that my native land, United States, has called me to do my bit not only for her but "to make the world safe for democracy," it was thought that I might not be able to fulfill my engagement and therefore have been asked to open this series of lectures on the Polish Questions of to day.

According to program Miss Martha Mazurowska,<sup>2</sup> Principal of Public School 7 annex was to address you tonight on the Background of the Poles, their history, their homelife, their literature and art, and I was to confine myself to the Poles of America, their aims, their hopes and their ideals, their handicaps and consequences. I surely believe the task to be a very difficult one, but I shall try to do my share and aid in the elucidation of some of the mooted questions relating to the Poles here in America.

As a rule, one of Polish descent, no matter how many years he might have spent in this country, is called a foreigner, but if that is so you ought to call the en-

<sup>1</sup> Francis Fronczak, "Poles in America III," "2 April 1918, Civic Education Association, Americanization Lectures for Native Americans, Buffalo NY, Box 24, Folder 1, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947. Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection, Archives and Special Collections, E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo. Fronczak had delivered various versions of the speech over the years, and there are multiple versions still extant. This transcribed text represents the most complete version of the presentation delivered on 2 April 1918 in Buffalo.

<sup>2</sup> When Poland regained its independence, Marta Mazurowska, a prominent educator, was invited to teach in Poland to show how public schools are run in Buffalo.

tire American population foreigners for its [sic] only a question on of how recent a day has the immigrant or his forefathers come to this country. The only American is the American Indian and he has almost disappeared. The stranger in our midst is but of yesterday – his descendants two or three centuries hence can with as great a right point to them as the descendants of the Mayflower immigrants point today to their progenitors [sic]. As a matter of fact, it is not a question whether the citizen of these United States has but recently been naturalized or whether he is a member of the Sons of the Revolution or whether his forefathers have taken part in the war for Independence, the question today is how good a citizen is he. Does he add to the general welfare of the country by his presence here? Does he hold in his left hand a small American flag and sing the “Star Spangled Banner” together with his neighbor while at the same time in his right hand he holds a dagger to stab at American institutions and the country which has been his home and that of his children, and where he had the opportunity to become self-reliant, intelligent and attain material prosperity.

I shall endeavor to prove to you that the Pole in America today is as loyal a citizen as there is in this country of ours, barring none. Some may say that there are perhaps a few Poles whose loyalty may be questioned. We even admit that, but that less than one per cent of those who in their hearts are not through and through loyal, compares most favorably with the 99% of the Poles of today in America who adhere most closely to the principles laid down by George Washington and the statesmen from his time until the greatest statesman that the world has today, our President, Woodrow Wilson. This 99% of the Poles to day led by the greatest living Pole, Ignace John Paderewski, no matter from what view point you may gage him, are loayl [sic] to the core, are willing to do everything that this country may live and prosper.

Many in this audience have thought that the Polish immigration was but a recent one and that the Spaniards who are generally acknowledged to have discovered this country in 1492 led by that indomitable navigator Christopher Columbus, and that the English, and the Dutch and other representatives from western and north western portions of the European continent who have been here so long that many believe that they were the only people who took an active part in making this country what it is to day. I do not mention other nations which might have come to this country just before the great blot on our civilization, the European war broke out, almost four years ago, but I adhere to the fact that the Polish immigration has been quite an old one.

First, let me steal perhaps a little thunder from the address which Miss Mazurowska will deliver on the history of Poland and let me but in few sentences, give you an idea that the history of Poland is not a short one at all.

Already the geographer, Ptolemy, who lived in the second century of the Christian era mentioned the Polans, who were the forefathers of the Poles to day and who inhabited the plains of central part of Europe. As a matter of fact the

word Polak and Pole is derived from the Polish noun “pole” meaning the field or plain so that Polak meant an inhabitant of plains or fields.

Jordanes speaks of the Slav inhabitants who lived on the banks of the Vistula in 552 and tradition says that the Lachs, another name for Poles, began to form villages and colonies and had Kings and Princes at that time, the sixth century. When Alfred the Great, Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror sat on the throne of England, the latter from 1066 to 1087 – Poland had a history of centuries. When the Magna Charta was adopted in 1215 and became that important instrument in the government of the English people, Polish territory already extended for hundreds and thousands of square miles. When Columbus in 1492, who we are told, discovered this continent, Poland was in a most prosperous condition and additional lustre was cast upon her by the genius of the Great Copernicus, the geographer of heaven. When New York was settled by the Dutch in 1614, Poland at that time was at the height of her glory.

We citizens of America, pride ourselves in that great educational institution, the Harvard University, founded in 1640. Poland at that time already had the University of Cracow, founded almost three centuries before, and even at the time of the present war, is educating the youth of Poland. When John III Sobieski in 1683 was defending the civilization of Europe against the cohorts of Mohammendanism [sic] and saving Christianity on the continent, William Penn was just colonizing Pennsylvania. I could still further speak to you of certain historical events which took place in Europe as well as on this continent if I had the time, but you for yourselves can judge of the great historical life, early civilization, development and culture of this nation. Four years before the Declaration of Independence of this country in 1776, Poland had already undergone the first partition, this crime being perpetrated in 1772 by the neighboring countries of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. When George Washington in 1789 became the first President, Poland met in that Great Four Year Diet, which resulted in the Polish Magna Charta, the Constitution of the Third of May, adopted in 1791, the constitution which without fear of contradiction I can declare as being the most progressive of any of the nations of Europe at that time, except England, and was built on the lines of the Constitution of Great Britain and our own United States.

The great insurrection of the Poles under the leadership of the hero of two worlds, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, and the bloody battles and victories of the Russian cohorts over the Polish brave heroes and the resulting second partition in 1794, all took place before George Washington retired as President of this country, and Poland, after almost thirteen centuries of tradition and history, had been politically absorbed in 1795. The country of Copernicus and Sobieski, of Kosciuszko and Pulaski, of Chopin, Paderewski, Curie and Sienkiewicz, though divided by three neighboring nations, refused to be denationalized, but has grown stronger and stronger in every direction, in the number of people, in the progress of science, art and literature.

There is a startling resemblance between Poland and the United States. We are citizens of a young, powerful, active country, today we are the bulwarks of freedom. Poland was strong, energetic, restless, ever ready to fight the battles of the weak. Both of these countries, brave and generous to a fault, both a confederation of states. This country uniting under one flag, bound by one constitution, united by one executive representative body in Washington; Poland since 1589 a confederation of three great nations, Poland, Lithuania and Ruthenia, known at present as Ukraine – this being the first voluntary confederation of independent powers in Europe; Poland was and the United States is directed by elective government; both religious, both tolerant to all creeds; both loving liberty better than life, Washington and Kosciuszko fighting side by side for American independence, friends ever! There is a strong bond of friendship between the two countries. Poland, stricken off the map of Europe, is its battlefield to day; the great United States is looked upon by the nations of the world as the bulwark of all freedom, of all civilization and all progress; Poland for centuries pressed backwards the barbarous tribes from the east who came westward as far as the banks of the Dniester and Dwina and Vistula. When western civilization was blighted when Christianity was endangered, Poland defended same with her sword and with the lives of her sons, while the west of Europe flowered and taught the world civilization. Poland was the sentinel at the eastern gate of Europe, defending civilization from the inroads which were being made by the Mongolian people.

Victor Hugo says with great truth that  
“While my own dear France was the missionary of civilization,  
Poland was its Knight.”

Poland checked all invaders and in return asked for nothing from Europe, nothing in the line of contribution of troops or money; she asked for no thanks, she gave all, but the treatment she actually received from Europe in return is one of the crimes of the ages. Poland upheld Christianity when the most of Europe was sunk in bloody wars and greed; she was always the Champion of the West against the East; she was always the protector of culture against barbarism; the battlefield of the East against the West. “Improvident generosity” as was said at the first Peace Conference at the Hague, “was the cause of the downfall of this country”. Poland at its height was a great country. Her territory extended from the Baltic to the Black Seas, about 720 miles in length, almost the same in width, comprising about three hundred thousand Polish square miles in all; just for instance, take Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Kentucky, combine the area of these and make them into one state and you will have an idea of the vastness of the Polish territory, of the importance of a country with seaports in the south, on the Black Sea, with harbors in the north on the Baltic. Poland was a republic and a constitutional monarchy before constitutions were even dreamed of in Europe.

In 1800, the Polish people prayed to be allowed to live. In 1918 we know we shall live.

Now the Polish people are suffering as never before through no fault whatever of their own. Their territory the battlefield of the war in eastern Europe, it is soaked with the blood of the fallen, and millions of innocent women and children are starving. The plight is worse than that of the Belgians, according to the heart-rendering accounts of the conditions received from reliable sources. The men have been forced into the armies, regardless of their views of the justice of the conflict, the Poles of Galicia must fight for the Austrians, those of Russia for the Russians, those of Prussia for the Germans, friends against friends, perhaps brothers against brothers. Uncounted homes have been destroyed, all resources have been seized for military use, unnumbered throngs of the non-combatants are homeless and utterly destitute in a most rigorous winter.

Ignace John Paderewski at a speech delivered in Chicago probably covered the situation in Poland in as few words [sic] as possible when he uttered this. "Poland united in her anguish and her hope; her daughters walk in sorrow, mourning for their children, their husbands, their lovers. Desolation has fallen upon the land of their home. Let your heart feel their grief. Let your pity sustain them."

What is the history of the Poles in these United States? I shall run over this history of the Poles in as short space as possible. There are in America at present about four million Poles and from history and tradition it appears that already in the year 1476, John of Kolno discovered the shores of Labrador. He was in the service of Danish King Christian, and the head of the fleet which came to and discovered these shores. That was therefore at least sixteen years before the discovery of America by Columbus. John of Kolno came from a little village in Mazovia and was a Pole.

