

Peace Planning for Poland and the United States during WWII

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Abstract:

The “Polish Question” has been subject to a protracted discussion by diplomatic historians resulting in numerous books and articles which have dissected and exposed various aspects of the issue. The subject of this thesis: the foreign policy of the United States towards Poland during and after World War II has also been studied by others before me. In order to provide new insight into the issue I examine not only the diplomatic exchanges between the three great wartime powers, but also whether or not the Polish-American community was able to influence foreign policy.

The Roosevelt Administration found it impossible to amend to the popular Polish demand for the re-establishment of pre-war borders without conflicting with the Soviet Union’s similar desire to forge a lasting global settlement in Eastern Europe. The narrative discusses whether internal ethnic communities are able to mobilize themselves into well organized and effective lobbyist movements and whether diplomacy or foreign policy can be shaped by public opinion.

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Theoretical Framework:

The history reproduced here rests primarily on the traditional exploration and interpretation of diplomatic exchanges, the texts of treaties, and the proceedings of conferences. Yet, unavoidably, I have also striven to seek the underlying causes of the governing political processes of Central European history in the first half of the 20th century in the economic, social, geographical, strategic and cultural spheres. It has been observed that

Diplomatic history is less popular now than it used to be. Especially in the English-speaking world, detractors of the 'realist' school claim that the study of diplomatic relations opens an all too narrow window on the interactions between the various factors making up our societies. Yet, in the 1920s and 30s, the diplomats still played a (perhaps undeservedly) significant role in shaping the fortunes of millions of people who were often unaware of the fateful decisions that were being made in their names.¹

Therefore, perhaps no apology is needed when an important aspect of the past is examined through the spectacles and tools of diplomatic history, or, as it is now most often called: international history. The narrative employed is built directly from the sources. Yet, these sources are selected from as wide a field as possible and are examined for bias with the hindsight and judgment available to the author at the time of writing. This way, the most usual pitfalls of the international historian, tendentious selection and the witting or unwitting use of biased sources and are hopefully avoided. This thesis is not a mere revisiting of international history with improved methods. It also contains commentary on and appreciation of decisions and decision-makers in the context of contemporary and subsequent events.

According to historian G.R. Berridge, "Diplomacy is an essentially political activity and, well resourced and skillful...its chief purpose is to enable states to secure the objectives of their

¹ Preface to Magda Ádám, *The Versailles System and Central Europe*, edited and Preface written by Miklos Lojko, Aldershot (UK) and Burlington (Vermont): Ashgate, Variorum Collected Studies Series, p. xiii.

foreign policies without resort to force.”² The term diplomacy is sometimes synonymous with the term foreign policy; a symptom of the indiscriminate usage of the word diplomacy without understanding the theoretical differences between these terms. Foreign policy refers to the activity of a state in an external domain that crosses its political boundaries. In this sense, foreign policy’s objective is to “achieve a certain result vis-à-vis another state or group of states.”³ Theoretically, foreign policy is one facet of international politics. Since the end of World War II, the theoretical aspects of international politics have developed significantly due to extensive research conducted by American scholars. For instance, Professor James Rosenau of Rutgers University discusses the theory of foreign policy in his 1966 study entitled *Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy*. Rosenau, within this study, stated that “foreign policy analysis is devoid of general theory...the non-theoretical state of foreign policy research is all the more perplexing when it is contrasted with developments elsewhere in American political science.”⁴ Diplomacy, however, lacks adequate theoretical treatment making the word and the study obscure in an age when mere lexical definitions do not suffice.

The evolution of diplomacy had drastically changed during World War I. By this point diplomacy was enshrined in international law and was regulated by universal principles. Two new concepts developed in response to World War I: first, the demand that diplomacy be open to public scrutiny and control and second, the “projected establishment of an international organization which would act both as a forum for peaceful settlement of disputes and as a deterrent to the waging of aggressive war.”⁵ It was believed that ‘open diplomacy’ would bring in greater honesty to international politics. British politician Ramsay MacDonald, who resigned

² G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 1.

³ Jose Calvet De Magalhaes, *The Pure Concept of Diplomacy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 6.

⁴ Jose Calvet De Magalhaes, *The Pure Concept of Diplomacy*, 7.

⁵ Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (London: Routledge, 1995), 137.

on August 7th, 1914 from the leadership of the parliamentary Labour Group, stated that its time “to put an end to secret diplomacy and to the handing over of foreign policy to a handful of men drawn from the aristocratic and plutocratic classes.”⁶ The present world order is molded by both territorial states and non-state actors; this is already a drastic change to the modern or Westphalian state system.⁷ Diplomacy is therefore based on a system of actors which continuously re-defines a nation’s relation to another; the emergence of new actors has lead to the formation of new interests which might clash with pre-existing policies. The peace conference at Versailles in 1919, serves an example of how the notion of diplomacy shifted. President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points called for transparent agreements which no longer held secret understandings between nations. American diplomat Charles W. Thayer remarked on this by stating that:

Much of the failure of the Versailles venture was due to American misunderstandings of the function of diplomacy. Despite his intellectual equipment and academic training, Wilson, like most of his compatriots, clung to the myth that Machiavellian diplomacy had been responsible for war. Mistaking diplomacy for policy-making, he put the blame not on the policies and their creators but on the men who had to carry them out. He was determined therefore that the post-war world was to be made safe for democracy by making it free of the “old diplomacy.”⁸

Professional diplomatist Monsieur Jules Cambon, however, argues that the alleged difference between old and new diplomacy is merely an illusion. Cambon remarks:

To talk about new and old diplomacy is to make a distinction without a difference. It is the outward appearance, or, if you like, the make-up of diplomacy which is gradually changing. The substance will remain—firstly because human nature changes; secondly

⁶ F.L. Carsten, *War against War: British and German Radical Movements in the First World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 30.

⁷ Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne ed., *Diplomacy: Volume III Problems and Issues in Contemporary Diplomacy* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 7.

⁸ Jose Calvet De Magalhaes, 45.

because they is only one way of setting international differences; and lastly because the most persuasive method at the disposal of a government is the word of an honest man.⁹

Wilson's effort of establishing a new diplomatic era, 'democratic diplomacy,' only contributed to inciting a deplorable confusion between diplomacy and foreign policy. This confusion still continues to dictate American political works today. Maintaining balance of power diplomacy is more feasible and therefore preferable in the international community than such ideological crusades of such innovations as Wilsonian liberalism. The United States affirms regularly in its diplomacy the necessity to uphold the virtues of democracy. However, World War II serves as an example of how American diplomacy has amended its democratic diplomacy for the purpose of aligning itself to regulating international stability. In the case of Poland, it is still unclear to what extent Roosevelt allowed the prestige of the United States to be identified with the objectives of the Soviet Union. This notion of amendment is paramount to understanding how certain actors, in this case Roosevelt, represent the interests of millions yet act in accordance to their own personal objectives.

It is problematic that international history contains considerable limitations through depictions of events through the eyes of individuals who work within the realm of diplomacy. A fitting example is Arthur Bliss Lane's *I Saw Poland Betrayed: an American Ambassador Reports to the American People*, a book which through the eyes of Ambassador Lane illuminates the Polish issue and yet is flawed due to its biased nature. Instead of objectively assessing the reality of the situation, Lane incorporated his emotions which caused overshadowing of the true development of events. Although aware of this book, I will refrain from using it as an accurate portrayal of what occurred in respects to Poland during and after WWII. For the same reason, I

⁹ Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 29.

avoided using Richard Lukas' book *Bitter Legacy: Polish American Relations in the Wake of World War II*. Lukas follows the standard monographic model on Polish-American relations that characterize the works of Piotr Wandycz and Joseph Wiecezszak.¹⁰ Lukas' opinion, however, leaks through the book easily exposing his clearly defined sympathies for the Polish-Americans. While the Polish Question has been tackled by many historians, I wish to provide a clearer picture of U.S. foreign policy towards Poland. The overexposed topic must be shown from new perspectives. Since the United States contains a large Polish-American community which differs in opinion on how American foreign policy led to the eventual immersion of interwar eastern Poland into the Soviet Union it becomes necessary to dissect the roles the U.S. government and the Polish-American community played in trying to provide a solution to the Polish Question.

In order to understand my thesis it is necessary to define what it means to be a Polish-American. It must be kept in mind that the Polish American has developed coextensively with the growth of the United States. The oldest historical information regarding the community can be traced back to the pre-Mayflower settlement of Jamestown, in which a handful of Polish artisans, in 1608, made their new home in the oldest English settlement in the New World. The role of Catholicism was paramount to understanding how Polish-Americans defined idealism; the word 'Pole' and 'Catholic' were synonymously interchangeable.¹¹ During the interwar period, Polish-Americans increased numerically by natural growth as opposed to new influxes of immigrants; this was due primarily to the immigration restriction acts of 1921 and 1924. This increase in population, without the inclusion of new Polish immigrants, is significant because it lead to assimilation and Americanization. For example, in the 1940 population statistics, "out of every three Polish-speaker, two were native born Americans, either foreign-born, or mixed, or

¹⁰ George J. Kerski, "Reviewed work: Bitter Legacy-Polish American Relations in the Wake of World War II by Richard C. Lukas, " *American Historical Review* 88, no.4 (Oct., 1983), 1103.

¹¹ Joseph Swastek, "What is a Polish American?" *Polish American Studies*, vol. 1 (1944), 34.

native born parents. Numerically speaking, 2,416,320 persons admitted using the Polish language as their principle language from childhood. Out of this number, 801,680 were foreign born while 1,614,640 were native born.¹² This growing distinction was important because the higher level of assimilation tended to coincide with a new found loyalty to the United States. Regardless of tradition, the Polish-American community began to identify itself as more American than Polish. Three formative influences dictated Polish-American life: first, the Catholic Church, second, agrarian life-style which mirrored their semi-feudal backgrounds, and thirdly, folk traditions such as customs and food. In addition to these three, a fourth influence developed from American idealism which was the notion that the United States represented a land of freedom.

The Polish-American community consists of three variations of communities: ethnic Poles; ethnic Jews who were born in Polish lands, or whose ancestors came from there, and had some knowledge of Poland and Poles, as well as some emotional ties with Polin¹³; and ethnic Jews of notional Polish geographic descent but with no Polish connections or sentiments. Naturally, the perceptions of these three groups differed over the issue of Poland's future. However this thesis will not focus on this stratification. I have specifically dispensed with discussing the role of the American Jewish community of Polish ancestry because of the overwrought nature of its complications. The large lobbyist groups of the Polish-American community have a strong connection with Catholicism. For them this religious difference is paramount in defining who is a member of the community and who is not. Therefore, the Polish-American or *Polonia* terminology I use is directly associated with Polish-Americans who adhere to the principles and practices of Catholicism.

¹² Joseph Swastek, "What is a Polish American?" 35.

¹³ Poland in Yiddish.

In terms of discussing American Foreign Policy one must be aware of the continuous changes which occur and reshape or redefine foreign policy. The United States, similar to other nations, does not adhere to a particular linear pattern of diplomacy. External changes have no doubt constituted a need to mold new policies which potentially could conflict with pre-existing ideas or even methodology. World War II serves as an example of how events change the way a nation acts and relates to others. The motivations of U.S. foreign policy are examined here in the contexts of changing policy towards Poland during and immediately after WWII, and of interactions with the Polish-American community. One must remember that the United States entered World War II at a relatively late stage, and therefore had to adapt to a fluid situation. The radical growth of the importance of the role of the Soviet Union had not been anticipated, therefore, the United States had to redirect policies, and alter guarantees to ensure a stabilized global community. Foreign policy is not a tangible concept that adheres to a standardized form of conduct but instead it is an amorphous force that has the ability to change the face of a nation or dictate the future of another. As stated by American journalist Isaac Goldberg “diplomacy, is to do and say the nastiest things in the nicest way.”

Understanding the changing attitudes to the Polish Question in U.S. policy is intricate, especially since this question has been repeatedly tackled. A picture is painted that allows the reader to decide whether U.S. foreign policy towards Poland was consistent with or contradictory to the long-term interest and principles of the United States. This thesis does not stand as a judgment of who was right, but an exploratory search into understanding how U.S. foreign policy was shaped including the many ways it was influenced by internal ethnic communities. Hopefully, the thesis will provide a new perspective in comprehending the role the United States played in deciding the fate of Poland and why foreign policy has a natural tendency to drastically

shift. During the 1960's, historians debated over Roosevelt's diplomacy and the coming of World War II and the conflicted nature of the 'internationalists,' who argued that the Axis powers challenged the U.S. therefore leading them into a war in the defense of American interests, and the 'revisionists,' who saw Roosevelt's entry into WWII as a manipulative scheme which caused an isolationist nation into war. Roosevelt tried to assert the democratic ideal in his methodology, yet, at the same time he wished not to repeat the mistakes of an older generation. Naturally, Roosevelt's wartime situation caused many changes to occur in America's foreign policy. Even though, scores of promises to nations were broken during Roosevelt's presidency, he still maintains the largest overseas credibility gap of any U.S. president.¹⁴

Diplomacy historically has been a function and a determinant of international order; without independent proximate political entities with a will to communicate amongst themselves it would be unnecessary. Without diplomatic intermediaries of some kind or other a states system would be almost unintelligible."¹⁵ Although archaic in form, diplomatic history still holds an importance in the study of history. This thesis examines how different actors contribute and decide the fate of nations and peoples. Hopefully, this will provide further insight into the development of American foreign policy during WWII and how it defined a future for Poland.

¹⁴ Frederick W. Marks III, *Wind over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 287.

¹⁵ Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*, 238.