In the year 1662 Zborowski, a Pole who had some misunderstanding with the then reigning King, Stephen Batory, came to this country and settled near the town of Hackensack, New Jersey, and the well known family, Zabriske in New York, Brooklyn, and New Jersey, is the Americanized name of the descendants of the original Zaborowski. All American historians agree that Polish settlers were among those who first laid down the foundation of the colonization of the south and west, and Theodore Roosevelt in his great historical book, "The winning of the West" says that Polish settlers were in Virginia for many years and that in 1770 Jacob Sandowski came to New York and that his sons were the first white men who went through the virgin forests as far as Kentucky. He also makes note of the fact that the city of Sandusky, Ohio, probably received its name from these Polish immigrants.

It is a fact that it was a Pole who first led the movement for the establishment of the Polytechnic Institute in this country. It was a Polish schoolmaster who taught in the first high school of America. It was the hero of the two hemispheres, Thaddeus Kosciuszko who founded the military school at West Point and the

services rendered by Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski, is being pointed out to our school children today as invaluable to this country during the Revolutionary period.

The well know [sic] Jesuit, Father Conway in his Catholic Education in the United States writes that as early as 1659, the Dutch colonies of Manhattan Island, hired a Polish schoolmaster for the education of the youth of the community in the higher schools. A Polish clergyman, Rev. Dymitry Galiczyn, who was ordained on March 16th, 1795, by Bishop Carroll, whose friend he was, arrived in 1792 and who was sent by his father to visit this country, and brought letters of introduction to Washington and Jefferson. Bishop Carroll aided him in organizing the first parish of Poles, Bohemians and Slavs at Bohemian Manor, Cecil County, Maryland. In 1808 the Bishop asked for Polish Jesuits and five of them came that year, and Polish Jesuits took important part in the church work of these United States. It was not until after the Polish insurrection in 1830 that Poles came to this country in great numbers. Many of the Polish immigrants escaped to England, later to America and those who came to this country at that time were the flower of the Polish intelligence, patriots, scientists, educators, etc. Already in 1835, there existed a Polish National Committee in the United States and as a result of the labors and endeavors of this committee Congress offered to Polish immigrants at that time thirty-six section of land in the Town of Rock River, Illinois, and in a speech delivered in Congress, we read that this land was eighteen miles in length and that it was on both sides of the Rock River.

In 1842, there was another Polish organization in America, the head of which was Rev. Ludwig Jelkowicz of New York, whose motto was "Die for Poland." This organization had a great mass meeting in the Stuyvesant Institute in New York City in that year to commemorate the insurrection of 1830 and Poles from all parts of America attended this meeting and also great number of others.

In 1855, there was organized a Polish Anti-Slavery Association known as the Democratic Polish Society of America. These men were men of education as I said before, and they were welcomed in the best of American society, for they saw in them martyrs for the cause of liberty and democracy. In 1851 a Polish clergyman, the Rev. Leopold Moczygamba a Franciscan, came to this country from Upper Silesia, landed in the port of Galveston and brought with him agricultural implements of all kinds and even a church bell and a tower cross, and built the city of Panna Maria and Cestohowa in Texas. They were the first Polish churches built in this country. Ten years later, the Poles have been organizing Polish colonies in Parisville, Michigan, in Polonia, Wisconsin, and in 1862 there was organized the first Polish parish in Milwaukee; in 1870 there were twenty Polish colonies in the States of Texas, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Pennsylvania, as can be verified by looking through the Hoffman's Catholic Directory. The rich and cheap lands of Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin called to the Poles, for the majority of the Poles in England had been engaged in agri-

culture. Here in America they have started many Polish colonies in agricultural districts. They have taken up farms abandoned by Americans and coaxed out of them a good living, and the great wastes of but a short time ago have become fields of plenty under their hands.

In 1870, the Polish immigrants in America numbered about four hundred thousand, about a quarters [sic] of these living in the city of Chicago, and incidentally I might say there are living to day in the city of Chicago no less than four hundred and fifty thousand people of Polish descent. To day they number in the United States four millions. In other words people of Polish anscenstry [sic] living to day in the United States would duplicate the population of the New England States. Every eighth person you meet in Wisconsin or Michigan is of Polish descent; one out of every ten in Massachusetts, one out of every twelve in Pennsylvania; one out of every fourteen in the Empire State of this Union, New York State, has polish [sic] blood in in his veins. New York City, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Buffalo, Milwaukee, Detroit, each have Polish colonits [sic] of one hundred thousand or more. Here in Buffalo every fifth person is a Pole. The great tide of Polish immigration set in in 1880 and since that time every state in the Union has received Poles within its boundaries. In the State of New York for instance we see Polish churches and the great Polish population in every city reached by any of the great railroad trunk lines, as witness, Buffalo, Depew, Batavia, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Herkimer, Little Falls, Amsterdam, Schnectady [sic], Troy, Cohoes, Peekskill, Poughkepsie [sic], Hudson, Yonkers, New York, Lackawanna, Dunkirk, Salamanca, Olean, Elmira, Binghamton, Tonawanda, Niagara Falls and Oswego. It is sufficient to mention these facts and I shall not worry you by giving in detail the history of the Poles in this country.

There are in the State of New York over hundred Polish colonies, over one hundred churches and two hundred Polish clergymen.

What have these people done in the last forty years? They have come as poor as the proverbial church mouse; as poor as one can imagine an immigrant to be and yet they made good. They were not only poor but they were handicapped by the lack of knowledge of the language, customs and traditions of the new country. Many of them were also handicapped because the three countries among which their land was divided would not give them even a chance to acquire any elementary education. They were beset and oppressed, forbidden to speak the language of their fathers, to practice their religion, to show any national feeling, and as they were surrounded on all sides by spies and traitors and forced into involuntary servitude, they became suspicious even of many of those who spoke their language.

But they desired to become good citizens. They brought healthy and strong bodies, uncorrupted and untainted morals and minds. 99% of them were peasants who worked from dawn to dusk and were equal to do the same here, so they succeeded by reason of these sterling qualities. In 1901 the Rev. Father Kruszka of Milwaukee wrote the history of the American Pole and made a most extensive

study of the people and discovered that most of the Poles live in the middle states and more than one-half were situated on farms as owners as well as laborers. At that time he estimated that the Poles own land equal to the states of New Jersey and Rhode Island. In city property they possess more than three billion dollars in value. From the start they sought for the ownership of little homes. As a rule the Poles are industrious, thrifty, honest and cautious and seldom take chances. Stock speculators and those who deal in uncertain gold mines find very poor field among these people. But by building their own homes they prove their sagacity and ability to rise from the lowest financial stratum and from a poor subsistence to the highest scale of economic condition. In building their own homes, they have shown that they are fit citizens. And as I have said before they possess more than three billion dollars in city property alone, millions of this property being in the city of Buffalo. They own thousands upon thousands of small pieces of property which are always paid for. A foreclosure proceeding record against a piece of property belonging to a Pole is almost unknown. The Pole as I said before is an agriculturist by nature. Poland was never a commercial country and its commerce was usually conducted by others. It is only recently that the Polish people have taken to business and commercial life, but enterprises of great magnitude are now run by Poles. Besides possessing property and being established in business, they all show their thrift in other directions. In the four savings banks in the city of Buffalo, figures show that Poles have more than three million dollars on deposit. And yet all this wealth amounting to millions and millions of dollars, was saved notwithstanding the poor wages prevailing until recent times.

Not only have the Poles built their homes and churches out of these wages, but in the one thousand and more Polish colonies in the cities, towns and hamlets in the country, there are Polish schools both elementary and high, and colleges and seminaries. They have built asylums, homes for the aged and poor, and clubs for the wealthy. They have libraries, halls and newspapers. In other words, they have everything that is part and parcel of a cultured and progressive, up to date people.

I could enumerate many more facts which would indicate that the Poles in America are here to stay and that they are an invaluable asset to the country. They did not come to this country to reap the fruits from the labor of others, but they came and added their mite to the general welfare of the country by their honest labor and thrift, by the acquirement of homes and the payment of their share of the taxes.

They have left beyond the Atlantic their beloved country. They brought with them their customs and traditions, their love for liberty, their patriotism [sic], and their willingness to sacrifice all that is valuable to them for what is truly good and worthy of their endeavors. Aye, even more, even life itself, are they willing to lay down on the altar of their adopted country, as witnessed in all the wars, from that of Independence to the present one. The Poles took part in all of them and are taking a great part in the present one and they bear their share of the vicissitudes

of today. They have been unwillingly drawn into the armies of Austria, Germany and Russia and we are obliged to fight against each other, brother against brother. They have willingly entered the foreign legions in France, Italy and England. They have volunteered and entered in great numbers, over one hundred and fifty thousand strong into the army of the United States to fight for humanity, liberty and democracy, while those who were not able to enter the army of Uncle Sam either being under or above age, or for some physical defect, have entered into the ranks of the Polish army and more than twenty-five thousand of these men who have been living in the United States and who were not subject to draft because they come from countries which are enemy countries, or because of other reason provided by law, have joined in great numbers the Polish army, and they hope to see as a result of this war, a free, independent Poland, Poland with a seaport at Danzig, a Poland which will be able to exist commercially, economically, and a barrier between western civilization and the Eastern encroachments and thereby become a guaranty of permanent peace. The Polish army, notwithstanding statements to the contrary including even some of our renegade [sic] Polish press, is recognized by England and by France and United States as a matter of fact by all of the allies. The Polish army is not an un-American idea. It is democratic to the core.

The soldiers who join the Polish army are being trained among other places at Fort Niagara, within a short distance of this city. American transports and American convoys have taken these men across the Atlantic where they take part in the sanguinary strife "Over there." The aim and ideal of the Poles in America is to see not only his adopted country great, but also to see that the country of his forefathers shall resume its proper place among the nations of the world.

Poles to day are prominent in science and art, in literature and commerce. Poland has added to the treasure of the world by the study of the firmament of the heaven and of the bowels of the earth. Poles have battled on the field of glory and lectured in the halls of education. The poles [sic] love American [sic] because America gave them a safe harbor after exile from their own unhappy land and permitted them to develope [sic] their possibilities. The Polish have done and will continue all in their power to make this country the greatest, the best, of any land the sun has ever shown upon. They will fight with the American soldiers, shoulder to shoulder for the preservation of civilization, the laws of humanity, democracy, and liberty for all oppressed nations and they cherish in their hearts the hope of liberty for the land of their forefathers, which we hope they shall obtain with the aid of the American people, and with their benediction carry forth the highest ideals of mankind.

TOMASZ PUDEŁOCKI (*Kraków – Przemyśl*),  
ANDREW KIER WISE (*Amherst, NY*)

THE PADEREWSKI MILIEU.  
SELECT CORRESPONDENCE FROM  
THE DR. FRANCIS E. FRONCZAK COLLECTION,  
ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS,  
E.H. BUTLER LIBRARY, SUNY BUFFALO STATE<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction**

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) is a character who has inspired historians, politicians, artists and music lovers for many decades. A pianist, composer and politician, he was one of the most important Polish leaders during World War I, and there is an enormous amount of scholarship devoted to him. Paderewski is the subject of many books, television programs, and radio broadcasts, as well as countless scholarly and popular articles published in many languages. His letters – and also correspondence related to his circle of family, friends, and political colleagues – are especially appreciated by scholars. These documents still bring to light a lot of unknown details not only from the private lives of “the Maestro” and his family, but also from his broad range of public activities. There are already publications that include various examples of correspondence dealing with his extensive cultural, social, and political activities. For example, Małgorzata Perkowska-Waszek recently edited an extensive volume of his letters, in which the reader will find detailed references to further reading on Paderewski.<sup>2</sup>

We thus decided to provide a small sample of correspondence related to the theme of this volume, with a focus on the activities of Paderewski, his wife, and his colleagues in the United States during World War I. While Paderewski towers over his family and associates in historiography, more recent studies have explored the ways in which he was aided in his political efforts by his fam-

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<sup>1</sup> The editors wish to thank Wanda Slawinska, Curator of the Fronczak Collection, for permission to reprint this correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Perkowska-Waszek, *Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Listy do Ojca i Heleny Górskiej (1872-1924)* (Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina, 2018).

ily (especially his wife), and also colleagues in Europe and the United States. One example is Dr. Francis Fronczak and his family in Buffalo, NY, who were enchanted by his charismatic personality. The Paderewski-Fronczak friendship emerged long before World War I, but the wartime efforts by Paderewski to promote the Polish cause brought them closer together. Francis Fronczak thus exemplifies the group of select people who, being greatly influenced by Paderewski, supported him in his work for an independent Poland and an American-Polish rapprochement.<sup>3</sup>

This volume includes the texts of seven letters, which are presented in print here for the first time. All the correspondents are well-known figures in American Polonia who appear in scholarly research dealing with American-Polish relations. In addition, they were directly or indirectly associated with Paderewski. These included, first of all, his wife (Helena Paderewska, 1856–1934),<sup>4</sup> and also Francis E. Fronczak (1874–1955). Their correspondence allows us to better understand Paderewski's phenomenal political success, and they also provide examples of his and his wife's myriad activities on behalf of the Polish cause in the wartime years.

The letter from Józef F. Sawicki<sup>5</sup> to Francis E. Fronczak exemplifies the important role played by the Buffalo physician and Public Health Commissioner within Polonia organizations in the United States. He was perhaps the most prominent Pole in Buffalo, and his charisma, diligence and dedication to the needs of the Polish communities in America and the cause of Poland was appreciated far beyond Western New York. Sawicki's correspondence clearly points to the fact that many Poles in the United States considered Fronczak to be a speaker who could proudly replace Paderewski when the great leader could not personally attend various Polish-American events. Helena Paderewska's correspondence emphasizes that Fronczak was one of her husband's closest collaborators, and they knew they could depend on his support.

This selection of just a few letters is also intended to draw the attention of Polish diaspora researchers to an important but underused archival collection that deals with the history of Polonia in America and its role in the rebirth of the Polish state. The Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection is housed in the Ar-

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see J.A. Herter, *Zygmunt Stojowski. Life and Music* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> On Paderewska see more: *Helena Paderewska, Memoirs, 1910-1920*. Edited with an Introduction and Annotations by Maciej Siekierski. Foreword by Norman Davies (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> J.F. Sawicki (1881–1969), lawyer, politician, and judge. One of the most prominent Polish Americans in Ohio, leader of many Polonia organizations and fraternal orders in Cleveland. Sawicki served in the Ohio state legislature from 1905–08 and 1911–12. He was appointed judge of the Cleveland municipal court on 1 January 1919 and won his first election to the post that November. In 1953, Sawicki served as a member of the Cleveland Charter Commission, and in 1959 was appointed special counsel for the Ohio attorney general.

chives and Special Collections of the E. H. Butler Library at SUNY Buffalo State in Buffalo, NY. The collection actually consists of two separately catalogued sets of papers (one was originally part of the archival collection at the Buffalo History Museum), which together contain correspondence, documents related to Fronczak's work as Public Health Commissioner from 1910-47, and photographs of Fronczak and his family. The collection also deals extensively with the Polish community in Buffalo and beyond, including a wealth of documentation about the contacts of Polish diaspora leaders with political activists in Poland during the early 20th century. There is a particular focus on the war years and the interwar period.<sup>6</sup>

We have presented the letters as written in their original languages, in order to show the "atmosphere" of the era and the formal way of communication, even among close colleagues and friends. It is worth recalling that the Polish language has changed significantly in its grammar and spelling since the beginning of the 20th century. In accordance with the principles of publishing 19th and 20th century documents, the spelling of Polish-language sources has been updated. Only those formulations were left that convey the "spirit of the age," which can be picked up even from this small sampling of correspondence among Paderewski's close supporters. In the case of surnames, they are given according to the Polish- and English-language rules; thus, Polish surnames have not been anglicized. For example, we have retained the Polish ending for the name of Paderewski's wife, referring to her as "Helena Paderewska" rather than "Helena Paderewski" (as some historians have chosen to use). In this correspondence, Helena Paderewska herself wrote her surname in this form in English.

This sample of correspondence from the Fronczak Collection does not present any breakthrough revelations. However, it does offer insights into attitudes and activities related to the cause of Polish independence in Polish diaspora centers in cities such as Buffalo and Cleveland, rather than other notable Polonia centers – such as Chicago and New York – that so often occupy the attention of scholars. There are many well-known scholarly works dealing with the activities of Polish diaspora leaders in America, whose actions in support of Polish independence have inspired historical research for over a century. Our hope is that these letters, as well as the entire volume, will spark additional research on the Polish diaspora in communities of all sizes in the United States, especially in connection with the story of World War I and the rebirth of an independent Polish state in 1918.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information about the collection, see <https://library.buffalostate.edu/archives/francis-fronczak>. For an unpublished biography of Fronczak, and also an extensive selection of photographs from the collection, see <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/fronczak/>.

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1. Francis E. Fronczak<sup>7</sup> to Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

Typed letter in Polish from Francis E. Fronczak, M. D. on stationery for Office of Health Commissioner, Buffalo, N. Y. dated 19 April [1915?].<sup>8</sup>

Wielce mi miły i czcigodny Mistrzu!

Ledwie wkroczyliście, czcigodny Mistrzu, na ziemię amerykańską, a już na pewno jesteście zawałeni rozmaitymi prośbami i petycjami. Sądzę jednak, że będziecie uwzględniać tylko te, które są treścią wytycznego celu przybycia Waszego do nas, tj. niesienia pomocy głodnym w Ojczyźnie. Otóż w tej kwestii pozwalam się zwrócić do Was.

Komitet Centralnej Pomocy Narodowej w Buffalo polecił mi zaprosić Go<sup>9</sup> do Buffalo na dzień 2-3 maja w celu agitacyjnym na rzecz naszych rodaków w Ojczyźnie. Dnia 2go maja rozpoczyna się bazar urządzany przez towarzystwa w Buffalo, a 3go maja odegrana zostanie sztuka "Quo Vadis" w teatrze Majestic. Obecność Wasza, czcigodny Mistrzu, ze względu na chęć utworzenia Komitetu Polsko-Amerykańskiego przysporzyłaby na pewno kilku tysięcy dolarów dla funduszu narodowego.

Gdyby czcigodny Mistrz mógł przybyć, jestem przekonany, że Polonia w Buffalo oraz okolicy nie poskąpiłaby grosza, aby okazać swą łączność z krajem, a zarazem aby dać wyraz swej wdzięczności za zainteresowanie się tak żywo sprawą ojczystą przez jej najwierniejszego syna. Osobiście sądzą, iż cokolwiek czcigodny Pan w tym kierunku rozporządzi, będzie z chęcią przyjęte przez Komitet.

Przy sposobności łączę serdeczny uścisk dłoni z nadzieją rychłego spotkania się osobiście. Ukłony dla Szanownej Pani od nas obojga.

Dr Fronczak (handwritten signature)

2. Helena Paderewska to Francis E. Fronczak.

Typed letter in English from Helena Paderewska to Dr. Fronczak on stationery of The Polish Victims' Relief Fund. National American Committee. Aeolian Building, 33 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 1507-10. New York, June 15, 1915.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For more about F.E. Fronczak and his actions during World War I, see other documents and articles in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> Box 21, folder 7, Francis E. Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947. Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Collection, Archives and Special Collections, E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo, NY (hereafter cited as Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947).