Introduction:

The 19th and 20th century occupies a unique place in Polish history. The “Polish Question” had been an ongoing issue dating back to the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). The reorganization of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars brought about the redistribution of Polish lands. However, little attention in the West, especially the United States, was given to the Polish plight. By the 1860s, however, Polish émigrés in the United States tried to interpret events in their homeland by enlisting the sympathy of the Americans.¹⁶ By 1860, Poles were present in almost every state and territory of the United States. The January 1863 insurrection led many Poles in America to attempt to stir public opinion through rallies in major cities such as New York and San Francisco. Brigadier General Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski and other Polish officers in the Union army, for example, established the Polish Central Committee which tried to appeal to the American people. By the 20th century numerous Polish organizations had been formed in the United States with the intent of advocating Polish independence, or as defined by the Polish National Alliance a “free, independent people’s Poland.”¹⁷ As politics and wars re-shape and re-define nations, the Polish Question continued to echo throughout the globe. However, nothing would prepare Poland or the United States for the future written by the aftermath of WWII.

On December 8th, 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States joined the Allied Powers in WWII. By May 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt told Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov to expect the opening of a second front in Europe by the end of the year.¹⁸ However, such a promise would not be met until June 1944, when Operation

¹⁶ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 79.

¹⁷ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The United States and Poland*, 98.

¹⁸ John L. Harper and Andrew Parlin, *The Polish Question During World War II* (Washington DC: John Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1990), 7.

Overlord would land Canadian, British, and U.S. troops on the shores of Normandy. Prior to D-Day, the Soviet Union had borne the brunt of the Allied war burden. As the war progressed, FDR realized the powerful role the Soviet Union would play in re-shaping post-war Europe. Regardless of the Soviet Union's eventual influence in Eastern Europe, Roosevelt wished not to grant the Russians *carte blanche* in post-war Poland.¹⁹ Towards the end of the war, the Polish Question continued to be discussed among the Allied Powers; each country offering different solutions with varying agendas. The Polish Question addressed two major issues: first, the nature of the government, meaning which ideology would dominate Polish society, and second, how the new frontiers would be drawn. The Polish Question played a large role in the re-structuring of Europe and is therefore worth exploring.

Roosevelt favored an independent, democratic Poland, an idea inherited from Woodrow Wilson and affirmed in the 1941 Atlantic Charter. The Charter was drafted primarily by the Americans and the British to establish a vision for post-WWII Europe. The Atlantic Charter became an important test of America's post-war intentions, and would ultimately be reflected on by both the international and U.S. community. It is important to point out that Roosevelt never gave his consent for Poland to become a Soviet puppet State. In many ways, Roosevelt's interests in Poland were linked to the 1944 elections, in which six to seven million Polish-Americans voted on the basis of plans for a free and independent Poland.²⁰ However, the Tehran Conference, held from November 28th to December 1st, 1943, proved to be a turning point in Anglo-American-Soviet policy on the Polish Question. The Soviet advance towards Poland was gathering pace by November 1943, and the Red Army's presence on Polish lands would become a growing problem following the end of the war.

¹⁹ John L. Harper and Andrew Parlin, *The Polish Question During World War II*, 8.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 8.

During the Tehran Conference, Stalin re-emphasized the strategic importance of Poland in the protection of Russia's western frontier. During these territorial disputes between the Soviet dictator and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Roosevelt remained absent. The U.S. president refused to involve himself in any discussions which addressed Poland's boundaries. The upcoming 1944 elections were drawing near, and Roosevelt feared that any negative perspective on Poland's future would cause irreparable damage between his administration and the growing Polish-American community. Harry Hopkins, one of Roosevelt's closest advisors, considered the Polish issue 'political dynamite' due to the numerous Americans of Polish descent who saw Roosevelt as an idol and a sincere supporter of the Polish cause.²¹ On December 1st, 1943, Roosevelt met privately with Stalin in order to discuss the issue of Poland and the impact it would have on American internal politics. Although Roosevelt disagreed with Stalin's claims to Polish territory, he could not publically involve himself until the end of 1944.²² By the end of January 1944, Polish Ambassador Jan Ciechanowski was instructed to obtain an official statement from President Roosevelt's administration on the issue of Europe's territorial problems following the end of the war. Ambassador Ciechanowski received the following statement:

The basic position of the United States Government that general discussions of the many European frontier questions during the period of active hostilities against the Axis will run the risk of creating confusion and diverting concentration from the overall objective of defeating Germany. This attitude, however, does not preclude the possibility of any two countries having mutual accord. This Government recognizes that the developments present certain complex and vital considerations which may render it desirable for the Polish Government to endeavor to reach a solution with regard to its territory without delay.²³

The above statement provided somewhat misleading guarantees to the Polish ambassador. By March, Ciechanowski went to London in order to warn his colleagues not to rely on Roosevelt. Ciechanowski eventually returned to his post in Washington, bringing with him a letter written by

²¹ Jan Karski, *The Great Powers & Poland 1919-1945* (New York: University Press of America), 476.

²² Jan Karski, *The Great Powers & Poland 1919-1945*, 477.

²³ Jan Karski, 513.

the Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile, Stanislaw Mikołajczyk, with the goal of reaching Roosevelt. The letter expressed Mikołajczyk's fear that communism would ultimately be forced upon Poland by the Soviets. The letter ended with the following statement:

On behalf of the Polish nation and government, I appeal to you, Mr. President, to do all in your power to prevent the creation in Poland of accomplished fact; to safeguard the sovereign rights of the Polish people and its lawful authorities; to assure the respect and safety of the lives and property of Polish citizens; to safeguard the Polish Underground Army and administration from the dangers that threaten them from their disclosures to Soviet Forces.²⁴

In response, Roosevelt promised to meet with Mikołajczyk sometime in May. Sympathy for the Polish cause was growing in the U.S. and this culminated with the creation of the Polish-American Congress, which dedicated itself to the Polish cause.

The Yalta Conference, which was held from February 4th to the 11th, 1945, was the wartime meeting of the three major Allied Powers: Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt. During the conference, the Polish issue was discussed, highlighting three points: the restructuring of the Communist Provisional Government set up by the Red Army, the reassertion of the Curzon Line, and Churchill's desire to hold free elections in Poland. However, by June 21, 1945, the 'new' communist government was established in Poland. Neither the U.S. nor Great Britain could intervene or change the outcome of the elections. The future of Poland found itself entwined with the Soviet Union.

While it seems like a straightforward category, it will be difficult to define and identify the Polish-American. In addition to describing these communities it is important to include the role of British diplomacy in dealing with the Polish Question, since much of post-war planning for Europe had been directed from London. The Government-in-Exile which was established in

²⁴ Jan Karski, 516.

Paris in 1939, eventually moved to London under the leadership of General Władysław Sikorski. The government was a coalition of the Polish Peasant Party, the Polish Socialist Party, Labor Party and the National Democratic Party. Although the majority of Polish immigrants, during this period, were situated in the United States, President Władysław Razkiewicz believed that establishing a government in exile in Europe would allow Poland to have easier access to forming diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Such research will hopefully offer a new perspective on how the U.S. and the Allied Powers viewed and handled the post-war settlement in east-central Europe and especially Poland.

The first chapter will deal with the historical relationship between Poland and the United States and how such a relationship formed and molded U.S. foreign policy towards the future of Poland. Particular attention will be paid to the role Poles in America played in shaping and influencing U.S. public and diplomatic opinion on the Polish Question. The second chapter will focus on U.S. foreign policy during WWII and how it compared to Great Britain's. Such a comparison will hopefully shed light on the real feelings on the issue of the Polish Question within the Allied community. This chapter will also highlight Winston Churchill's relationship with the Polish government-in-exile in London. In addition, the Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers between 1940 and 1943 will be discussed. The third chapter will discuss the response from the Polish American community and how particular Polish-American organizations placed continuous pressure on FDR. This concluding chapter will examine the final decisions made by U.S. foreign policy makers in regard to Poland's future. Aspects of Conferences such as Yalta, Teheran, and Potsdam will be analyzed in order to illuminate the U.S.'s true intentions for Poland as seen through FDR's secret meetings with Stalin; again a comparison with Great Britain is needed. Hopefully, through my research new

conclusions will be drawn about how the U.S. handled the Polish Question and whether politics outweighed diplomacy.

Chapter I: The Rise of the Infamous “Polish Question”

1.2 Partitioned Poland

Throughout Poland’s history the question of existence has continued to re-surface at the hands of the great European powers. The Kingdom of Poland, commonly referred to as *Res Publica*, was a highly diversified nation by the 18th century. The ethnic mixture was a result of the cohabitation of different groups within the same state which did not adhere to Polish as their mother tongue. Few had a clear consciousness of national identity; the majority being Polish-speakers.²⁵ Within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth special autonomous regimes existed which was reflected in the dualism of *Res Publica*, ‘two nations,’ that contained separate administrations, armies, treasuries, and legal codes. By the 18th century common executive organs became to appear following the 1791 constitution, however, such reforms proved too late to save the commonwealth from the partitions. During this time period the constitutional and socioeconomic system of the old commonwealth was decaying. The combination of wars and invasions coupled with rapid decline in the volume of production made Poland ripe for plundering. Under the pretense of safeguarding the rights of the nation, the magnates consolidated power and selfishly absorbed the remaining the hope for the survival of Poland. Unlike the major European powers, Poland had yet to adopt a functional bureaucracy, effective system of taxation, and a large army.²⁶ In 1780, for example, the revenues of Poland were supposedly forty times smaller than those of France and ten times smaller than those of Russia.²⁷ The once progressive nation of personal liberties and political rights had hung itself by

²⁵ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 3.

²⁶ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918*, 7.

²⁷ Ibid, 7.

undermining its own power.

Obviously Polish national consciousness is much older than the partitions. The Deluge in the 17th century and the civil wars of the 18th century are periods in which citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic questioned age-old traditions of loyalty and identity. Another example can be seen in which it was assumed that ‘to be a Pole’ meant being a loyal subject of the Polish King and the Republic. However, after 1717, where the Polish King and the Republic were puppets of the Russian Tsar, the term ‘loyalty’ began to be associated with ‘collaboration.’²⁸ Therefore the notion of a ‘Pole’ was re-defined and mended closer to more cultural and religious traits. The Polish essence is one that cannot be measured, however, it provides an inkling to how important their homeland and traditions are to their identity.

The first partition on August 5th, 1772, was seen by many patriotic Poles as a necessary step in implementing new reforms that ultimately would strengthen the government. Rousseau, for example, wrote in 1771 that “Poland would probably be ‘devoured,’ but if she wanted to continue her existence she must see to it that she was not ‘digested’ ...Get rid of your traditions which have made you what you are.”²⁹ Rousseau’s emphatic advice was unfortunately ignored as the political and social traditions of the Poles worsened the politically impotent and backward Polish state. In some ways the partition should not be seen as an ‘act of brigandage,” but a natural denouncement of two centuries of irresponsible rule by the nobility; however, most historians see the partitions in a negative light. England and France placed the blame of the partitions on autocratic Russia; Prussia was seen as a pitiful and subordinate accomplice while Austria was absolved as an unwilling accessory.³⁰ This scheme changed however following the

²⁸ Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A history of Poland Volume II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 12.

²⁹ Louis L. Gerson, 3.

³⁰ Louis L. Gerson, 4.

outcome of WWI in which Prussia was seen as the chief instigator of the partitions.

The partitions of Poland removed Poland from the map of Europe as its territories were divided between Prussia, Russia and Habsburg Austria. The partitioning of Poland did not shock 18th century Europe for even French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau commented that the “Polish Republic was composed of three orders; the nobles who are everything; the bourgeois who are nothing; and the peasants who are less than nothing.”³¹ Such insight into Polish society illuminated the self-destruction nature of the Polish state. The fall of Poland was a combination of both internal and external factors. This conclusion is based in comparison to other European nations at the time which although battled anarchy, corruption and revolutions did not succumb to partitioning.³² The aristocratic republic, as a political form, is strictly a Polish phenomenon.³³ Certain liberties which were given to the Polish nobility destroyed the power structure leaving Poland vulnerable to its own greed. For example, the usage of *liberum veto*, which allowed any member of the *Sejm* to force an immediate end to the current session and nullify all legislation already passed at it by shouting *Nie pozwalam!*³⁴, delayed any reforms from be enacted. As a result foreign powers such as Prussia and Russia found that *liberum veto* not only delayed reforms but slowly suffocated the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the Constitution of 1791 abolished *liberum veto* and also established the principle of emancipating the serfs. Russian Minister Alexander Bezborodko stated that “the Poles have ways of thinking which may prove dangerous if they spread.”³⁵ Poland was therefore torn to pieces because she had the mind to begin to correct her own faults.

³¹ Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland 1914-1920*, 1.

³² Casimir Smogorzewski, *Poland's Access to the Sea* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1934), 56.

³³ Ibid, 56.

³⁴ “I do not allow.”

³⁵ Casimir Smogorzewski, *Poland's Access to the Sea*, 57.

Although Russia sensed Poland's collapse, it was Prussia who established the idea of partition. On May 3rd, 1791, the Polish Diet voted for a new constitution which would have saved the country if not for the re-grouping of the partitionists. On May 23rd, after the succession of Frederick William II, Prussian Minister Ewald Friedrich Graf von Hertzberg confessed his fears to the representative of Berlin at Warsaw, stating that "the Kingdom of Poland has become hereditary and has received a Constitution more solid and better organized than that of England. I think that by this Poland will become a danger to Prussia and will sooner re-take West Prussian and perhaps in East Prussia."³⁶ Such a fear however subsided as the second partition occurred in 1793, followed by the third in 1795. Highlighting Hertzberg's statement is important in showing that the great powers of Europe saw both strength and weakness in Poland. It is true that 18th century Poland was an oligarchy where rule of law only benefited the *szlachta*³⁷ and the clergy.

Unlike the first partition, the last two happened at a moment when Poland was emerging from its previous state of decline. The country was some-what moving in a direction that opened before it large vistas and possibilities. Alarmed by such productivity the neighboring powers intervened in order to squash any signs of vitality. Through corruption of the magnates and the creation of the Targowica Confederation, Catherine the Great of Russia intervened militarily. The share of land received by Russia in the partitions was by far the most; more than one-half of the old commonwealth and nearly one-half of its population.³⁸ The annexed territories consisted mostly of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ukraine, and several other provinces of the Crown east of the Bug River. Both Austria and Prussia tried to justify their acquisitions by invoking historical and dynastic claims, however, Catherine II went further by ordering a medal, after the second partition, engraved with the following words, "I recovered what had been torn away

³⁶ Casimir Smogorzewski, 58.

³⁷ Term for Polish nobility

³⁸ Piotr S. Wandycz. 17.

(*ottorzhennaia vozvratikh*).”³⁹ Catherine argued that she had only reunited lands that had been part of the Kievan patrimony. This argument was furthered by Catherine’s contemporaries who believed that the partitions were a crime but Russian *raison d’etat* and exigencies of the balance of power justified the annexation of ‘rightfully’ Russian lands; these lands had historically been seen as “Polish provinces,” or ‘guberniias.’ An example is provided by an early 19th century geography textbook by I.A. Arsenevich who referred to the Poles as a “nation constituting the major part of the population of the Kingdom of Poland and in the guberniias [taken] from Poland and united [with Russia].”⁴⁰ The ‘Polish provinces’ were mainly populated by Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians; however, Poles still represented the largest group. These historical issues play a large role in the territorial disputes following WWI and WWII.

The British were not surprised with Poland’s demise but were rather resentful that such partitions occurred without British concurrence. Irish statesman Edmund Burke wrote the following:

I have no doubt that a prince (Frederick the Great) so wise in politics will improve his new acquisitions (for I am not to call them conquests) to the best advantage for his power and greatness. I agree ... that it was extremely fortunate that the three allied powers were able to find a fourth which was utterly unable to resist any of them, and much less all united. If this circumstance had not concurred with their earnest inclination to preserve public tranquility, they might have been obliged to find a discharge for the superfluous strength of their plethoric habits in the destruction of most of the countries in Europe.⁴¹

French statesman Duc de Broglie wrote within his book *The King’s Secret* that the partition was an “act of brigandage.”⁴² Contrary to Broglie, individuals such as Voltaire believed that the partition was a fortunate event which saved Europe from war and that the intervention from Prussia and Austria saved Poland from becoming a Russian province. Following the

³⁹ Ibid, 17.

⁴⁰ Piotr S. Wandycz, 17

⁴¹ Ibid, 1.

⁴² Louis L. Gerson, 2.

partitions a wave of patriotism swept across the Polish consciousness as the Polish people prayed for a re-unified Poland. An example of such patriotism can be seen in the following hymn which was recited at the end of Mass:

O God who through the ages
Hast girded Poland with power and fame,
Whose shield hath kept Her in Thy care
From evils that would cause her harm.
Before Thy altars, we bring our entreaty:
Restore, O Lord, our free country.⁴³

Following the partitions, Poland disappeared into the midst of European imperialism. The spirit, however, of the Polish people lay in their inability to accept removal from history. Adam Mickiewicz, Poland's national poet wrote the following poem after the failure of the Polish Revolution of 1830 in order to strengthen the hearts of the Poles in exile:

For a universal war for the freedom of nations
We beseech Thee, O Lord.
For national arms and eagles
We beseech Thee, O Lord.
For the independence, integrity and freedom of our country
We beseech Thee, O Lord.⁴⁴

Each of the bureaucracies of the partitioning powers had their own terminological conventions for distinguishing the land lost Poles. There were many different Poland's as there were people who cared to perceive it, as many 'kings of Poland' as cared to reign within their imaginary kingdoms. Poland's spiritual nature has been underlined by some of the most sensitive foreign observers of the 19th century: Helmuth von Moltke, J.H. Sutherland Edwards, and Georg Brandes.⁴⁵ Poet Kazimierz Brodziński wrote the following:

⁴³ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A history of Poland Volume II*, 15.

⁴⁴ Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland 1914-1920* (Hamden, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1953), 7.

⁴⁵ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A history of Poland Volume II*, 7.

Hail, O Christ, Thou Lord of Men!
Poland, in Thy footsteps treading
Like Thee suffers, at Thy bidding;
Like Thee, too, shall rise again.⁴⁶

The partitioning nations however provided different terminology for Poles who lived within their respective boundaries. For example, in Russian official usage, a man living on the left bank of the River Bug might be called a ‘Pole,’ in that he was a citizen of the Congress Kingdom; his neighbor, however, who dwells on the right bank of the river, even if he was the other’s man’s kin, was a ‘Russian.’⁴⁷ Following the abolishment of the Congress Kingdom in 1874, all Poles became classified as ‘Russians’ regardless of geographical proximity. Internally, the Poles had trouble identifying themselves and their relationship to their homeland. Individuals, for example, who looked for the restoration of a state resembling the old Republic, continued to view ‘Polishness’ in non-national terms. Mickiewicz embraced the notion that a Pole could be both Polish and Lithuanian at the same time; a notion which resonated the once powerful Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Within Mickiewicz’s masterpiece *Pan Tadeusz*, an invocation is dedicated to Lithuania not Poland: *Litwo! Ojczyzno moja! ty jesteś jak zdrowie.*⁴⁸ It is clear that different nationalist groups envisioned a renewed Poland that encompassed many facets of Poland’s past. The only linkage among these groups is that the end product would lead to an independent Poland. Historians continue to argue at what point in history the Polish nation rejuvenated itself from the ashes. Some highlight the decisive moment in 1864, when a measure of social emancipation attended the national demonstration of the January Rising. Others believe that the Rebirth of the Polish state in 1918 was the exact point of sovereignty. Numerous observers argue that the

⁴⁶ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁷ Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A history of Poland Volume II*, 10.

⁴⁸ O Lithuania, my fatherland! You are like health to me.

national process could not be seen as a complete homogeneous Polish population who were uniformly conscious of their national identity; this would not be reached until 1945.⁴⁹

The one and only consistent theme which continued to draw the attention of statesmen of the time was the Polish Question. The Polish Question has re-surfaced, re-defined, and re-shaped Poland's existence. The future of Poland's frontiers has been dominated by the Allied Powers of Europe as the carving of Poland has been tantamount to bringing of stability to Europe. This subject appeared on numerous conference agendas for no ideal solution could ever be reached. One of the oldest jokes in the ambassador's repertoire, is that a Polish candidate at an international essay competition on 'Elephants' produced a paper entitled 'The Elephant and the Polish Question. The point being that of all the animals to be found in the diplomatic garden of Europe, the Polish Question is indeed the elephant.'⁵⁰ The growing influence of the French Revolution and later the War of the first Coalition forced the three partitioning powers to re-open the Polish Question. While the Polish Question was discussed new political groups formed within the Polish community; these groups encompassed moderates, radicals, evolutionists, revolutionaries, etc. The ultimate goal, regardless of beliefs, was gaining independence for Poland. Two working possibilities were established, the first being a tactic to cooperate with one partitioning power while working against another. The second pinned its hope on France, whose revolutionary declaration of offering aid to oppressed nations could re-strengthen French interest in Poland.⁵¹ The first tactic had some poignancy for Berlin was considering the Polish suggestion of re-forming the Polish state under the crown of the Prussian king; Catherine the II threatened to release Tadeusz Kosciuszko on Prussia if the crown gave in to such a request. However, Tsar Paul I in 1796 did release Kosciuszko and many other Polish prisoners. This act by Tsar Paul I

⁴⁹ Norman Davies, 11.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 11.

⁵¹ Piotr S. Wandycz, 24.

was extremely troubling for the Germanic powers. Such concessions for the Poles, under Russian rule, were immediately crushed by the supplementary treaty of January 26th, 1797, which forbade the use of any title with the word Polish in it; this treaty was enacted directly against any plan by the two other partitioning powers to revive Poland. The Polish aristocracy aligned themselves with the partitioning powers in order to engage in political schemes. The three court powers of Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Austria also used the magnates to further their own political gains. Even non-aristocrats such as Henryk Dąbrowski received numerous pleas to enter both the Russian and Prussian military services. In addition, Prince Józef Poniatowski was placed high on military lists of all three partitioning powers.⁵² All three powers wished to keep the Polish aristocracy on a short lease and this was done through the threat of confiscating their estates. For Paris, the Polish Question was a useful diversion for its enemies. By distracting Russia and Prussia, the Polish issue played an important role in assisting the French war effort in 1793-95; Kosciuszko's honorary French citizenship serves as an example between the usefulness of the Polish Question, and French advancement.

By the 19th century, Polish independence seemed more like a mirage than anything close to reality. After 1801, the center of Polish activity shifted to reviving the homeland. The shift of powers in Russia, the rise of Tsar Paul, saw a loosening of religious measures directed against the Uniates, saw new developments in Russo-Polish dialogue. However, the greatest effort on the behalf of the Poles came from Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski. In 1775, Prince Adam was sent to St. Petersburg to pledge allegiance to the Russian tsar on behalf of the Czartoryski's. A strong relationship eventually developed with Grand Duke Alexander, who would soon become Tsar Alexander I. In 1801, Alexander took the throne and made Czartoryski the minister of foreign

⁵² Piotr Wandycz, 25.

affairs, a member of the Council on Education and later of the Council of State, and a senator.⁵³ Many Russian officials distrusted and disliked the fact that a Pole held so many high positions in the Russian government. Although, Czartoryski wished to see a free and independent Poland he had to be extremely circumspect. Czartoryski hoped that through modernizing Russia, the partitioning powers would give up some of their shares of Poland; in this sense a reconstituted Poland under the Romanov crown would be appealing to both Russia and Poland. In Germany and Russia, regardless of Czartoryski's influence, the Polish provinces were ruled from the center, and played a minor role in policy-making. No Polish nationalist politician held an important position in imperial counsels. In Austria, where Galicia had enjoyed political and cultural autonomy since 1868-75, the Poles formed one of the strongest pillars of the Habsburg regime.⁵⁴ The Polish Question on the diplomatic front had long since disappeared from the active agenda of the major European powers. The history of Poland prior to WWI is extremely complicated as the map of Europe continuously changed. Polish territories shifted hands as the Napoleonic wave spread throughout Europe. The Polish Question had disappeared from the agendas of many powers until the end of WWI. American influence over the issue also did not appear until the aftermath of WWI.

1.2 The Polish Question following WWI

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the hopes for an independent Poland seemed bleak. Count Istvan Burian wrote that “when all the great European powers interests came into conflict nobody gave a thought to Poland. It did not seem desirable or necessary to any

⁵³ Piotr Wandycz, 34.

⁵⁴ Norman Davies, 45.

of the three powers concerned in the partition to disturb the Polish problem.”⁵⁵ However, it was the United States entrance into the conflict which gave some Poles hope for their nation’s revival. Hope seemed closer to the truth when in Woodrow Wilson joined the European conflict. On the November 6th, 1916 election of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Wilson stated the following to Paderewski, “My dear Paderewski, I can tell that Poland will be resurrected and will exist again. For Poland this miracle of independence will come from the West...”⁵⁶

The eruption of WWI divided the Polish people into numerous antagonistic groups. It was clear that none of these antagonistic groups envisaged a fully independent Poland. Paderewski declared that “Nobody believed or worked for an independent Poland before the outbreak of the war and during the first years of war.”⁵⁷ The internal fighting among these groups made it difficult for any vision of a unified Poland plausible. Writer J.J. Korostovetz wrote that “none of the Poles engaged in the various armies had ever dreamt of any political independence, extending beyond national autonomy and territorial home rule.”⁵⁸ Józef Klemens Pilsudski, future ruler of Poland, acknowledged these facts and retrospectively in 1931 stated the following:

I am repeatedly astonished that such simple truths and historical facts are continuously twisted and continuously falsified. For there is no doubt whatsoever that at the outbreak of the war in 1914 the Poles and Poland were in a state of complete prostration and complete impotence. It is then an incontestable fact that in each of the dismembered parts all of the Poles did what their partitioning powers ordered...This fact is so true and incontrovertible that it is with genuine displeasure that one sees or hears it denied by those who glorify themselves, and themselves only, in their accounts of all they have done.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland 1914-1920* (Hamden, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1953), 14.

⁵⁶ Louis L Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland 1914-1920*, 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁹ Gerson, 16.

Piłsudski counted on the general disruption following the outbreak of WWI to realize his dream of an independent Poland, or at least the union of Russian Poland with Austrian Poland under an autonomous regime. Piłsudski successfully convinced Austria that it would be advantageous to recognize Polish aspirations. Immediately following the outbreak of WWI the Supreme Command of the German and Austrian armies issued a manifesto which told Poles they were being brought freedom, acceptance, and religious tolerance. The Polish Club in the Austrian parliament declared that, in defense of the liberty of the Poles and other peoples, was sending to Poland a “mighty army against the Russian oppressors.”⁶⁰ Poet Edward Słōński wrote the following in September 1914:

We're kept apart, my brother,
By a fate that we can't deny.
From our two opposing dug-outs
We're staring death in the eye.
In the trenches filled with groaning,
Alert to the shellfire's whine,
We stand and confront each other,
I'm your enemy; and you are mine.
So when you catch me in your sights
I beg you, play your part,
And sink your Muscovite bullet
Deep in my Polish heart.
Now I see the vision clearly,
Caring not that we'll both be dead;
For *that which has not perished*
Shall rise from the blood we shed.⁶¹

In Vienna on August 22nd, 1914, a draft manifesto was drawn up by finance minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and one of the most significant Polish Club members, Leon Bilinski. The manifesto, which disclosed the policy of the Austrian Poles read as following, “If Almighty God gives victory to the Allied Armies, *your country shall be incorporated among my States for ever*, in such a way that together with my territory inhabited by your compatriots it

⁶⁰ Ibid, 16.