<sup>9</sup> This is an obsolete polite form of the word „you.” In contemporary Polish, the word „Ciebie” or „Pana” would be used.

<sup>10</sup> Box 21, folder 7, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

Dear Dr. Fronczak:

As you know, Mr. Paderewski has come to the United States to raise money for his destitute and starving countrymen. To this end he has established The Polich [sic] Victims' Relief Fund. This Fund is now actively engaged in collecting money. One source of revenue is the selling of Polish Victims' Relief Fund stamps, like the enclosed sample, which can be placed on letters, etc., just as the Christmas stamps are used. These stamps have been made up into booklets containing eighty stamps each, and are sold for one dollar.

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to help the good work by taking a number of these booklets to dispose of to your friends? It would be very helpful to us and I trust not give you much trouble.

Hoping to hear favorably from you, and with every good wish, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Helena Paderewska<sup>11</sup>

Drogi Panie, gdyby Pan mógł puścić w kurs te znaczki, byłoby ślicznie – to dzień życia dla zgłodniałych rodzin, serdecznie pozdrawiam H.<sup>12</sup>

P.S. In order to minimize your trouble, in case you can do this, we shall send you as many letters and cards like enclosed as you wish to use in sending to your friends. H. P.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Joseph F. Sawicki to Francis E. Fronczak

Typed letter in Polish from Joseph F. Sawicki, Attorney and Counselor at Law, Cleveland, Ohio on stationery of Centralny Komitet Ratunkowy w mieście Cleveland. "Wierni przeszłości – Ufni w przyszłość." Sawicki was an acting President of the Central Relief Committee in Cleveland, OH.<sup>14</sup>

Cleveland, O., 7go lipca 1916

Wielmożny Panie Doktorze!

Zwracamy się do W[ielmożnego] Pana z gorącą prośbą ratowania nas z kłopotliwego, ale to bardzo kłopotliwego położenia.

<sup>11</sup> Handwritten signature.

<sup>12</sup> Handwritten postscript in Polish.

<sup>13</sup> Typed postscript in English.

<sup>14</sup> Box 43, folder 10, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

W szczególności rzecz ma się następująco. Dnia 16 lipca urządzają Zjednoczone Towarzystwa w Cleveland Manifestację ku czci Flagi Amerykańskiej, a zarazem w celu zaznaczenia naszej siły i wpojenia wiary w masy, że są silne. Podczas Manifestacji miał przemawiać mistrz Paderewski. Niestety wczoraj powiadomił nas telegraficznie, że udziału wziąć nie może. Całe miasto na nas patrzy, więc musimy z pogwałceniem wszelkich form i etykiety prosić W[ielmożnego] Pana na mówcę na ten dzień, jako rzeczywiście godnego zastępcę Paderewskiego. Obchód odbędzie się w Grays Armory.

Całym sercem prosimy Pana o wysłuchanie naszej prośby i przebaczenia nieformalnego zaproszenia.

Tusząc,<sup>15</sup> że W[ielmożny] Pan nie odmówi naszej gorącej prośbie, kreślimy się z najgłębszym szacunkiem.

Za komitet Manifestacji  
Józef F. Sawicki  
Leokadia (not clear surname)  
Bolesław K. Zieliński<sup>16</sup>

4. Helena Paderewska to Francis E. Fronczak.

Typed letter in English from Madame Helena Paderewska on her personal stationery. With handwritten postscript in Polish.<sup>17</sup>

May 7th, 1917.  
Dr. F. E. Fronczak,  
568 Elicot Square,  
Buffalo, New York.

My dear Dr. Fronczak:

In reply to your letter of a few days ago, Mr. Paderewski wishes me to say that he accepts with greatest pleasure your kind invitation to be present on Polish Day at the Bazaar in Buffalo. I also shall be very glad to accompany him on that day.

Please accept my sincere apologies that this letter is typewritten and in English but I am very tired and not feeling especially well.

With warmest greetings from us both.

Devotedly yours,

<sup>15</sup> This is an Old Polish word that means „trusting” or „hoping.”

<sup>16</sup> Handwritten signatures.

<sup>17</sup> Box 43, folder 6, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

Przepraszam za ten list – mój mąż gotów jest przemówić – tylko czy po polsku czy po angielsku?<sup>18</sup>

Pozdrawiam serdecznie H.P.

5. Helena Paderewska to Francis E. Fronczak.

Handwritten letter in Polish from Helena Paderewska to Dr. Fronczak on stationery of Madame Helena Paderewska For Poland. American Refuge For Suffering Womanhood, A Home For Polish Girls in Warsaw, Poland. Other Activities Polish Starving Children's Fund, Polish Refugee Dolls "Dziewczęta dla Dziewcząt" (Polish Girls for Polish Girls). Residence and Private Office, Hotel Gotham 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Corner of Fifth Avenue, New York City, Telephone Circle 2200<sup>19</sup>

22/XII 1917

Szanowny Panie Doktorze,

Sądzę, że lunczki<sup>20</sup> najlepiej do mnie do Gotham przysłać, gdyż wątpię, by je umiano roztaczać<sup>21</sup> – z zawartości każdego zdam rachunek.

Cieszę się, że tyle Komitetów dla wojska naszego pracuje w Buffalo – czy to jednak nie szkoda, że ich jest tyle i praca zamiast koncentrować się – rozprasza się na wszystkie strony. Zamiast stworzyć naszą rodzimą organizację, obejmującą wszystkie polskie środowiska – my po dawnemu skrobiemy każda swą rzepkę osobno.

Jest zawsze tak i teraz [problem] z jednością. Proponuję byśmy założyły<sup>22</sup> Komitet złożony z przedstawicieli Chicago, Buffalo i New Jorku – stworzyły jedno wielkie Towarzystwo z subkomitetami i zaprowadziły jednolitą organizację. Wtedy dopiero praca będzie dobra i szybka.

Gotowam do wszelkich ustępstw – byle praca sama dobrą była. Niech D[oktor] Kochany dopomoże, a może się i uda.

Od dłuższego czasu jestem chora i dziś dopiero wstałam z łóżka. Mąż też przemęczony strasznie. A Doktor – a żona – a dzieci? Proszę je uściskać, a żonę ucałować.

Życzenia Nowego Roku łączę – Daj nam Boże przyszły, lepszy.

Helena Paderewska

<sup>18</sup> Postscript in Polish.

<sup>19</sup> Box 43, folder 6, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>20</sup> This is a polonized version of the English word „lunch.”

<sup>21</sup> In this context, this means „to develop” or „to expand.”

<sup>22</sup> Paderewska used the feminine form in this paragraph, which perhaps indicates that she envisioned women establishing and providing the foundation for a new organization.

Układy z Czerwonym Krzyżem prowadzę – o pozwolenie nazwy Polskiego Czer[wonego] Krzyża – o rezultacie doniosę. Zanim jednak pozwolenie, czyli licencję otrzymamy (jeżeli otrzymamy), niech nazwy Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża nie używać, bo będzie bieda.

6. Francis E. Fronczak to Ignacy and Helena Paderewskis.  
Night Letter in English. The Western Union Telegraph Company.<sup>23</sup>

Buffalo, N.Y., December 24, 1917

To: Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Paderewski, Hotel Gotham, Fifth Ave. & 55<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City.

Mrs. Fronczak and children join me in best wishes for merry Yuletide and hope that next Christmas will enable us to join in the chorus Glory to God on High Peace to all Men of Good Will who brought about Poland's freedom. Kindest remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Gorski.

Dr. Francis E. Fronczak.

7. Francis Fronczak to Ignacy J. Paderewski  
Typed letter in English.<sup>24</sup>

February 23, 1918

Mr. I. J. Paderewski,  
Hotel Gotham,  
Cor. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. & 55<sup>th</sup> St.,  
New York City.

My dear Mr. Paderewski:

I was very sorry indeed to have missed you while you were in Buffalo between trains. At the time you were in Buffalo, I was attending the funeral of a former Mayor, Dr. Conrad Diehl,<sup>25</sup> and when I arrived home and my little girl told me that Mr. Francke called and that you and the doctor were in town (by the way I hope you are not ill and that the doctor was not needed to look after you while on the road) I immediately called up the Iroquois Hotel and they informed me you did not register, but only stopped for a short time.

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<sup>23</sup> Box 43, folder 6, Fronczak Papers, 1894-1947.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Conrad Diehl (1843-1918) was Mayor of the City of Buffalo, NY, serving from 1898 to 1901. He died on February 20, 1918.

I am leaving Sunday night for Philadelphia and Atlantic City. On Monday I will be at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, attending a meeting on housing and city planning. Late Tuesday afternoon and until Friday or Saturday, I shall most likely be in Atlantic City at the Marlborough Blenheim, attending Child Welfare meeting.

If there is anything of importance kindly let me know, or if there is something important you desire to see me about, I might drop into New York, but do not want to do so unless really important. Mrs. Fronczak will be with me.

Incidentally, have you done anything in my matter in the Departments of State and War. I, of course, cannot leave until I have proper credentials, passports and so on is shape. [sic]

Pardon me for writing this in English, but I have such an accumulation of work, it is absolutely out of the question to do anything without a stenographer and I have several appointments which I must keep at once.