⁶¹ Norman Davies, 281.

shall form a unified Kingdom of Poland, the administration of which I shall entrust subject to the best interests and needs of the Monarchy as a whole-to a national Government responsible to the Diet at Warsaw.”⁶² As the German and Austrian forces strengthened over the occupied area of Poland the intentions of the Central Powers became clearer. Both Austria and Germany would have denounced their previous proclamations which guaranteed an independent Poland if they had an alternative solution to their manpower shortage. Germany could not afford to keep large occupying forces in Poland at a time when the front demanded soldiers. The Poles could not be conscripted into the German forces without contravening a principle of international law established in the Hague Conference in 1907 which made it illegal to mobilize armed forces within occupied areas during wartime. It was, therefore, decided to create an independent Polish kingdom, under the protection of, and allied with, the Central Powers. In order to avoid disagreement between Austrian and German governments over who should administer the occupied areas, a decree was drafted which established that a Polish state only be formed in the occupied part of Russia only. On November 5th, 1916, the following manifesto was published in Berlin and Vienna:

...His Majesty the German Emperor and His Majesty the Austrian Emperor and Apostolic King of Hungary, sustained by their firm confidence in the final victory of their arms, and guided by the wish to lead to a happy future the Polish districts which by their brave armies were snatched with heavy sacrifices from Russian power, have agreed to form from these districts an independent state with an hereditary monarchy and a constitution. The more precise regulation of the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland remains reserved. In union with both Allied Powers and the new Kingdom will find the guarantees, which it desires for the free development of its strength. In its own army the glorious traditions of the Polish Army of frontier times and the memory of our brave Polish fellow-combatants in the great war of the present time will continue to live. Its organization, training, and command will be regulated by mutual agreement.⁶³

In concurrence with the manifesto General von Beseler and General von Kuk, German and Austrian commanders of the occupied areas of Russian Poland, published a

⁶² Gerson, 17.

⁶³ Gerson, 18.

proclamation asking the Poles to support the new state by enlisting in their armies, so their dream of an independent Poland could become a reality. The proclamation stated:

The struggle with Russia has not yet ended; in this struggle you must also participate. Stand by our side therefore as volunteers and help us to crown our victory against your oppressor. Your brothers in the Polish legions fought with us courageously and gloriously; follow in their footsteps and enlist in the new formations which, united with the legions, will constitute the Polish Army, which will provide strong support for your new state and will secure its safety both within and without...⁶⁴

By 1916 nearly 1.9 million Poles were serving in the war. This included 4% of the population in the Vistula provinces; 14.8% of the Polish population of Prussian Poland, and 16.3% of Galician Poles. The Provisional Council of State was created with Piłsudski as a military leader; eventually he would lead the campaign in the Eastern Front. Prior to the Russian offensive into East Prussia and Austria, Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, issued the following manifesto to the Polish Nation:

Poles! The hour has struck when the dreams of your fathers and forefathers can come true. A century and a half ago, the living body of Poland was torn in pieces; but her soul did not die. It was kept alive by a hope for the resurrection of the Polish nation and for its fraternal union with Great Russia. The Russian Army brings you the blessed news of that union. May the frontiers that cut across Poland be erased. May the Polish nation be joined in one under the scepter of the Russian Emperor. Under that scepter Poland will be reborn, free in her own faith, language, and self rule. Russia expects only one thing of you, namely, that you show respect for all those other people whose fate has been bound by your history. Great Russia steps forward to meet you with an open heart and with a brotherly hand extended in friendship. She firmly believes that the sword which slew the common enemy at Grunwald⁶⁵ has not tarnished. The Russian battalions stretched from the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the Northern Sea. The dawn of your new life is breaking. May the banner of the Cross shine forth as a symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of the nations.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid, 18.

⁶⁵ Took place on 15 July 1410 with the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, led by the king Władysław II Jagiełło, ranged against the Knights of the Teutonic Order.

⁶⁶ Davies, 283.

This St. Petersburg proclamation had a profound effect on the Poles within and outside Russian Poland. In response to the manifesto, National Democratic Party leader Roman Dmowski published the following:

The representatives of the undersigned political parties assembled on August 16th in Warsaw welcome the proclamation to the Poles of His Imperial Highness, the Supreme Commander of the Russian armies, as an act of the greatest historical weight, and believe firmly that after the end of the war the promises expressed in the proclamation will be realized, and that the dreams of our fathers and forefathers will be fulfilled; that the body of Poland went to pieces a century and a half ago, will be reunited and that the frontiers which have divided the Polish nation will vanish.⁶⁷

The tsarist regime always saw the Polish Question as one of Russian internal politics. Following the downfall of absolutism in Russia and the introduction of the so-called rule by 'liberty,' many Poles felt that such a political shift would be the catalyst in annulling the work of the partitions; meaning an announcement by Russia to revive Polish territory and by proclaiming a new government in favor of Polish independence. This act, however, was not long delayed for on March 30, 1917, a proclamation appeared by the Provisional Government, signed by all the ministers, stating the following:

Poles! The old system of Russia, the source of our common slavery and of our disunity is now overturned forever. Free Russia...hastens to send you her fraternal greeting; she calls you to a new life, to liberty. The old Power made hypocritical promises to you which it could, but would not, keep... Brothers of Poland, free Russia calls you to join the ranks of the combatants for the freedom of nations. The Russian nation, which has thrown off the yoke, recognizes equally for her Polish sister-nation the full right to determine her future according to her royal will. Loyal to its agreements with its allies, faithful to the general plan of campaign against militant Germanism, the Provisional Government considers that the creation of an independent Polish State, controlling all the territories where the majority of the population consists of Poles, is a pledge of lasting peace in the renovated Europe of the future.⁶⁸

The proclamation by the Provisional Government played a large role in the future evolution of the problem of Polish independence. There would have not been an independent Poland if Russia

⁶⁷ Gerson, 23.

⁶⁸ Smogorzewski, 80.

had not been at war with the Central Powers, nor would it have existed if the Allies had won their victory with the assistance of Tsarist Russia; the Russian Revolution had freed the hands of the Western powers. The Russian Revolution was an important factor in the restoration of Poland. During the war, Berlin and Vienna continuously squabbled over the Polish Question; such bickering weakened their movements. Germany wavered between two policies: the destruction of Russia and the creation of a Polish 'buffer state,' or an *entente* with Russia over the body of Poland.⁶⁹ Austria-Hungary saw the Polish Question as a mean of increasing her power and influence. Both Germany and Austria-Hungary could not arrive at a common Polish policy.

1.3 Poland in the eyes of the U.S. during WWI

Prior to the United State's entrance into the war and support for an independence Poland, a long tradition of mutual friendship had existed between both nations. During the 1775 American Revolutionary War, notorious figures such as Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski fought valiantly and earned their places within American history; both heroes were recommended to serve by Benjamin Franklin. In 1789, Kościuszko returned to Poland and in 1794 led an unsuccessful revolution against Russia which eventually led to the third partition. The loss of Polish independence and Kościuszko's captivity in Russia initiated American sympathy leading to a stronger bond between both nations. The failure of the November Insurrection 1830-1831 contributed to the emigration of Poles. On January 1831, the word of the Polish insurrection reached New York. Captain Champlin, the captain of the packet boat *Suzerain*, brought the news in the form of British, French, and German newspapers.⁷⁰ One of the

⁶⁹ Smogorzewski, 81.

⁷⁰ Bogdan Grzeloński, *Poles in the United States of America, 1776-1865* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1976), 113.

local New York newspaper *The Daily Advertiser* commented on the insurrection, “Every friend of justice, the rights of men, and the independence of nations, will most cordially wish them [the Poles] abundant success in their present struggle for emancipation.”⁷¹ On May 20th, 1831, the New York newspaper the *Evening Post* published an appeal to the town’s leaders in order to invite the public to support Poland and the insurrection. Other states also rallied large groups in support of the Polish cause. For example, on September 24th, 1831, the Washington *Globe* newspaper sponsored an association called the Young Men of Philadelphia. This organization appointed P.O. Hagean to “travel through this and the neighboring states, for the purpose of calling meetings on behalf of the Poles.”⁷² Nearly \$248 dollars was raised for the embattled Poland by the cadets of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; all together around \$5,500⁷³ dollars was raised by American-Polish Committees towards the insurrection. Poet Miecislau Haiman wrote that “this was indeed the only period when Poland could be said to be in the vogue in the United States, when her name was on the lips of all Americans.”⁷⁴ Haiman, however, failed to mention the attitude of the U.S. government at the time. President Andrew Jackson delivered the following speech in front of Congress in December 1831, “With the Empire of the Russians our political connection is of the most friendly, and our commercial, of the most liberal kind.”⁷⁵ The political attitude of the President Jackson reflected the worry surrounding the growing support for South Carolina and other southern states to secede from the Union. Jackson felt that the Polish problem could be seen from the Russians as an intervention into Russian internal affairs that could ultimately spark Russian involvement in American internal affairs. In

⁷¹ Ibid, 113.

⁷² Bogdan Grzeloński, *Poles in the United States of America*, 115.

⁷³ Sizable amount of money during this time period.

⁷⁴ Bogdan Grzeloński, *Poles in the United States of America*, 116.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 116.

general, Jackson felt that relations with Russia should be improved not stinted; this was manifested through the trade agreement of 1833.

By 1860 every state, with the exception of Dakota, had a Polish population.⁷⁶ Ironically, the Polish Revolution of 1863 neither increased Polish emigration to the United States nor changed or swayed public opinion. An example is seen in the rejection of Napoleon III's invitation to the United States to protest against Russian policy in Poland; this was largely due to American policy involving intervention in European or foreign affairs. During the late 1860's, pockets of Polish communities began forming in city centers. These communities made up the Polonia or Polish Diaspora. The United States government, like the German and Russian government, made no effort to denationalize the Poles. The 1880's saw a high influx of Poles to America due to the anti-Polish and anti-Catholic policies of Bismarck; therefore the Polish emigration of 1880 is seen as religiously motivated unlike the previous economic driven émigrés. During the industrialization of Germany many Poles saw a chance to profit on the expanding industries. As a result, the Polish émigrés from Germany decreased, whereas, the Poles from Russian Poland and Galicia increased. These Poles were typical peasants who stereotypical were politically inexperienced and fanatically religious. These peasants immigrated to America because of the primitive nature of the agricultural system in Russia. Galicia, for example, had no industry to support excess populations.

By the early 20th century Polish immigrants were beginning to be received well in America. This of course was due to the large industrial boom in the U.S. which required a large labor force. Both Polish peasants and other immigrants from Eastern Europe flocked in order to fill these extremely difficult positions. Such jobs tended to focus around mining. As the number of immigrants from Poland increased so did the Polonia. Numerous organizations and societies

⁷⁶ Gerson, 39.

for formed in order to represent and protect the interests of the Polish community. The initial step in creating these communities was the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church. Writer Roman Dyboski wrote that “the Polish Roman Catholic parish became the Polish immigrant worker’s chief center of social organization, and schools and college, when they developed among the immigrant community, were largely conducted by nuns and priests. Purely secular organizations, when they arose, originally served the purpose of social insurance....”⁷⁷

Prior to the outbreak of WWI, the Polish-American press, Polish Catholic organizations, and various Polish societies were greatly concerned with the cultural, social, and material interests of the immigrants. When WWI erupted the Polish-American press shifted its attention to the larger question of Polish nationalism in Europe and the encouragement of Poles in America to assist in the struggle for Poland’s independence. However, the majority of Polish immigrants had come to America for purely economic reasons and therefore refused to become politically active in a crisis which reminded them of the old country. When the possibility of Poland becoming independence became a reality, many Polish leaders strove to persuade the Polish-American community to united and influence American foreign policy. Numerous influential Poles from Russia, Austria, and Germany came to America to persuade individuals that they represented the ‘fourth partition,’ and should assistant Poland in become sovereign once again.⁷⁸ Propaganda was used by these organizations through the usage of posters which stated that “Kościuszko and Pulaski fought for American freedom. Will you help American fight for freedom in Poland?”⁷⁹ It was at this point that Poles in American became conscious of their contributions to the United States.

⁷⁷ Gerson, 42.

⁷⁸ Gerson, 46.

⁷⁹ Gerson, 47.

It was not until 1915 that the United States, with the assistance of Herbert Hoover became seriously involved with Polish affairs; his first visit to Poland was in 1913. During Hoover's responsibility as chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium he was approached by numerous Polish organizations in both German-occupied Warsaw and in the United States who hoped for food and clothing assistance. Poland began suffering immediately when the war broke out. In November 1915, with German permission, Hoover sent his senior associate Dr. Vernon Kellogg, future secretary of state, to investigate the seriousness of the situation. In response to Kellogg's report, Hoover met with representatives of the German General Staff to inform them that the Western Allies would set particular conditions before allowing the International Commission for Relief in Poland.⁸⁰ On February 6, 1916, Hoover prepared to plan four million people in Polish cities without the consent of Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary. Although a starving Poland was refused substantial American help until the Armistice, Hoover's intentions would contribute greatly to an increased political increase in the region. Historians of the American Relief Administration, Harold Fisher and Sidney Brooks stated the following:

Sympathy for the war sufferings of the Poles merged with sympathy for their demand for the unity and independence of their nation. In this way the restoration of Poland become a war issue for a large public long before it was accepted by the foreign offices of Europe...popular support of Polish aspirations gained headway for rapidly in America than elsewhere, and this championship...was to be given new force in President Wilson's speech on January 22nd, 1917.⁸¹

The relationship between Paderewski and President Wilson's top assistant in foreign affairs, Colonel Edward D. House brought the Polish cause closer to the presidency; as honorary president of the Polish Central Relief Committee in the United States, Paderewski was able to

⁸⁰ George J. Lerski, *Herbert Hoover and Poland: A Documentary History of Friendship* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), 5.

⁸¹ Ibid, 5.

rally the leaders of the American Polonia⁸². The joint effort between Paderewski and President Wilson was later solidified through Wilson's recognition of Poland's independence with free access to the Baltic Sea in his famous Thirteenth Point declared on January 8, 1918.

⁸² The name for Poland in Latin and many other languages, refers in modern Polish to the Polish Diaspora.

Chapter II: Poland on the Run:

2.1 *The United States and the Polish Government in Exile*

In 1917, the Allied powers recognized the Polish National Committee, the center of Poland's postwar government. However, controversy arose about Poland's legitimate territorial boundaries. The thirteenth of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points called for "an independent Polish State...which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations."⁸³ Yet, in areas such as southern Lithuania, western Ukraine, and eastern Galicia it proved to be difficult to distinguish ethnic majorities. The Polish-German frontier was established at the Peace Conference held at Versailles in June 1919. On December 8th, 1919, the Allied Supreme Council agreed on a temporary boundary to mark Poland's minimum eastern frontier. The actual line ran from Grodno, east of Bialystok and through Brest Litovsk, then continued along the Bug River to an area close to the town of Sokoly.⁸⁴ The Allies had yet to decide on the temporary Polish-Soviet frontier especially when Marshall Józef Piłsudski pushed eastward into the Ukraine as far as Kyiv in 1920. When the Red Army tried to push the Poles back, Polish Prime Minister Władysław Grabski appealed in July 1920 to the Allies for assistance. Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, proposed an armistice, calling for a return to the boundary established on December 8th, 1919, which later would manifest itself into the notorious Curzon Line. American consideration as to the Polish frontier problem was marked by divergent opinions. During 1919, it was unclear what future role the United States wished to play in postwar Europe. It was obvious that the Polish Foreign Ministry (MSZ) hoped to win the

⁸³ John L. Harper and Andrew Parlin, *The Polish Question During World War II*, 3.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 3.

patronage of the transatlantic giant, which had emerged from WWI as the foremost power in the world.⁸⁵ The issues surrounding Poland's boundaries were symptomatic of WWII, as the face of Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe was redesigned by the powers of the West. However, Poland's fate or complete restoration would exhume itself from the ashes of WWII. Poland's geographical location had become an increasing worry for General Władysław Sikorski as the growing powers of both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were beginning to suffocate Poland. Throughout the interwar period, Sikorski saw Germany, in particular, as the greatest danger to Poland's future.

Regardless of pre-WWII predictions or even attempts to strengthening alliances, as seen through last minute endeavors to establish better Polish-Soviet relations, Poland was ultimately engulfed on September 1st, 1939. Prior to Poland's invasion, the Anglo-Polish Treaty was signed on August 25th, 1939, which guaranteed the following on behalf of the United Kingdom:

Its first article provided that should one of the contracting parties become engaged in hostilities with a European power in consequence of aggression by the later against the Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party would at once give it all the support and assistance in its power. Article 3 declared that Britain and Poland would support each other in resisting any attempt to undermine the independence or either by 'processes of economic penetration or in any other way.'⁸⁶

This guarantee held grave significance for the Polish who truly believed that the British would defend Poland, not only militarily, but would also voice Poland's wishes in the global arena.

Significantly, on March 9th 1945, the British War Cabinet passed the following top secret statement in respects to the Anglo-Polish Treaty:

... No British Government could guarantee that in no circumstances should Poland lose territory either to Russia or Germany. It may, indeed, be doubted whether such a guarantee has ever been given to any country except in certain special cases, such as neutralized Belgium, where the guarantors were certainly in a position to implement their

⁸⁵ Neal Please, *Poland, the United States, and the Stabilization of Europe, 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.

⁸⁶ Foreign Diplomat Janusz Sleszyński, "Depiction of Anglo-Polish relations, March 1939-November 1943," Archives reference no. PRM 109/26, Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum: London, England.

guarantee. In the particular case of Poland there is the further consideration that, of the territories whose perpetual possession by Poland would have been guaranteed by us, those to the East of the Curzon Line were acquired contrary to our express advice, while Vilna was obtained by most dubious methods, to which the Council of the League took strong exception. It is plain that the Anglo-Polish Treaty of 1939 involved no such guarantee...⁸⁷

The Anglo-Polish Treaty serves as an example, of the pre-Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam guarantees that were given to Poland in respects to maintaining specific territorial boundaries. The German military style of blitzkrieg devastated Poland as the sheer onslaught toppled over Poland's archaic method of defense. To worsen matters, on September 17th Soviet troops crossed in the Polish frontier in direct contravention of the Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact signed in 1932. Following the attack, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov broadcast the following explanation, "As the Polish State ceased to exist, the treaties of Russia with Poland are no longer valid...no one could expect Russia to forsake the Ukrainian and White Russian populations *which formed part of the former Poland*, and she would take them under her protection."⁸⁸ In response to Molotov's broadcast, *The Times* issued a commentary on September 18th, 1939 entitled, "Stalin shows his hand." The commentary stated:

From the moment at which the signature of the Soviet-German agreement liberated and encouraged Hitler to light the first flame of a world war in Europe, the question for most minds has not been whether Stalin would invade Poland but when. Russian troops crossed the Polish border along the whole front...and are now moving forward to the occupation of White Russia and Polish Ukraine. *Only these can be disappointed who clung to the ingenious belief that Russian was to be distinguished from her Nazi neighbor, despite the identity of their institutions and political idioms, by the principles and purposes behind her foreign policy...* Germany was to do murder and Russia was to share the estate. Some of the blackest chapters in European history record earlier experiments in this type of crime by the same partners...All that needs to be said now quite soundly is that they leave not the smallest scratch or dint upon the solidity of British and Allied purpose...Sympathy for Poland, which was warm and eager yesterday, is aflame today...⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Printed for the War Cabinet, "Anglo-Polish Secret Protocol of 1939," Archives reference no. CAB/66/63/62, British National Archives at the Kew: London, England.

⁸⁸ Foreign Diplomat Janusz Sleszyński, "Depiction of Anglo-Polish relations, March 1939-November 1943," Archives reference no. PRM 109/26, Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum: London, England.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Britain's unilateral guarantee of Poland's independence and territorial integrity became seriously questioned once the Soviet Union shifted their alliance. The Soviet Union posed the antithesis to Poland's interests in the relationship between the British and Polish government.⁹⁰ Besides defeating the Soviets and the Nazis, Poles wished to preserve Poland's independence and most, if not all, of her prewar eastern territories. Stalin's desire was not only to win the war but to claim the territories from both his arrangement with Hitler, and what he had acquired, through force, in 1939-1940: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The Poles feared that Stalin's territorial demands would amount to another partition. Strategically, the British's commitment of 1939, to assist Poland seemed rather illusory. Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax later contended that "...neither the Polish government nor the Rumanian government was under any illusion as to the measure of concrete help they might expect from Great Britain in the event of Hitler choosing war. For them as for us the guarantees were the best, indeed the only, chance of warning him off that decision."⁹¹ In regards to Romania, the British and German government on April 13th, 1939, had pledged to guarantee the independence of Romania. The British commitment to Poland had grave future implications which would resurface continuously throughout the war. The British guarantee of security implied that if Poland lost the war with Germany, as predicted, and the Allied powers ultimately prevailed, Poland would be liberated and restored within its prewar boundaries. Therefore, 'Poland's alliances would be a guarantee of ultimate victory.'⁹² Even General Kazimierz Sosnowski, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces believed that Poland would prevail for he states:

⁹⁰ George V. Kacewicz, *Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Polish Government in Exile 1939-1945* (London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), x.

⁹¹ Lord Halifax, *Fullness of Days* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1957), 205.

⁹² Anna M. Cienciala, *Poland and the Western powers 1938-1939: a study in the interdependence of Eastern and Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 1968), 239.

Poland's part in the war, however, has been by no means limited to the September campaign or to the subsequent struggles of her troops on various war fronts. The numerically strongest army under my command is the Underground army in tormented and terrorized Occupied Poland. Here again Poland was the first among the conquered countries to make steady progress in face of unbelievable difficulties and it carries out the task that are imposed on it with the utmost soldierly devotion. All in all, I may claim that during the past four years of war Poland has faithfully and fully discharged her obligations as an Ally among the United Nations. The soldiers of Poland have remained faithful to the watchword of Kosciuszko and Pulaski: "For our Freedom and Yours..."⁹³

Following the invasion of Poland, the Polish government wished to move to neutral Romania as a temporary refuge with the intent of re-establishing its operations. Colonel Joseph Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, inquired about the French attitude toward such a move to French Ambassador to Poland, Leon Noël, who indicated that his government was prepared to assist. Unfortunately, the seemingly uncomplicated journey through Romania turned into a controversial issue culminating in the downfall of the prewar government. Romanian Ambassador to Poland, Grigore Grigorcea, reported to Beck that "...the Romanian government agrees to the unofficial transfer through its territory of the Polish president and government to Constanța or any other point bordering on a neutral country; it asks only that the government travel quickly through Romania, without undue stopovers. With regard to Marshal Smigly-Rydz, the High command, and the Polish Army, there may be certain formal difficulties, but all will be allowed to transfer from Poland."⁹⁴

The British and American governments were indifferent to the internment of the Polish government on Romanian soil. According to William Bullitt, the United States Ambassador to France, the French and British governments had protested the Polish government's wish to move from Romania to France; neither London or Paris were particularly eager for the Polish

⁹³General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, "Poland has been a Faithful and Un-wearying Ally: four years of Ordeal and unbroken Resistance." Archives reference no. PRM 137/19, Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum: London, England

⁹⁴George V. Kaciewicz, *Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Polish Government in Exile 1939-1945*, 29.

government to move to France. Internally, some Polish opposition parties found refuge in Romania and saw an opportunity to replace a government which they held responsible for the demise of Poland. Future Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in Exile Edward Raczynski stated that, “the state of mind among the Poles in Romania was well known to me from eye-witness descriptions. The refugees who flocked into the country were bitterly critical of their government and the regime on which it was based. French diplomats, for example M. Noël, the Ambassador in Poland, were in favor of a change, both of regime and of personalities.”⁹⁵

Although the Polish government in exile finally reached Paris the French at this point were close to surrendering. In the summer of 1940, France was no longer a secure place for the Poles. Therefore, General Sikorski flew to London to pledge undying support to the Allied cause. At the invitation of the British government, the Polish government moved to London. On March 5th, 1941, the Polish government in exile’s legal status was defined by ‘a parliamentary grant of full diplomatic immunity and privileges to the members of the sovereign Allied governments and their official staffs through the Diplomatic Privileges (Extension) Act.’⁹⁶ On August 2nd, 1940, prior to granting official legal status to the Polish government in exile, the British government issued an internal memorandum by the Foreign Secretary in conjunction with the British War Cabinet to allow Polish military forces to assist the British military:

The annexed draft of the agreement between His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom and the Polish Government in regard to the organization and employment of the Polish forces has been prepared and approved by the Polish Forces (Official) Committee and has been negotiated and agreed by the respective departments with the representatives of the Polish Government.⁹⁷

The agreement between the government of Great Britain and the exiled governments operating on British soil can be contrasted to the Anglo-American Agreement of July 27th, 1942, which

⁹⁵ George V. Kacewicz, 32.

⁹⁶ Kacewicz, 44.

⁹⁷ Printed for the War Cabinet, “Agreement with the Polish Government 1940,” CAB/67/8/2, British National Archives.

allowed U.S. troops on British soil secured and immune from the jurisdiction of the British courts.

The greatest difficulty between the British and Polish governments was the role of the Soviet Union. In his memoirs Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated that, “the attitude of Russia to Poland lay at the root of our early relations with the Soviets.”⁹⁸ Joseph Kennedy, U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, noted that it would be more difficult than first conceived to restore Poland, to its prewar borders, after the war, now that the Soviet Union has attacked Poland. On June 26th and 27th, 1940, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Romania which demanded the cession of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Soviet Ambassador in Great Britain, Ivan Maisky explained the Soviet Union’s action to the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, noting that the new border with Poland included less territory than Russia held during tsarist times; therefore the Soviets felt that annexation of Bessarabia and Bukovina was well deserved.

The Anglo-Polish Agreement of 1939 did not guarantee Polish boundaries as they were on August 31st, 1939, but it did however restrict the “contracting parties from entering into obligations with a third state which could prejudice the interests of the other party.”⁹⁹ It was clear that Sikorski’s government was naturally mistrusting of Soviet intentions. Poland’s situation, however, was not unique during this time period for many smaller powers shared a similar fate. Therefore, the Poles could neither afford to anger London nor forsake Polish interests for the purpose of pleasing the British government. June 22nd, 1941, changed the playing field as Nazi Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Sikorski told Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador in Moscow, that he saw no real reason why Poland should not assist Russia if Germany decides to invade. Sikorski stated the following:

⁹⁸ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War Vol. III: The Grand Alliance* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 390.