Very truly yours,

[no signature]



### III. BOOK REVIEWS

*ROCZNIK PRZEMYSKI vol. 55*

*HISTORY issue 3 (23) 2019*

*ROBIN LAUERMANN (Grantham, PA)*

REVIEW: M.B.B. BISKUPSKI, *THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE REBIRTH OF POLAND, 1914-1918*  
DORDRECHT: THE NETHERLANDS, 2012

By the turn of the 20th century, a significant wave of immigrants from Poland had fled their homeland as it marked over one hundred years under partition rule by the Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian empires. As they resettled in diaspora, including a significant number in the United States, they formed a significant base of political activity to influence other nations' foreign policies. In this scrupulously detailed work, M.B.B. Biskupski characterizes the activities by various civic associations of Polonia and their leaders to raise American consciousness, first for relief and military support of the war-ravaged lands of Poland and then for its return to independence. Two key lessons emerge: despite fragmented agendas and rivalries, Polonia achieved its common goal of Polish independence in part due to intentional leadership from the Polish community; despite the impact of the United States' foreign policy contributions to this outcome, its lack of strong and consistent commitment to the cause meant that it was not quite the strong ally as some had perceived it, often frustrating the accomplishment of Polish goals.

Built on extensive source documents in Polish and English, Biskupski presents a painstakingly detailed narrative that affirms the complexity of historical developments. Although not fully ordered either by chronology or topic, the author provides a compelling wealth of evidence. Cautioning against deterministic explanations for the outcome of Polish independence, he nevertheless reveals some influential factors. American Poles demonstrated similar sub-divisions as their international counterparts, though at times they could set those differences aside for the common good of a rebirthed Polish nation-state. Polish leaders helped to generate attention within Polonia and connections with the American government to promote their goals – for an army, for relief and for independence.

America responded, but sometimes with more rhetoric and symbolism than effective policy decisions and commitments. As a result of this scholarship, we have a much more detailed picture of the events that influenced the rebirth of the Polish nation-state – before, during and after the war.

Biskupski's account of the diverse perspectives within American Polonia, initially sketched in the first chapter, presents a complex picture. Contrary to some summary images of immigrant groups, Poles were far from a monolith of perspective and experience. Sometimes seen as a "Fourth Partition," this population was no less divided than those in the land from whence they arrived.<sup>1</sup> Individuals settling in the Midwest, around the Great Lakes, tended to come from the German portion of partitioned lands; they tended towards more clerical and economic traditionalism with a pro-Russia stance. Those settling along the Atlantic came from eastern lands; they tended towards more socialist and pro-German stances. In all, each of these broad groupings were very much framed by the culture and experiences of their emigration locations. Moreover, these multiple cleavages tended to be reinforcing rather than cross-cutting, save for the overarching interest in some sort of independent Poland, so there was less common ground on which to build collaboration.

These differences were reflected in the organizations that developed within Polonia producing, in turn, complications to efforts to support the Polish Question; that is, the return of Polish independence. Since the time of Alexis de Tocqueville, observers in America have seen civic associations as a mainstay of generating support for political activity within the general public.<sup>2</sup> These groups bring together like-minded individuals, pooling efforts collectively, magnifying their influence over what an average individual might accomplish. Within Polonia, Biskupski catalogs the varied associations that represented interests from clerical (Polish Roman Catholic Union, ZPRK), to nationalist (Polish National Alliance, ZNP), to martial (Polish Falcons Alliance of America, ZSP) and many other groups.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the text, he frames the events of the war and its resolution in an independent Polish state through the vantage point of these numerous and sometimes competing groups, indicating the important role of grassroots participation in these efforts.

The plethora of organizations resulted in divergent perspectives on the ends of a rebirthed Poland, reflecting more common ideological differences, resulting in an inability to tolerate the success of competing groups. These divisions were perpetuated by those of parallel émigré camps in Europe, particularly those spearheaded by Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski.<sup>4</sup> Other leaders, such as

<sup>1</sup> M.B.B. Biskupski, *The United States and the Rebirth of Poland, 1914-18*. (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2012), 6-11.

<sup>2</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, transl. Henry Reeve (Project Gutenberg, 2006), Volume I, Book I, Chapter XII, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/815> (accessed: 1 July 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Biskupski, 10-16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-21.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski, likely helped to promote sustained American attention to their goals because of celebrity.<sup>5</sup> However, social capital failed to bond the efforts across American Polonia in significant ways, despite several attempts to create larger umbrella organizations, such as the KON (National Defense Committee – Komitet Obrony Narodowej), as the ideological competition usually tended to rent cooperative efforts.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the efforts by differing groups were often seen as competition, rather than collaboration, which likely hampered the effectiveness of their work.

One of the several goals towards which Polonia worked involved repeated and faltering attempts, traced by Biskupski over several chapters, to fund and recruit for a Polish national army. Initial efforts began in Poland with the KTSSN (Temporary Coordinating Commission of Confederated Independence Parties) and RN (National Movement), and spread through connections to American Polonia. Dr. Teofil Starzyński initiated efforts by the Falcons to lead the organizational and funding elements. Very quickly, divisions between traditionalists and the left created challenges in cooperating on this goal. A solution offered involved centering efforts for a Polish army in France, encouraged by Wacław Gąsiorowski, but faltered to lack of funding and support by the French government.<sup>7</sup> A second option for conglomerating and training recruits in Canada, promoted by the PCKR (Polish Central Relief Committee), would likewise dissolve after opportunities to fight on Polish and Russian behalf dissolved. Leftist efforts, aligned through the NKN (Supreme National Committee) to support the efforts in Austria also fell through.<sup>8</sup> Anti-Semitic impulses, evident in Poland during the war and in clashes within America, also hindered collaborative support in this area as it opened the movement to criticism of its character and question of its merit.<sup>9</sup> The initiative would lose its momentum for a time.

Efforts to create the army were also hampered by imaging of Polish ties to subterfuge. Segments of the foreign press attempted an appeal to discourage America's entry into the war, due to concerns of how it might impact the outcome. In response, the British launched campaigns, not only to discredit particular editors, but also to cast German Poles as agents of the European powers that ruled their homeland.<sup>10</sup> Despite limited evidence of actual collusion, efforts by domestic opponents of the KON, along with Allied powers, gained credibility with the larger public, discouraging support for the recruitment of American Poles to serve in the army.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 50-54.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 59-63.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 99-104.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 105-19.

As with other developments, it took movement by other international actors to spur America to further action. Jan M. Horodyski would serve as mediator on these issues, reporting to Paderewski. After delays in agreement forming "Kościuszko's Corps" within the United States army, or as contingents of noncitizens in Canada, the French government indicated a renewal in its own interest and support.<sup>12</sup> However, it would be the transition in Russian governments in 1917 that would lead to the authorization of the first official unit.<sup>13</sup> Yet despite the formal recognition of these units, the Polish army languished, as citizens were not eligible to serve outside American forces and those not eligible for draft faced uncertain return under immigration law.

Once the United States entered the war, German and Austrian Poles became enemy aliens as opposed to refugees. Attempts to gain certificates of nationality for potential recruits were slowly addressed by the administration, showing a lack of awareness of the impact from the war that this population faced. Only late in the war was permission granted for recruiting of American Poles, along with concerted training efforts in several locations along the Canadian-American border.<sup>14</sup> As the army's ranks also flourished from the gathering of Poles elsewhere in the world, larger scale developments in the war would determine that this activity was too little too late for the army to make its anticipated impact.<sup>15</sup> However, the persistent attention to this concern would allow for inroads on other affairs of Polonia.

When military recruitment efforts stalled earlier in the war, members of Polonia turned their attention towards relief assistance, albeit, ultimately unsuccessfully. Polish celebrities, such as Paderewski and Henryk Sienkiewicz, made use of their renown to build attention to the suffering in Poland brought on by the war.<sup>16</sup> Their founding of the Vevey Committee, in partnership with several others, dominated the relief efforts. Their pro-Russian/Entente leanings created dissatisfaction among those aligning with Austria/ Germany, especially with its resulting alliance with the PCKR, and for Jews who came to America from Poland who experienced poor treatment there.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, they undercut perceived rival efforts, such as the Kochańska Committee, burning bridges with others who shared a larger concern for the homeland.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, the efforts raised a meager amount in relation to relief efforts for other nations, at least until major organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation became involved and émigré leaders convinced the American government to support its cause.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 279-86.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 287-90.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 341-45.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 349-52.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 65-68.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 69-76.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 86-96.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 124-27.

Despite the relative lack of sustained success of the relief effort compared to those for other European nations, such as Belgium, Biskupski asserts that it did stimulate attention to the Polish cause within American society and thereby helped to facilitate movement on the Polish Question, which would not be resolved until the conclusion of the war. The devastation visited on Polish territories both by Russian and German troops produced concern within the American public and government, especially with concerted attention to the issue in the national press. Earlier efforts by Erazm Piltz in establishing the Central Polish Agency (CAP), an international body that solicited funds from American Poles, laid a foundation for action.<sup>20</sup> In cooperation with the Polish National Department (WN), collaboration spread across Polonia. That collaboration would be impacted by international developments, as the coordinated PCKR-WN successfully developed internationally while the NKN-KON declined; however, the dissolution of formal competition meant that a more coherent approach to President Wilson could occur.<sup>21</sup>

Paderewski, as the perceived diplomatic leader of the Polish cause, was successful in gaining entrée to President Wilson's advisor Colonel House, on this and other issues, though Biskupski notes that evidence is unclear as to the exact extent of Paderewski's influence on American actions.<sup>22</sup> Despite this contact and America's sympathetic rhetorical response, relief efforts would be stalled by the blockade of Germany, which the British initially refused to lift, in whole or part, without some guarantees for protections against German responses.<sup>23</sup> After lengthy diplomatic machinations, American support failed to secure agreements with the British and German governments, as conditions in Poland remained grim, but facilitated some furtherance of Polish national concerns.<sup>24</sup> Despite unsuccessful efforts in ending the blockade, the United States' displayed an open interest to intervene on behalf of the Polish cause. These developments would not have been possible without President Wilson's openness as a leader to learn.

In his work, Biskupski also provides a view into the evolving perspective of President Wilson, who went from near ignorance on Poland, Polonia and their cause, to a receptive ally. His prior academic work said little about Poles, and what there was of it was dismissive, as was his view of "hyphenated Americans."<sup>25</sup> As such he alienated Polish voters in 1912.<sup>26</sup> Held to account for his statements, he managed to overcome his negative reputation among this group. Moreover, his veto of immigration restrictions won favor among Poles for the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 160-64.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 164-79.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 131-40.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 142-45.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 145-46.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 184-87, 194-96.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 196-98.

1916 election.<sup>27</sup> Attentive to this group more closely, he would go on to insert the United States into the international conversation with a push for Polish independence, though not before other foreign powers officially raised the issue.

Early attempts by Austria and Germany to control the evolution of events produced a proclamation of November 5, 1916 establishing an as-yet-to-be determined independent Polish state; this potential outcome did not sit well with Russia, who feared the new state would align with its current enemies.<sup>28</sup> However, rather than giving a positive reception to this statement, the WN agitated among American Polonia, claiming that it failed to deliver a true independent Poland. Despite counter-efforts by KON to highlight the proclamation as a positive development, general attitudes tended to be negative.<sup>29</sup> Wilson initially critiqued this proclamation to the Senate, finding it self-serving to the actors who issued it.<sup>30</sup> He would later include a more specific and formal statement of support of Polish independence as his Thirteenth Point, advocating for its autonomy with sea access, for which America would further push once the Central Powers were cornered.<sup>31</sup> This assertion marked a consonance with broader administration policy towards facilitating democracy, as well as an alignment with the Allied powers on the question of Polish independence.

Once efforts finally turned to defining the borders of Poland, contestation still abounded as to whether to draw boundaries based on pure geography, history, ethnicity or other criteria. Initial considerations examined population dispersions based on linguistic commonality.<sup>32</sup> Continued conversation on the importance of a sea-port through Danzig stretched these original criteria, resulting in five potential combinations of partitioned lands.<sup>33</sup> The conversations were complicated by contested views of data from two different censuses – one conducted by tsarist Russia in 1897 and those by the Germans in 1916.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the experts had to balance the proposed boundaries of Poland with concerns about other ethnic groups; the Baltic states, along with Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, where members favored restoration of those territories as part of a Russian confederacy.<sup>35</sup> But ultimately, Poland would achieve its independence, along with its sea-port, simultaneously with the end of the war on November 11, 1918. Biskupski's research reveals that the path to independence was indeed complex, shaped by Polonian efforts to influence American foreign policy.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 200-12.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 220-21.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 223-24.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-40.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 328-36.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 393-96.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 398-405.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 407-8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 409-12.

ANDREW KIER WISE (*Amherst, NY*)

REVIEWS: RICHARD D. MERRITT, *TRAINING  
FOR ARMAGEDDON: NIAGARA CAMP  
IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1919*. VICTORIA,  
CA: FRIESEN PRESS, 2015, PP. XII + 307;  
ANITTA MAKSYMOWICZ,  
*W DRODZE DO NIEPODLEGŁOŚCI. KANADYJSKI  
PRZYSTANEK OBÓZ KOŚCIUSZKO  
W NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE (1917-1919)*.  
ZIELONA GÓRA: MUZEUM ZIEMI LUBUSKIEJ  
W ZIELONEJ GÓRZE, 2017, PP. 71

On 21 September 2018, participants in a special symposium commemorating the 100th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish state (*For Your Freedom and Ours: Polonia and the Struggle for Polish Independence*) travelled from Daemen College (Amherst, NY) to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Fine weather prevailed, and it was an unusually warm day for the guided tour of a special exhibition on “Camp Kosciuszko: The Polish Army at Niagara Camp, 1917-1919” at the Niagara Historical Society & Museum. Assistant Curator Shawn Butts explained the highlights of the fascinating exhibition, and then Richard D. Merritt guided visitors on a tour of the actual sites connected to Camp Kosciuszko. These colleagues provided deeper context for the fascinating story of the more than 20,000 Polish troops who were trained in this charming town along the Canadian-US border from 28 September 1917 to 26 March 1919.

Merritt has also authored a splendid volume about the role of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a training center for troops during World War I. *Training for Armageddon* is a well-researched book that covers the broader history of the site as a military camp for Canadian soldiers. This context helps readers understand why Camp Kosciuszko emerged as a key training area for Poles in North America who fought for Polish independence during the Great War as volunteers in General Haller’s “Blue Army.” Chapter 7 is dedicated entirely to the Polish experience at Niagara-on-the-Lake. This chapter exemplifies the strengths found throughout Merritt’s book: an engaging narrative crafted in a fluid writing style;

integration of material from an impressive range of archival and other primary sources; and contextualizing developments at Niagara Camp within broader wartime trends.

While Merritt certainly takes care to introduce the reader to well-known figures in the story of Camp Kosciuszko (such as Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Camp Commandant Lt. Colonel Arthur D. LePan and others), he is at his best when providing insights about daily life at the Camp for recruits. Merritt provides a wide array of visual sources, which are reprinted here with great impact. Especially noteworthy are the postcards and photos housed in private collections, including his own. On the one hand, life in the crowded barracks could be quite difficult, especially during the cold winter months. Military training was intense, and the soldiers had few distractions in the small community. The town adjusted to the wartime influx of foreign troops, and local residents proved to be amiable hosts. Soldiers were encouraged by their commanders to frequent events sponsored by the YMCA, attend weekly mass, and participate in athletic clubs.

The author is especially effective in humanizing the narrative with vignettes about the lives of men and women who were caught up in the preparations for war, including local residents who embraced the Polish cause. For example, he tells the story of 2nd Lieutenant Lucjan Chwałkowski, who was one of the first Polish recruits to die in the war. He had graduated from a special officer-training course for Poles at the University of Toronto. He was killed in action in France, and his heroic death was commemorated back at Camp Kosciuszko when news arrived in late July 1918. One local Canadian featured by Merritt is Elizabeth “Lizzie” C. Ascher, who regularly reported on Camp Kosciuszko as a correspondent for the *St. Catharines Standard*. Ascher also led fundraising and relief efforts for Poles during the war. As a result of her extraordinary efforts, she was later awarded the Order of Polonia Restituta.

In her volume, symposium participant Anitta Maksymowicz makes extensive use of Ascher’s press reports about Camp Kosciuszko, which were compiled, edited, and published online by Stan Skrzyszewski in 2015. Another main resource for Maksymowicz is the archive of the Polish Army Veterans’ Association of America in New York. Her volume was written to accompany an exhibition held at the Museum of the Lubusz Region in Zielona Góra from 10 November 2017 to 18 February 2018. Maksymowicz was the curator of this exhibition, and her volume is filled with many of the same images and texts about daily life in Camp Kosciuszko.

Maksymowicz covers many of the same areas as Merritt, with chapters dedicated to the recruitment of troops from Canada and the USA; the construction of Camp Kosciuszko; the daily routine for troops; the help provided by Polish support groups and local supporters, with special detail on the role of Elizabeth Ascher; and the mobilization and departure of troops for the front in Europe. Maksymowicz frequently juxtaposes photographs and other archival documents

with narratives about individuals that bring alive the stories of the soldiers who spent time in Camp Kosciuszko a century ago.

These volumes complement each other very well; this is nowhere more evident than in their telling of the final resting place for Polish soldiers who died – mainly from the influenza epidemic – during their time in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In this idyllic setting today is a piece of Poland – a fenced-in section of St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery, which was officially transferred to Poland by Canada in commemoration of the sacrifices of the Polish soldiers who trained at Camp Kosciuszko. Flying the flags of Poland, Canada, and the United States, this cemetery today serves as a site of pilgrimage for those who wish to honor those Poles who gave their lives while training to fight for Polish freedom in World War I. Merritt and Maksymowicz have authored important volumes which offer readers a rare glimpse into their lives at Camp Kosciuszko.



TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI (*Kraków – Przemyśl*)

REVIEW: *HELENA PADEREWSKA, MEMOIRS, 1910-1920.*  
EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
AND ANNOTATIONS BY MACIEJ SIEKIERSKI,  
FOREWORD BY NORMAN DAVIES. STANFORD,  
CA: HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS 2015, PP. 214

The anniversaries of the outbreak of World War I and regaining independence by Poland have generated a lot of interesting publications recently. Among them there are not only new monographs or articles which change the former historiographic findings but above all, a lot of valuable source publications, showing unknown aspects of life in the second decade of the twentieth century. As regards the Polish-American relations in that period, a must-read is the long-awaited book with memoirs of Helena Paderewska.

The book has a pretty complicated layout. The memoirs proper are preceded by four parts: *List of Maps and Illustrations*, *Foreword by Norman Davies*, *Editor's Acknowledgments*, *Editor's Introduction*, and followed by *Editor's Epilogue*, *The Paderewskis' Timeline, 1910–1920*, *Guide to Names*, *About the Author*, *About the Editor* and *Index*. Does this order make reading easy? I am afraid not. I also believe *Editor's Introduction* and *Editor's Epilogue* could have been combined to form one coherent text, especially that the latter is only two pages long and is a logical continuation of the former. That would by no means have done harm to any of the texts and would have only been a logical structural device.