⁹⁹ Kacewicz, 79.

A principle was adopted at the last meeting of the Council of Ministers according to which the first and main enemy of Poland was Germany, and that, should full Polish sovereignty be recognized within her prewar frontiers, cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union would be possible. As long, however, as Russia did not change her basic attitudes towards Poland and the Poles, we also would not change our line of policy, which is the policy of war against Russia, imposed on us by the latter.¹⁰⁰

It was increasingly clear that the restoration of the Polish state within her prewar boundaries was not high on Britain's priority list. Therefore, the Polish government in exile felt it necessary to establish a federation in Eastern Europe, resulting in the Polish-Czechoslovak Declaration Favoring Closer Political and Economic Association of November 11th, 1940. The federation was a form of *pactum de contrahendo* which committed both nations to closer association after the war and also permitted other states to join the agreement if they felt it necessary. In a letter Sir Philip Nichols, British Ambassador to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, to British diplomat William Strang stated:

In my conversation with Soviet Ambassador Alexandr Bogomolov, he had shown himself extremely suspicious of the Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation. Why, he enquired, is it necessary for the Czechoslovaks to bind themselves so closely to a nation which is doing all it can to make trouble for the Russians?...We know there are circles in England who are not sympathetic to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and we know that the Poles are doing what they can to ally themselves with these circles and to harm our interest...¹⁰¹

The first large Czechoslovak-Polish public meeting sponsored by the two governments took place in London in the *Dom Polski*, the Polish House on October 11, 1940. Both the Polish and Czechoslovak governments fully participated; on the British side such prominent figures as Minister of Economic Welfare Hugh Dalton and Sir Edward Kennard attended. Polish historian Piotr S. Wandycz recalls Professor Stanislaw Stroński, a member of Polish Cabinet, deliver a speech which stressed the common Czechoslovak-Polish heritage and past history; in this spirit Stroński prophesized a great future for the two countries when united. In this respect, Beneš issued the following principles of the confederation:

¹⁰⁰ Kacewicz, 86.

¹⁰¹ Dated 29th July 1942," FO 371/30828, British National Archives.

1. The sovereignty of Poland and Czechoslovakia will not be disturbed by the bond of the confederation, each country keeping its own head of state, parliament, government, army, etc.
2. Restriction of sovereignty will be chiefly directed to economic measures. There will be a common commercial policy, and a transport, customs and currency union.
3. There will be a common foreign policy, but the separate diplomatic representatives will remain.
4. Armaments and equipment will be identical and war production will accordingly be standardized.
5. The common organs of the Confederation will be: a. Council, composed of delegates of both states, including specially their Prime Ministers, ministers for foreign affairs, foreign trade, finance and transport. Its resolutions will be approved and carried out by both governments. b. A common General Staff, but the General Staff of each respective country will remain. c. A joint Committee of both parliaments, whose decisions will be submitted for approval to each parliament. d. An Economic and Trade Council.¹⁰²

The Polish government was hesitant in accepting Beneš' memorandum believing that it was limited in scope; Beneš believed that 'ethnographic' Poland was a preferable solution of all Polish problems, and his flexible viewpoint worried the Poles. The Polish government, believed, that Beneš should have offered further support for the eastern frontier considering that the Poles had offered support to the prewar Czechoslovak-Hungarian border. Sikorski highly believed that a united Czechoslovak-Polish front was the only way to stop future Russian attempts to impose Communism on both nations. Sikorski argued for a completely independent union vis-à-vis Russia. The Polish National Council in London, which functioned as a parliament in exile, approved the government's position in the December 22nd, 1940 resolution which stated the following:

The National Council declares that the Republic of Poland conducts its foreign policy in unchangeable basis of respect for rights of all nations, great and small, to an independent existence. Viewing the above principle as constituting the foundation of a lasting organization of Europe, Poland, cannot recognize any political facts that are based on violence, was perpetrated toward the lands and the population of the Republic, or towards other lands and the population of the Republic, or toward other lands and their peoples.¹⁰³

¹⁰² S. Wandycz, *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers, 1940-43*, 40.

¹⁰³ Wandycz, 42.

In spite of the undeniable differences, as early as 1941, the Czechoslovak-Polish friendship became increasingly visible. Professor Stroński stressed the growing amity between both nations and added that their cooperation was making an approbatory impression on the British and Americans. On March 1941, General Sikorski went to the United States and discussed with U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, FDR, regional organization of East-Central Europe. Roosevelt commended Sikorski on 'laying the foundation with Beneš for a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation.'¹⁰⁴

The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Germany ultimately changed Czechoslovak-Polish relations. Both Britain and the United States praised the Soviet ideas on postwar reorganization of East-Central Europe; therefore, their views on the planned Czechoslovak-Polish confederation began to lose color and verve. In another confidential letter between Philip Nichols and William Strang the following was reported:

You wrote to me on the 27th of August about the Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and Soviet suspicions of it, and you subsequently told me that any further information I could get on this subject would be useful. Yesterday I went down to the country to lunch with Beneš alone, and we had a conversation which lasted without a break from one o'clock till half past six. At that time the Czechs had already received indications that the Russians were not in favor of the Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation. Beneš accordingly invited Bogomolov to luncheon and sounded him out. As a result Bogomolov said that he was not in favor of the Confederation, but he spoke of 'Soviet circles' and not the Soviet government...Beneš pointed out that if this was indeed the attitude of his government it was up to them to explain matters to the Poles, the British, and the Americans. The Poles, however, remained in favor of the Czech-Polish Confederation.¹⁰⁵

Prior to the German invasion of Russia, the United States, according to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, based its attitude towards the Soviets on the following assumptions:

the United States should make no special approaches to Russia, and treat any approaches from her with reserve until America was satisfied that the Russians were not maneuvering to obtain unilateral concessions; nor should the American government sacrifice principles in order to better relations; finally, the Roosevelt Administration

¹⁰⁴ Wandycz, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Nichols to Strang, 19 September 1942," FO 371/30828, The National Archives, Kew.

should let Russia understand that the United States considered improved relations as important, if not more so, to Russia than to the United States.¹⁰⁶

U.S.-Soviet relations were yet to be defined as it was still unclear the role the Soviets would play during the war. As such, the U.S. was unwilling to support any group or federations which might strain future relations.

2.2: “Here Comes Uncle Sam:” U.S. entrance into WWII

The fate of Eastern Europe, following the end of the war, was a grave concern for the Soviet Union. The Soviets yearned to dictate the future role of its surrounding neighbors and this, in itself, is manifested through its stranglehold on Poland. Although the United States’ priorities lay elsewhere, the emerging superpower was still unwilling to simply allow the cession of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union. Yet, Poland had never loomed large in American foreign policy. The Polish Question only appeared in the American political arena as a subsidiary to questions posed by larger world powers. Back in the final days of WWI, Woodrow Wilson’s fourteen points had a global agenda which included ‘self-determination’ for and the consequent rebirth of Poland. However, the famous 13th point contained no provisions regarding the territorial definition of such a state. By the middle of the second war, the Polish Question appeared yet again on the agenda of U.S. leaders as part of the complicated endeavor to attain global balance at the cost of dividing Europe into spheres of great power influence.

It is impossible to ignore Poland’s historical role in Eastern Europe. However, history has a tendency to shape and re-shape the importance of a nation. Roosevelt “had little genuine concern for Poland.”¹⁰⁷ His attention to Poland increased together with the recognition that

¹⁰⁶ Wandycz, 56.

¹⁰⁷ Piotr Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 252.

postwar Europe would be based on the great powers' domination, therefore, leaving little room for smaller nations. World War II was a key demographic moment for the Polish-American community; there had been a large baby boom in many parishes in the 1910s and the 1920s. An example can be seen through the Holy Trinity parish in Utica, New York where over 2,000 parishioners, out of 5,000, served in uniform before the war. According to historian Mieczysław Haiman, during WWII, Poles made up about 4% of the U.S. population but made up 8.5% of its soldiers, sailors, and aircrews.¹⁰⁸ Roosevelt, however, could not ignore the 1940 census, which estimated that Poles comprised 8.4% of the 34.5 million Americans 'who were foreign born or native born of foreign or mixed parentage.'¹⁰⁹ The Slav community, as indicated by *The New York Times* in 1942, "represented 50% of the nation's industrial workers..."¹¹⁰ In industries such as coal mining, steel, electrical equipment, autos and rubber, Poles and their fellow Slavs composed a majority of the work force in many plants. In 1944, according to writer Eric Estovik, "...some three million Poles are concentrated in key war cities - Chicago, Buffalo, New York and are working in essential war industries. These Polish workers have considerable influence over other Slavs in America..."¹¹¹ Unfortunately, the large Polish communities lacked direct links to policy-making, which made it difficult for them to have their views represented in the government, particularly, in the White House and State Department. The Catholic Church, the Democratic Party and the industrial unions in these industrial states where large Polish communities resided were controlled primarily by the Irish.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Mieczysław Haiman, "The Polish American Contribution to World War II," *Polish American Studies* 3, no. 1-2 (1946), 36.

¹⁰⁹ Peter H. Irons, "'The Test is Poland': the Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War," *Polish American Studies* 30, no.2 (Autumn, 1973), 7.

¹¹⁰ "SLAVS HERE PLEDGE AID; American Group Sends Patriotic Address to Roosevelt," *New York Times*, 22 June 1942, p. 6.

¹¹¹ Eric Estovik, "Polish American Politics," *The Nation*, 20 May 1944, 6.

¹¹² Peter H. Irons, "'The Test is Poland': the Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War," 9.

By 1914, Ignacy Paderewski was the most significant political figure who represented the Polish-American community during WWI. Paderewski and Nobel Prize winning journalist Henryk Sienkiewicz established the *Comité general des victims de la guerre en Pologne*, commonly known as the Vevey Committee.¹¹³ The committee's purpose was to provide world - wide relief and elicit support for Poland; in addition, the committee re-posed the Polish Question before international public opinion hoping for sympathy. By 1915, both Paderewski and Sienkiewicz knew that Vevey's future needed filial branches in Western Europe, but especially in the United States. In March 1915, Paderewski traveled to the United States in order to rally support from the Polish community. In many ways, Paderewski proved to be a persuasive in mobilizing a well organized political lobby.¹¹⁴ The Polish-American community, through Paderewski's guidance, adopted a pro-Entente orientation towards the war. This newly developed attitude associated the victory of the Western Powers with Polish independence. By 1917, the Polish-American community was organized into a cohesive political lobby, the Polish National Department,¹¹⁵ under Paderewski's leadership. Immediately following U.S. entrance into WWI, President Wilson approved the creation of a Polish Army in the United States.

By the time of the interwar period, the Polish-American community began to focus their attention on internal affairs such as preservation of ethnic identification within the younger and American born section of the community. Although there were some attempts at maintaining ties to the homeland like the forming of the Kosciuszko Foundation in 1925, however, the community emphasized on ethnic life in the United States.¹¹⁶ Unlike the Irish, the Polish-

¹¹³ M.B. Biskupski, "Paderewski as Leader of American Polonia, 1914-1918," *Polish American Historical Association Vol.43*, no.1 (Spring, 1986): 37.

¹¹⁴ M.B. Biskupski, "Paderewski as Leader of American Polonia, 1914-1918

¹¹⁵ Wydział Narodowy Polski-WN

¹¹⁶ Donald E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish-American Efforts on Poland's Behalf 1863-1991* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 74.

American community dealt primarily with becoming ‘American.’ Also, during the height of the Polish Soviet war in 1920, American newspapers began to publish articles which focused on anti-Semitism perpetrated by the Poles overseas. Rabbi Stephen Wise, acting on behalf of the Committee of the Status of Jews in Eastern Europe, complained to President Wilson about the atrocities committed by the Poles on the Jewish population. Rabbi Wise along with Judge Julian Gustave Hartman and others met with Prince Lubomirski and Polish Consul General Stephen Grotowski to discuss the mistreatment of the Jews in Poland. The Jewish delegation deemed the following course of measure taken:

To issue immediate orders to the Polish Army forbidding attacks upon the persons or interference with the property of the Jewish inhabitants of Poland...[To] prohibit the display or dissemination of all posters, signs and placards and the circulation of all newspapers and other publications that may incite or tend to provoke attacks upon the Jews. To take such measures as shall be necessary to enforce several provisions of the Minority Treaty, and especially such as guarantee the racial, religious and linguistic minorities of Poland freedom from political or economic discrimination.¹¹⁷

The Jewish lobby was extremely influential in policy-making during this period. The mass killings in Poland at the time clearly had an adverse affect on the Polish-American community who wished to distance themselves from Poland. American historian Selig Adler characterized American foreign policy in relation to Poland by stating that, “Pro-Polish sentiment, so marked during the wartime, was dissipated as the Warsaw government persecuted racial minorities and pushed its boundaries eastward in blatant violation of the principle of national self-determination.”¹¹⁸ On March 10th, 1921, an honorary dinner was held for Paderewski by the Civic Forum at the Hotel Astor, in which, he praised the U.S. for its aid to Poland during its struggle with the Soviets. However, during the ceremony Louis Marshall, constitutional lawyer

¹¹⁷ “Envoy Pledges Aid to Jews in Poland,” *New York Times*, 12 November 1920, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ Piotr Wandycz, *The United States and Poland*, 168.

and Jewish community leader, inquired about the Jewish persecution in Poland. In response, Paderewski issued the following response:

Our country affords the noblest example of the blessings that result from absolute equality before the law, and I am confident that those born in Poland who have become American citizens will not only rejoice at the adoption by the new-Poland of the principles of equality, but out of gratitude will welcome any opportunity that may be afforded to them to co-operate with their brethren in the free and independent Republic of Poland to do whatever lies within their power to contribute to its happiness and prosperity.¹¹⁹

Clearly, based on Paderewski's remarks, the Poles hoped to change the opinion of the Jewish lobbyist who associated anti-Semitism with Poland. For the Polish-Americans these issues seemed far removed as becoming assimilated to U.S. society outweighed the problems overseas. However in 1923, the Polish economic situation began to rapidly decline. The United States wished to stabilize the economic devastation endured by Europe after the war. It was unclear whether or not the United States financial community wished to do business with Poland; the eventual American loan actually developed into a failure due to the economic competition between Poland and Germany.

It was not until WWII that the Polish-American community shifted its attention back to Poland. The Polish community relied on spokesmen from non-Polish institutions. As a result, their representatives lacked the same passion for Poland's future as the community they represented. Numerous Polish community leaders complained about the absence of Poles in high governmental positions; as a matter of appeasement Roosevelt in 1933 appointed M.S. Szymczak to the Federal Reserve Board who was later reappointed twice, once in 1936 and again in 1948.¹²⁰ While this appointment pleased the Polish community, it also reminded them of the scarcity of their representation. No Pole held any policy-making positions in the White House or

¹¹⁹ "Paderewski Hailed as Poland's Savior," *New York Times*, 10 March 1921, p. 13.

¹²⁰ <http://www.federalreserve.gov/BIOS/boardmembership.htm> accessed 23 May, 2009.

the State Department; in addition there were no Poles in the Senate until way after the war. During Roosevelt and Truman's presidency only a bloc of ten to twelve members of the House of Representatives were of Polish descent.¹²¹

The Polish-American community never fully trusted Sikorski and this was emblematic in their adamant admiration for Marshall Piłsudski. Although Piłsudski died in 1935, the most conservative elements in Polish politics remained known as 'Piłsudskiites.' This distrust in Sikorski is important because it remained consistent throughout the war. Their distrust stemmed from Sikorski's opposition to Marshall Piłsudski and was considered "insufficiently obdurate in defense of Polish claims," by many of Piłsudski's supporters.¹²² Piłsudski's heroic status was left unshaken in both the United States and in future independent Poland. Prior to the U.S. entering the war relations between Sikorski and Roosevelt were cordial. Roosevelt was clearly aware of the massive amount of support given to him by the Polish-American community. The Poles in the U.S. had aligned themselves with the Democratic Party since the end of World War I; this is largely due to Woodrow Wilson's influence. This large Democratic demography was important in the 1940 presidential election which would solidify Roosevelt's third term in office. Roosevelt ran against Republican businessman Wendell Willkie, who highly criticized Roosevelt's failure to end the Depression and willingness to go to war. Anthony Biddle Jr., who had been the American ambassador to Poland from 1937 to 1940, spoke on Roosevelt's behalf in 45 cities and 15 states prior to appealing to the Polish community. Biddle wrote to Roosevelt that at a meeting in Chicago 5,000 Poles were willing and ready to pledge absolute support.¹²³ In March 1941, Roosevelt asked newly elected Polish ambassador to the U.S., Jan Ciechanowski, to speak across the country and to "enlist the sympathy of all Americans" for Poland, while "showing the

¹²¹ Peter H. Irons, "'The Test is Poland': the Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War," 10.

¹²² Ibid, 10.

¹²³ Peter H. Irons, 11.

urgency of speeding up production of war material which our communists are trying to prevent.”¹²⁴ Roosevelt realized that the Polish-Americans were likely to be among the most active supporters of an interventionist foreign policy, he therefore stated that it was “not merely because they voted for me so overwhelming in the last three elections...they were very good citizens who were conscious of their duties.”¹²⁵ However, the 1944 election would prove to be the ultimate test in the Polish-American communities’ support for Roosevelt. This topic, however, will be re-introduced later in order to stay consistent with policies being enacted at the time.

By 1941, Polish-American organizations such as the Polish American Council, or *Rada Polonii Amerykanskiej* (RPA) had already, through the assistance of both the Red Cross and the State Department, sent 12,000 food packages per month to Polish POWs in Germany; such assistance was eventually ended by the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944.¹²⁶ Treasurer John Olejniczak reported that in the two and a half year period from November 1st, 1939 to April 23rd, 1943, the RPA had accumulated \$1,433,703 from the ethnic Polish community; in total, between 1939 and 1948 the RPA gathered \$11,434,958 in financial donations.¹²⁷ The RPA is only one example of a Polish-American organization which provided invaluable assistance to both Roosevelt’s campaign and to the Polish national cause. However, such public assistance did not guarantee an independent Poland with its prewar frontiers. American foreign policy was never dictated by the Polish-American community. However, the Polish-American community had enough support to obtain large amounts of donations and to form organizations which continuously bombarded Roosevelt’s desk with appeals on behalf of Poland.

¹²⁴ Irons, 12.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 12.

¹²⁶ Donald E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish-American Efforts on Poland’s Behalf 1863-1991*, 86.

¹²⁷ E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish-American Efforts on Poland’s Behalf 1863-1991*, 87.

The Poles, however, would never be seen as a formal ally that had to be taken seriously into consideration by the Americans. Although Roosevelt adhered to the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, his conduct was always misleading to the Poles; many were prone to contrast the ruthless Churchillian Realpolitik with American idealism. The Polish government in exile, never grasped the extent to which Roosevelt wished to avoid Soviet-British controversies and evade the Polish problem, which, in Anthony Eden's words, "terrified" the American administration due to the large Polish-American community.

The Poles were led to believe that Roosevelt would use his influence with the Soviets to support the Polish cause. This, however, would never come true. The Polish government in exile operated under the impression that Roosevelt's policies were more amenable to its representations than the British government. Upon accepting his appointment as Polish Ambassador, Jan Ciechanowski remarked, on March 6th, 1941:

...[If] at this time of our history, unworthy though I feel, I have accepted to undertake the great mission entrusted to me, it is because I have had once the privilege of representing my country in the United States, of interpreting its deep traditional friendship for the American people, of explaining its policies to the Government of this great democracy.¹²⁸

Ciechanowski's remarks indicate how much the Poles believed in America's desire to assist Poland and protect democracy. However reasonable this may sound, it is clearly not pragmatic in the context of the U.S.'s eventual mutual agreement with the Soviet Union on the future of Poland. Again the Polish government saw the inclusion of Poland in the 1941 Lend-Lease, which allowed the United States to ship military equipment, food, fuel, medical supplies, and services to its allies, and the \$12.5 million dollar grant for underground activities as a promising step towards genuine American interest in Poland.

¹²⁸ S. Shepard Jones and Denys P. Meyers ed., *Documents on American Foreign Relations Vol. III July 1940-June 1941* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), 441.

By this point, however, Roosevelt and his administration was trying to rally enough public support to provide necessary aid to the Soviets. The American population saw the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime which had no intention of liberating Europe, therefore, any support for aid became challenging. To appease the widespread opposition, the American government suggested to the Soviet Union to loosen its ban on religion, which would eventually occur but the image of the Soviet Union did not fundamentally change.

The Atlantic Charter, issued on August 14th, 1941, served as a method of reassurance for the American public. The Charter highlighted the American concern for the worldwide spread of Communism. At the same time, Roosevelt used the principles of the Atlantic Charter as slogans in order to ‘uphold’ Poland’s territorial integrity. Although these slogans were used, Roosevelt was careful not to obligate himself. His true intentions would only be revealed at Teheran and Yalta. The agreement signed by the Soviets and the Poles on July 30th, 1941 had sidestepped the territorial problem leading to the resignation of three right-winged members of the Polish cabinet, including Foreign Minister August Zaleski. The split in the Polish cabinet had large ramifications for the Polish-American community because of its damaging effects on official American support for the Polish claims against the Soviet Union.¹²⁹ The anti-Sikorski’s Poles in the U.S. launched a strong anti-Soviet campaign with the intent of forcing the American government to recognize the Polish border claim. Sumner Wells, undersecretary of State, told Ciechanowski that favorable Polish-Soviet relations “would considerably help to popularize the Soviets in American public opinion...especially the need for countering anti-Soviet feeling among isolationist and Catholic elements in America...”¹³⁰ The Roosevelt administration feared the anti-Soviet campaign initiated by American Poles and supported by other Eastern European

¹²⁹ Irons, 13.

¹³⁰ Jan Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1947), 30-32.

groups. In response, Welles established the Interdepartmental Committee on Foreign Nationality Problems (ICFNP) with the goal of counteracting these anti-Soviet movements; the committee met every two weeks under the leadership of Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle.

The ICFNP including not only members of the State Department but also individuals from the Office Strategic Services, the Department of Justice and the FBI, the War and Navy Departments, the Office of War Information, the Office of Civil Defense, the office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Office of the Censor.¹³¹ All these agencies dealt with any destructive factors which might be detrimental to war-time morale and with inter-ethnic internal unrest and disputes. The Office of Strategic Services Foreign Nationalities Branch collected 1600 reports, analyses, and memoranda on almost every aspect of Polish-American activities and opinions with regards to both the war effort, the Polish government in exile, and the rupture of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations in 1943.¹³² Publicly, the U.S. expressed its confidence in the loyalty of such immigrants however this confidence was merely a mirage. The State Department feared that these communities, which composed one-quarter of some 35,000,000 people, were easily susceptible to foreign politicians. The following decree was issued by the State Department in 1941:

The government of the United States does not look with favor on any activities designed to divide the allegiance of any group of American residents between the United States and any foreign government, in existence or in prospect. The first concern of the United States must always be the unity of its country, based on the American way of life...In general the government of the United States does not favor "free movements" or groups representing such movements which carry on activities contrary to the government of the United States.¹³³

¹³¹ Irons, 14.

¹³² Robert Szymczak, "Uneasy Observers: The OSS Foreign Nationalities Branch and Perceptions of Polish Nationalism in the United States during World War II," *Polish American Studies* 56, no. 1 (Spring, 1999): 7.

¹³³ Robert Szymczak, "Uneasy Observers: The OSS Foreign Nationalities Branch and Perceptions of Polish Nationalism in the United States during World War II," 8.

As a result the Foreign Nationalities Branch, FNB, closely watched the Polish-American community as the acrimonious international debate over the future of Poland continued. The Polish-American by 1943 consisted of nearly five million people with over 10,000 fraternal and cultural organizations, nine daily newspapers, dozens of other publications, and nine congressmen.¹³⁴ The FNB reported that the majority of Polish-Americans supported the Polish government in exile, and hope to see the reconstruction of an independent Poland within its prewar boundaries. In the spring of 1943, the FNB warned the Roosevelt administration that the Polish-American community was preparing itself to defend the legitimacy of the Polish London government in the face of the Soviet Union. The FNB reports had a tendency to refer to the Polish-Americans as, “a fractious lot, hampered by organizational, personal, and political rivalries.”¹³⁵ In one such report the following was stated:

At first glance, one receives the impression that Polish political life has been transferred, without change, to American soil. The same parties, the same ideologies, remain; and the struggles between their several orientations are; also alive and perhaps more violent than they were in Poland. We find in America Polish nationalists, democratic Christians, progressives and socialists. Also, the fundamental division between the pro- and anti-Piłsudskiites, which has been a characteristic feature of Polish political life for thirty years, reappears here almost unchanged, with the same struggles between personalities, the same polemic violence. One would say that a Little Poland has formed itself on American soil to continue its old way of life.¹³⁶

Regardless of the various types of Polish-Americans it was clear, as indicated by Stephen P. Mizwa, director of the Kosciuszko Foundation, that “they are all, I can literally say, 100% for Roosevelt and all his foreign and domestic policies...The Polish-Americans have a sort of religious faith in Roosevelt...so far as Roosevelt is concerned the Atlantic Charter is the Bible by which they are willing to swear.”¹³⁷ The Polish-American community also had faith in Churchill

¹³⁴ Robert Szymczak, 12.

¹³⁵ Szymczak, 16.

¹³⁶ “General Survey of Political Groups Among Polish-Americans,” April 18, 1942, OSS-FNB RG 226.

¹³⁷ “The Polish-Americans, Their Sympathies and Antipathies,” August 25, 1942, OSS-FNB RG 226.

but they were unwilling to swear on his policies as with Roosevelt. Over one million Polish Americans served in the U.S. military during WWII; for example, in some Polish parishes, over 40% of all parishioners were in uniform by spring 1944. In Dudley and Webster, Massachusetts, Polish Americans, for example, made up 28.3% of its population but 48.9% of all its servicemen and women.¹³⁸ Another example can be seen at St. Stanisław Kostka in Hudson, New York, where 99 out of 300 parishioners were in the military. Since the Polish American community was so heavily involved in provide man-power, they hoped that their military service and loyalty would be returned in the U.S. protection of Poland. The Polish-American community was fearful of the Soviet Union's intentions however, they were careful during this time period to convey their opinions publicly. Roosevelt's administration wanted to contain any anti-Soviet sentiments in order to maintain good relations with the Soviets.