*Foreword* by Norman Davies is written with great expertness and panache. Too bad it is rather a short outline (slightly over three pages), as it reads extremely well. It is perfectly complemented by the *Editor's Introduction*, in which Maciej Siekierski presents Helena Paderewska and her activity at the side of her famous husband and explains the reasons why she wrote down her memories. After reading the book, it is hard not to agree with Siekierski, who writes: „Not until her husband left government service and they moved back to Switzerland in the early months of 1920 did she find the time and peace of mind to begin writing. Wanting to reconstruct the basic chronology and to remember the main characters in the dramatic events of the past several years, she especially wanted to pay tribute to American friends of Poland, including President Woodrow Wilson, his

foreign policy adviser Edward House, and the one she called the ‘miracle worker from California,’ Herbert Hoover. This is why she decided to write the memoirs in English, not in Polish or French, and most likely she had American publication in mind” (p. XX). In addition, Siekierski explains, very precisely and accurately, the reasons for some of Paderewska’s observations – what they stemmed from and what their context was. This can be seen especially when describing the years 1918-1919, i. e. the first months of the revived Poland. Siekierski rightly observes that both Paderewskis might have been in for a great shock, seeing the difference between the imagined Poland they had fought for in diplomatic salons, and the real one, tossed about by a lot of problems and contradictions, despite the Pianist/Prime Minister’s best intentions hardly reconcilable. While Ignacy Paderewski had already been the subject of many studies, his wife’s extraordinary relief work, though crucial for the economic situation in 1919, did not find sufficient appreciation among historians.

The memories themselves, as Norman Davies puts it, “written at a juncture when both [Helena and Ignace] were in their prime” (p. XI), are divided into short, chronologically arranged, chapters. They are: 1. *Husband, Artist, Patriot*, 2. *July 1910 – July 1914*, 3. *July 1914 – January 1915*, 4. *January – April 1915*, 5. *April – September 1915*, 6. *September 1915 – June 1916*, 7. *July 1916 – July 1917*, 8. *1917*, 9. *1917 – 1918*, 10. *December 1918 – January 1919*, 11. *January 1919*, 12. *January 1919 – March 1919*, 13. *April 1919 – July 1919*, 14. *July 1919 – February 1920*. Helena Paderewska describes hers and her husbands’ work, which in the second decade of the 20th century was undeniably exceptional and embraced a lot of aspects. We can see her great admiration of her husband’s diligence, idealism and devotion to the Polish cause (throughout the book she refers to him as “Mr. Paderewski”). In her memoirs she tries to magnify her husband’s activity, even though her own involvement in public matters, even if cursorily covered in places, appears to have been amazing. Every now and then, as though in an attempt to justify herself, Helena stresses that she was never idle around Ignacy. Engaged in humanitarian and organizational aid for Poland, she emerges from the book as one of the major figures of the time – organizing the Polish White Cross, collaborating with American Polish women in order to put her ideals into action, spending long hours talking to plenty of people from all walks of life: from top politicians to the so-called man in the street. Like Ignacy’s, her goal was to make people work together on the idea of Polish independence, and in 1919 – address different social and economic issues.

In parts, one may get the impression that the text (after all, not written in a language which Paderewska knew best, like Polish or French), is slightly bland, and the events presented – very vague. In her memoirs, “the cause” (here: Poland) is most important, not the people, atmosphere or emotions. On the other hand, one needs to remember that the memoirs were supposed to be a tribute to the major figures (Wilson, House, Hoover and Paderewski), not a personal account

of events. Perhaps that is why Helena Paderewska avoided name-dropping, and those she included in her memoirs are described very carefully and with respect, even if one can read between the lines she might not have been too fond of them. Paradoxically, presenting personal memoirs almost as an official document, makes them read more like a typical man's, not woman's, look at the second decade of the 20th century (the public is more important than the personal). On the other hand, we should remember that at the time the Paderewskis lived an extremely busy social life and were public figures, widely recognized in the salons of Paris, London, Washington and Warsaw. It must have been the feeling of actually creating a new post-war reality, not just assisting her husband therein that ultimately affected her memoirs.

Due to all those nuances, Paderewska's memoirs can be interpreted on more than one level; perhaps that is why they are so valuable. They have been edited with utmost care and are an excellent read not only for experts but for anyone interested in politics and culture of the first half of the 20th century.



TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI (*Kraków – Przemysł*)

REVIEW: HUGH S. GIBSON, *AMERYKANIN W WARSZAWIE. 1919–1924. NIEPODLEGŁA RZECZPOSPOLITA OCZAMI PIERWSZEGO AMBASADORA STANÓW ZJEDNOCZONYCH (AN AMERICAN IN WARSAW: SELECTED WRITINGS OF HUGH S. GIBSON, US MINISTER TO POLAND 1919-1924)*, SELECTED AND EDITED BY: VIVIEN HUX REED, M.B.B. BISKUPSKI, JOCHEN BÖHLER, JAN-ROMAN POTOCKI (TRANSLATED BY ANDRZEJ EHRlich), KRAKÓW: ZNAK HORYZONT 2018, PP. 669

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the Polish translation of the English-language publication about Hugh Simsons Gibson's first years in a diplomatic post in Warsaw. Even the original, edited by a team including the excellent expert on Polish-American relations, Mieczysław B. B. Biskupski, had been long-awaited.<sup>1</sup> Both books are an excellent contribution to the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Poland regaining independence and the hundredth anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the USA and the Second Polish Republic.

The book's layout seems to be slightly confusing, which is a consequence of the editors wanting to include as many documents presenting Gibson's impressions of Poland as possible: from private letters to official political reports, messages and telegrams. The opening article is called *A biographical Outline of Hugh S. Gibson*, then there are *Hugh S. Gibson's Publications, Acknowledgements* (by Vivien Hux Reed), *Foreword* (by Jan-Roman Potocki), *A Few Words about My Father* by Michael Francis Gibson, *Introduction* (by the authors of the publication) followed by the main body of the book, arranged chronologically (each chapter corresponds to one year). They are as follows: *1919 – A New Observer in*

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<sup>1</sup> See the English-language version: *An American in Warsaw: Selected Writings of Hugh S. Gibson, US Minister to Poland 1919-1924*. Edited by Vivien Hux Reed, M.B.B. Biskupski, Jochen Böhlér, Jan-Roman Potocki (series: Rochester Studies in East and Central Europe), Rochester: University of Rochester Press: 2018, 608 pp.

*a New Poland, 1920 – A Wild Ride, 1921 – Aftermath and Rebuilding, 1922 – A Wedding and a Funeral, 1923 – Stabilization, 1924 – Changes in the Wind.* At the end we find *Epilogue* and *Index* (of persons). One wishes a useful index of place names had been included too, as is a custom in Polish-language publications, especially as Gibson travelled a lot.

While the first two parts do not contribute much to the content, apart from very general information, the *Acknowledgments* chapter by V. Hux Reed shows the background of the publication, which she is the main creator of. The *Foreword* by J.-R. Potocki seems to be a good introduction to the book, though when reading carefully, one can easily find some faults with it. First of all, it is a chapter designed to prove a point. Based on a well-known quotation by Lincoln about the house divided against itself, which cannot stand,<sup>2</sup> Potocki shows the interwar Poland as a country of great patriots in constant conflict with one another; a country of paradoxes. In his view, the May Coup of 1926 was the finishing off of “Poland’s moribund and dysfunctional democracy,” and the 1926-1939 Polish Parliament was a “propped-up corpse.” Irrespective of the criticism of Poland in the *Sanacja* period, simplification of this kind in contemporary historiography is unacceptable, indeed, outrageous. Also the way Potocki explains Polish-American relations is naïve to say the least, as if the author has forgotten the interwar American isolationism and the basic aspects of geopolitics at the time. He says, for instance, that Poland had never fully appreciated the significance of the USA’s power and had not managed to establish appropriate relations with President Roosevelt’s administration before it was too late.

Michael Francis Gibson’s text, on the other hand, deserves much higher praise. Hugh S. Gibson’s son skilfully combines personal motifs with his father’s public service, pointing out the various forms of expression, from which a completely different image of him as a person emerges. In a short analysis of a few selected examples, Gibson Jr. reveals what problems his father had to face and how he tried to deal with them in his Warsaw mission.

The *Introduction* by the authors of the publication is also very well written; it is a measured yet detailed study on the international and internal situation of Poland in 1919-1924 (with an extended historical part, which lets the reader understand better what exactly the Poles were in for during the first years of reconstructing their state). And here the main focus is Hugh S. Gibson, who had to organize the American diplomatic mission from scratch; his situation differed dramatically from the working conditions of his counterparts in London or Paris. Two elements might perhaps have been stronger emphasized here – the tremendous destruction of Polish territories, where the war lasted in fact until 1921 (which hindered the functioning of the new state) and the fact that the war lasted

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<sup>2</sup> “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” The House Divided Speech was an address given by Abraham Lincoln, later President of the United States, on June 16, 1858.

much longer in the east than in the west of Europe. These are, however, minor remarks: otherwise the *Introduction* fulfils its role perfectly.

The main body of the book is made up of long excerpts from Gibson's letters to his mother and his official political reports and wires sent to Washington. They are perfect historical sources; no wonder the editors enthuse over them. One needs to give them the credit for the concept of that book, as the chronological arrangement of different kinds of sources written by Gibson gives us a broader picture of his experiences and observations. The Gibson who emerges from his writings is an attentive, clever and sharp-witted observer who managed to find himself in many new situations. Gibson's impressions and findings, sometimes surprising in retrospect, say a lot about people's mentality soon after the end of WWI. They also say a lot about the Poland at the time: how little known it was, how little the newcomers from abroad knew about it, what issues it had to struggle with, and what was its attraction that intrigued many Polonophiles in the interwar period. I feel justified in using the word "Polonophile" because despite his often critical look at Polish post-war administration and the conditions he had to work in, Gibson soon became one of the most fervent friends of Poland – of which there were not many in the Anglosphere.

Editorially, the book is impeccable. The numerous quotations and comments (perfect in form and length) make reading easy and let the reader find his way among the accumulated terms and figures. From the reviewer's point of view, let me add that actually Gibson was not a US ambassador to Poland (as the Polish book title suggests); Polish diplomatic missions in the USA and American ones in Poland were elevated to the rank of embassies as late as in 1929. Gibson was a special envoy and minister plenipotentiary in Warsaw, which is stated clearly in the book, but the book cover and title are misleading in this matter. In international relations between the wars the status of diplomatic posts was significant, though.

Despite its length and the fact it is not a uniform text, the book reads very well. What is more, it is so interesting that one feels the cuts at some places in the text were unnecessary. On the other hand, Gibson left behind so many different writings concerning his time spent in Poland that including them all would require a book twice as long.



TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI (*Kraków – Przemyśl*)

REVIEW: *ĒRIKS JĒKABSONS, LATVIJAS UN AMERIKAS SAVIENOTO VALSTU ATTIECĪBAS 1918.-1922. GADĀ*  
[RELATIONS BETWEEN LATVIA AND THE UNITED STATES 1918-1922], RIGA: LATVIJAS VĒSTURES INSTITŪTA APGĀDS, 2018, PP. 832

In 2018, Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds (Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia) in Riga published an extensive book by Professor Ēriks Jēkabsons on the American-Latvian relations in the years 1918-1922. It is the first so broad and reliably documented study of American presence in that region. As regards the subject matter (politics, economy, charity), Jēkabsons' monograph is perhaps the most exhaustive and without a doubt obligatory reading for all those who explore the history of the region in the interwar period. It provides an in-depth explanation why Americans, probably for the first and last time in history, took such an interest in the Baltic states, Latvia in particular.

Jēkabsons bases his theses on a thorough preliminary archive research carried out in not only Latvian and American archives but also Lithuanian, Polish and British ones, including a considerable amount of Latvian and American press (also that of the Latvian diaspora in the USA), as well as numerous printed sources, memoirs and literature on the subject. The broad scope of the work raises great respect for the author right from the first pages of the book, and the further reading only reinforces the feeling.

The book is divided into two parts: 1. "The political and economical relations between Latvia and the USA in the years 1918-1922" and 2. "American non-governmental organizations providing relief in Latvia." In the first part particular chapters are quite extended, except for the first one ("The main features of American politics in Russia and the Baltic aspect"), which shows the context necessary to understand the change of the US politics in the region and its departure from supporting Russian rule over the land on the Daugava River. The author is scrupulous in reconstructing the reality the Lett people had to function in and shows that American support, especially the American Relief Administration (ARA) was not only of charitable but also political nature: it ultimately supported Latvia's independence and helped to keep the country's territorial integrity, co-

operating with the Latvian government. In that, the activity of Lt. Col. Warwick Greene, the ARA leader, is unquestioned. Jēkabsons shows in detail the gradual change in American politics – from perceiving Latvia as a part of new Russia up to strengthening Latvian statehood in 1919.

It should be remembered that compared with other countries of the region, Latvia's economic situation was exceptionally difficult. So far researchers have focused their attention mostly on the post-war Belgium or Poland, where Americans rendered great services reconstructing the economy and saving the young generation from hunger and diseases, while the situation of Latvia in 1918 was by no means better. First of all, the country was depopulated and destroyed by the long warfare, a consequence of the war of independence with Germans and Russians until 1920. The young state which declared its independence on 18 November 1918, had to face a lot of adversities of military, but above all economic, social and mental nature. As Ēriks Jēkabsons has shown, because Riga was the largest and most important city in all the Baltic states, it was there that regional offices of the American Relief Administration (ARA), the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the American Red Cross and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee were situated. The author meticulously enumerates the forms of aid American organizations granted, supplying free medical care, clothes and food to civilians and soldiers alike; they also provided assistance in the form of medicaments and inventory. The ARA set up special clinics for children throughout Latvia. The American aid during the dysentery and typhoid epidemics of 1920 was invaluable.

Wherever he can, Jēkabsons tries to show specific examples of American activity; he cites numbers, amounts, personal data, and quotes people's reactions. He also indicates long-term effects of American activity. He is very insightful in his investigations, which makes the reading of his monograph slightly tiresome at places. On the other hand, the author is the first to have undertaken the task of examining the issue thoroughly, which affected the pace of his narration. The enumerations show the enormity of actions undertaken and are invaluable for historiographers. It is worth emphasizing, however, that these detailed lists do not eclipse the main thesis: without American support, Latvia's fate would have been hard to predict in the first years of the new state's existence.

It should be added that the book has been very neatly published. Additional source material is a 32-page insert with photos (most of them so far unpublished). The insert includes mainly portrait photographs of the Americans and the Lett who contributed to building the bilateral relations in the discussed period, as well as photos documenting American activity in Latvia (basically, free distribution of humanitarian aid).

Without a doubt, Jēkabsons' book is one of the major publications in recent years concerning not only the Baltic states but the whole of Eastern Europe.

Without reading it, it would be hard to understand the hardships suffered by new post-1918 states, for which the immense destruction, hunger, political discord and many threats from the outside (particularly from the Germans and the Russians) were a hard-to-pass barrier on the way to full independence in the international arena. Hopefully, the book will soon be translated into English, thereby becoming available to the researchers who do not speak Latvian. It is not only an excellent study of the relations between Latvia and the USA but above all, a very thorough work showing why Latvia after the WWI was one of the most important countries on the Baltic Sea and why it had the attention of global superpowers like the USA.



KAMIL RUSZAŁA (*Kraków*)

REVIEW: AUGUST ZALESKI, *WSPOMNIENIA*  
(MEMOIRS), ED. BY K. KANIA, K. KLOC,  
P. M. ŻUKOWSKI, TRANSL. BY E. GOŁĘBIOWSKA,  
WARSAW: PISM 2017

In 2017 The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) published the memoirs of August Zaleski (1883-1972), Polish politician, diplomat, minister of foreign affairs and President of the Republic of Poland in exile. Three researchers – Krzysztof Kania, Krzysztof Kloc and Przemysław Marcin Żukowski had undertaken the task to prepare this interesting document for print; a document of the life of a person who had rendered great service to Polish diplomacy. They were assisted in their work by translator Elżbieta Gołębiowska.

Zaleski started writing his memoirs in 1941 and finished several years after the war. The original version, which was a basis for editing the material, is kept in the collection of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London. It is worth mentioning that apart from Zaleski's extensive legacy this institution also keeps materials concerning Polish institutions in exile during and after the war. What is more, some of the materials are found outside the European continent and kept at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

The original source text is preceded by a foreword from the editors and an introduction. The whole publication is divided into nine chapters with an addendum. Zaleski's memoirs embrace a long period of the politician's life. They start in his youth (Chapter 1, *Schoolboy Politics*), where Zaleski emphasizes the beginnings of his political involvement back under the Russian partition in Poland. He continues, describing the time of World War 1 (Chapter 2, *The War and Notes to the Memoirs*), which he spent in Great Britain. There, besides actively supporting the Polish question, Zaleski delivered lectures on Polish literature and language, which was his reaction to the ignorance of the Poles and things Polish he used to meet with. Further, Zaleski describes the period of re-shaping post-war Europe and the world, from behind-the-scenes, as a representative of the reviving Poland in Switzerland and during the peace talks in Paris. The later chapters show further stages of Zaleski's diplomatic career. Chapter 4 (*Athens*) is concerned with Greece, where he had stayed as a Polish MP since 1921 and the next one shows his activity in Warsaw as the Head of the Department of Policy in the Pol-

ish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chapter 5, *Warsaw*), and in Genoa (Chapter 6, *The Genoa Conference*), where he presents the proceedings of the world economic conference in Genoa in April and May 1922, remembering to acknowledge the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo between the Soviet Russia and the German Republic at the same time. The next chapter is concerned with his work as a Polish MP in Italy (Chapter 7, *Rome*), where, at the end of his diplomatic mission, Zaleski sensed a certain dislike from Italian government. Apparently, that is why he was going to be moved to a diplomatic post in Tokyo; before that he wanted to spend three months in Poland. He arrived in Warsaw in the spring of 1926 and he could take part in domestic political events. At home, he happened upon the May Coup, and so he could not ignore those tense moments in Polish interwar history in his memoirs. Zaleski devoted to them Chapter 8. The next one, Chapter 9, refers to the strained relations between Poland and Germany between the wars and the attempt to appease political unrest and preserve peace and safety. The book ends with an appendix designed by the editors as an addendum. Compared with the previous part, edited on the basis of the material kept in Polish archives in London, the addendum contains materials from the already mentioned collection of the Hoover Institution in California. Zaleski would produce them in the form of loose notes in 1959 (only the last one does not have a date or place). The problems he mentions in them are varied. Depending on the date, they refer to ongoing events, for instance the relations between Poland and the European countries, the visit of U.S. President Eisenhower in Europe, or the evaluation – in retrospect – of European dictators, who, as Zaleski puts it, suffered from grandiosity. What is more, Zaleski attempts to evaluate the Polish political background and argues, why in his opinion Poland was not prone to embracing great dictatorships. Zaleski also assesses contemporary politicians: for instance, he considers Sikorski to have been a rather arrogant person, citing second-hand stories. Among other apparently bigheaded figures he also mentions Stanisław Mikołajczyk and Kazimierz Sosnkowski, who – in Zaleski's opinion – do not even deserve writing more about. Moreover, the author expresses his opinion about individual states and nations of Western Europe. For example, he evaluates Great Britain, feeling entitled to do that, as someone who had spent a considerable part of his adult life there and had gotten to know a lot of Britons, particularly politicians.

The content of Zaleski's memoirs is very rich, presenting politics from the inside and behind-the-scenes diplomacy from the vantage point of an eye witness and participant of the interwar events. Without a shadow of a doubt, it is an interesting read, recommended to any researcher of early modern history.

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