The greater the role of the Soviet Union became the more the United States wished to establish closer relations. The Polish Question was a poignant wrench in the diplomatic mechanics between the US and the Soviet Union. The British, similarly, had the same issues to deal with especially since the Polish government in exile was situated in London, and that Great Britain had formally entered the war in 1939 to honor its guarantee for Poland. The extent of the Polish government in exile's influence over British policy-making is not fully known. However, the British, like the Americans, were not willing to risk damaging relations with the Soviet Union on behalf of the Polish cause. Churchill was placed in a difficult position because of his proximity to the Polish government in exile, therefore, his aims tended to be more carefully stated than U.S. policies. The Teheran and Yalta Conference are the true test in whether or not the United States would defend and fight for Poland's wishes. Roosevelt's diplomatic policies are revealed to the global community and to the Polish-American communities during these

¹³⁸ Mieczysław Haiman, "The Polish American Contribution to World War II," 37.

conferences, especially Yalta. Too many Polish-Americans these conferences symbolize the betrayal of the United States in safe-guarding their promise to advocate and strive for an independent Poland with its prewar frontiers.

2.3 The U.S. Attitude to Soviet Demands in Teheran and Yalta:

Teheran and Yalta became two extremely distinctive conferences in the minds of many Polish-Americans. Yalta, in particular for Polish-Americans, constituted a betrayal of Poland and a violation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Both these conferences were monumental in highlighting the future role the Soviet Union would play in Poland. For Polish-Americans it illuminated the dark side of politics.

The Poles had endured three enormous blows by the spring of 1943: first, increased complications in the diplomatic relations with the Soviets, second, the arrest by the Gestapo of the commander of the Home Army Stefan Paweł Rowecki, and third, the death of General Sikorski; in addition, on April 13th, the Nazis discovered the mass graves at Katyn and identified the Soviets as the culprits of this horrid crime.¹³⁹ In response, the Soviets accused the Sikorski government in collaborating with the Nazis by propagandizing the Katyn massacre as a Soviet outrage. Prior to these accusations, Polish-Soviet relations had already veered towards rupture. The Katyn massacre became the necessary pretext for the Soviets to further the dispute over the question of the Soviet-Polish border. Roosevelt and Biddle wanted the Sikorski government to issue internal changes and to curb the anti-Soviet campaigns of Polish organizations abroad. The Roosevelt administration wanted London to deal with the restoration of Polish-Soviet relations; in a telegram to Stalin, Roosevelt stated that “Churchill would make the Poles act with

¹³⁹ Wandycz, 265.

more common sense.”¹⁴⁰ In a 1943 survey conducted by the FNB of the Polish language press in America, “for the purpose of estimating and interpreting the powerful domestic forces playing on American foreign policy at this critical juncture,”¹⁴¹ concluded that the Polish American community’s newspapers portray and “influence the actions of the largest politically-active foreign nationality group in the United States.”¹⁴²

Roosevelt left for Teheran with no established guarantees to the Polish government in exile and the Polish-American community. The conference, was held from November 27th to December 2nd, 1943, and covered an array of issues which had a profound effect on postwar Europe. Two major questions were resolved at Teheran: first, Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of France, and second, the Polish Question. The Polish Question was still a difficult one to discuss among the three leaders. However, it was Churchill who insisted on raising the subject to Stalin at Teheran. Churchill wished to reconfirm the Soviet support for an extension of Poland up to the Oder Line. Stalin, as he had done in his December 1941 meeting with Foreign Secretary Eden, insisted on his 1939 frontier with Poland. Roosevelt remained silent during the discussion of Poland because of the upcoming elections. Churchill agreed with Stalin asserting that “if some reasonable formula could be devised” he would discuss the issue with the Polish government in exile and “without telling them that the Soviet Government would accept such a solution, would offer it to them as probably the best they could obtain.”¹⁴³ Although silent during the actual precession, Roosevelt closeted himself with Stalin in order to express his views on the subject. The following meeting took place at Roosevelt’s quarters at the Soviet Embassy at 3:20 pm and was recorded by Roosevelt’s translator Chester Bohlen:

¹⁴⁰ Wandycz, 265.

¹⁴¹ Szymczak, 32

¹⁴² Ibid, 32.

¹⁴³ Francis L. Loewenheim, Harold D. Langley and Manfred Jonas ed., *Roosevelt and Church: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC, 1975), 396.

The President said he had asked Marshal Stalin to come to see him as he wished to discuss a matter briefly and frankly. He said it referred to internal American politics. He said that we had an election in 1944 and that while personally he did not wish to run again, if the war was still in progress, he might have to. He added that there were in the United States from six to seven million Americans of Polish extraction, and as a practical man, he did not wish to lose their vote. He said personally he agreed with the views of Marshal Stalin as to the necessity of the restoration of a Polish state but would like to see the Eastern border moved further west and the Western border moved even to the River Oder. He hoped, however, that the Marshal would understand that for political reasons outlined above, he could not participate in any decision here in Tehran or even next winter on this subject, and that he could not publicly take part in any such arrangement at the present time.¹⁴⁴

Roosevelt feared public outcry by the Polish-American community in response to the decisions made at Teheran. The Big Three had decided on a course which would be imposed on the Polish government in exile: that Poland would be compensated in the west for territory lost in the east. British historians such as Isaac Deutscher would remark on the Teheran Conference as a victory, in Stalin's eyes, for the Soviet Union. Churchill had the unfortunate task of having to inform the Polish government in exile, now under the leadership of Premier Stanisław Mikołajczyk, of the resolutions concluded at Teheran. Churchill tried to convince Mikołajczyk that these boundary changes were for the best and that Poland's new extended western frontier stood as a protectorate. The unfavorable decisions at Teheran were not felt entirely in the United States because of Roosevelt's secrecy during the conference. However, the Yalta Conference would serve as the spring board of outcry by the Polish-American community because of the perceived iniquity of the decisions.

"FDR Betrayed all at Yalta, Poles Charge,"¹⁴⁵ is an indication of the immediate reaction to the decisions finalized at Yalta. The conference was convened from February 4th to 11th, 1945 to discuss Europe's postwar reorganization. The Polish-American community, in conjunction with the Polish government in exile, bitterly criticized Roosevelt's failures at Yalta to ensure the

¹⁴⁴ Roosevelt to Stalin, 1 December 1943," FRUS Tehran Conference p. 594, The National Archives, College Park.

¹⁴⁵ "FDR Betrayed all at Yalta, Poles Charge," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 March 1945, p. 5.

1939 Polish boundaries in the east. The Allied leaders verified that the Curzon Line would be the boundary between Poland and the Soviet Union; although this decision had been made at Teheran it was made public during Yalta. In addition to the Curzon Line, the Big Three also decided that the so-called Lublin Poles, now installed in Warsaw and recognized by the Soviets as the ‘true’ government of Poland, would “be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad.”¹⁴⁶ Ironically, the 1944 elections and the fears about the Polish-American vote proved to be baseless; more than 90% of the Polish-American community voted for Roosevelt. Republican and one of the vice presidents of the Polish American Congress Frank Januszewski explained to Senator Arthur Vanderberg that “a great majority of Polish voters here distinguished quite clearly the difference between national and international politics. Poland is very dear to them but the United States is much dearer.”¹⁴⁷ However, following Yalta, sharp criticism from the Polish American Congress ensued. The Polish American Congress *Bulletin* declared that “we want to be on record in claiming that America has lost her way that we have again missed, miscalculated, squandered, frustrated, and deeply hurt the heart and soul of America.”¹⁴⁸ It was clear that the tripartite commission¹⁴⁹, formed to supervise affairs in Eastern Europe, would not ensure an equal status of power between the United States and the Soviet Union in influence over Eastern Europe. Although not immediately evident, the Yalta Conference would serve as a pivotal point in Soviet dominance over postwar Poland. The Republican Party in the United States criticized the boundary decision made by Roosevelt. Some Republicans felt that Roosevelt had abused his

¹⁴⁶ Richard C. Lukas, “The Polish American Congress and the Polish Question, 1944-1947,” *Polish American Studies* 38, no. 2 (Autumn, 1981): 43.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Richard C. Lukas, “The Polish American Congress and the Polish Question, 1944-1947,” 44.

¹⁴⁹ Consisted of Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. The commission was established in order to assist in the placement of non-communists in the pro-Soviet Lublin regime. This was done in response to Stalin’s unwillingness to allow free elections in Poland.

executive authority with his pro-Soviet leanings.¹⁵⁰ Eventually, the Republican Party would use the Polish-American disaffection with the Roosevelt Administration in order to break the traditional habit of the Polish community to vote for the Democratic Party; such a large body of voters would prove very useful in upcoming congressional elections. The Republican Party quickly responded to the politics of Yalta. Even though one of the primary Republican spokesmen, Senator Arthur Vandenberg Michigan, was unwilling to challenge the Roosevelt administration's decisions on the new policies in Eastern Europe, both Senator Robert Taft of Ohio and Governor Thomas Dewey of New York sought to capitalize on the Polish-American cause as a mean of gaining hopeful support for their presidential aspirations.¹⁵¹ For example, in May 1945, Taft spoke in front of 3,000 Poles in New York while Dewey in a telegram to the Coordinating Committee of American Polish Associations stated that:

It would be an ironic tragedy unsurpassed in modern history should the brave and gallant Polish nation, which was the first to bear the full weight of our enemy's attack and whose sacrifices and loyalty to the common cause have inspired us all, be now destroyed.¹⁵²

In addition to Dewey's telegram, he also offered support to Bor-Komorowski's nationwide tour in 1946. The wave of Polish-America outcry, as manifested through the newspapers, swept the nation as citizens vented and pleaded with the government to not allow Poland's future to be dictated by the Soviet Union. The Polish American Congress in particular sent numerous petitions and letters to the White House demanding repudiation of existing agreements.

¹⁵⁰ Athan Theoharis, "The Republican Party and Yalta: Partisan Exploitation of the Polish American Concern over the Conference, 1945-1960," *Polish American Studies* 28, no.1 (Spring, 1971), 7.

¹⁵¹ Robert D. Ubriaco Jr., "Bread and Butter Politics or Foreign Policy Concerns? Class versus Ethnicity in the Midwestern Polish American Community during the 1946 Congressional Elections," *Polish American Studies* 51, no. 2 (Autumn, 1994), 12.

¹⁵² "Firmness on Soviet Demanded by Taft," *New York Times*, 21 May 1946, p. 6.

Chapter III: The 'Fourth Partition'

3.1 President Truman and Polish Question at Potsdam

On March 2nd, 1945, upon his return to the United States, President Roosevelt addressed Congress on the results of the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt's physical appearance had drastically deteriorated and this was visible to Congress during his address. When speaking about Poland, Roosevelt expressed contentment with the level of success that was reached in establishing an independent Poland. As stated by Roosevelt, "steps were taken at Yalta to reorganize the existing provisional government in Poland on a broader democratic basis, so as to include democratic leaders now in Poland and those abroad. This new reorganized government will be recognized by all of us as the temporary government in Poland."¹⁵³ However, six weeks after the Yalta Conference, Stalin began to default on many of his obligations. Roosevelt told future assistant Secretary of Defense Anna Rosenberg on March 23rd that "we can't do business with Stalin. He has broken every one of the promises he made at Yalta."¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Stalin was clinging to the absolute legitimacy of the Lublin government and Molotov refused to have election observers in Poland. The issue of Poland, which would resurface during the Potsdam Conference, would not be resolved during Roosevelt's lifetime. On April 12th, 1945, President Roosevelt died, while in office, leading to massive grieving across the nation and the world. His death was shocking for his medical condition was not fully exposed to the public during his declining months. Regardless, Roosevelt would be remembered as one of the greatest American presidents alongside others such as Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

¹⁵³ "Report of President Roosevelt in Person to the Congress on the Crimea," *New York Times*, 2 March, 1945, p. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 1096.

Harry Truman had only been vice president for roughly 82 days before Roosevelt's death. In accordance with the Constitution, Truman was sworn into office on April 12th, 1945, following the death of the former president. Truman had had little interaction with Roosevelt, therefore his domestic and international policies were not an extension of Roosevelt's. Under the advice of Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Harriman, and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, Truman received a variety of opinions and strategies. Regarding Poland, Secretary of War Henry Stimson did not see the significance of the Polish crisis for the United States. Truman, however, felt that the agreements, so far, with the Soviet Union had been a one-way street and that a firmer attitude needs to be asserted towards the Soviets. An example can be seen with Truman's refusal to allow a representative from the Polish Provisional Government to attend the United Nations sessions in San Francisco. The Polish American Congress hoped that Truman would take a tougher stance towards the Soviet Union in defense of Poland. However, it became clear to the Polish American Congress that once the government in Warsaw was established under the Yalta formula, the U.S. would pay less attention to the Polish Question and would be unwilling to take drastic measures to ensure fair and free elections in Poland. Rozmarek tried to persuade Truman to guarantee Allied supervision of the Polish Elections, yet this attempt was fruitless. At this point, the United States had no special interest in Poland or its government; significantly, their only concern was that postwar structures in Poland would not be as friendly to the Soviets as necessary in order to maintain peace. In the period 1945-48, the United States did monitor Soviet policy in Eastern Europe in order to view their willingness to cooperate on numerous international issues. During this time, Eastern Europe stood as a symbol of whether the wartime grand alliance could survive.¹⁵⁵ Many of the Eastern European lobbyists,

¹⁵⁵ Stephen A. Garrett, *From Potsdam to Poland: American Policy toward Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 11.

in the U.S., had been able in 1945 to effectively delay action against Administration plans to stabilize relations with the Communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. One example is seen from the President of the Bulgarian Nation Front, founded in 1947, Ivan Doceff who emphasized that the movement was the “strongest Bulgarian anti-Communist organization in exile,” and that its ability to persuade others was shown through “the mass demonstration and memorandums signed by thousands.”¹⁵⁶ Doceff’s optimism towards U.S. foreign policy declined during the Truman administration, as Eastern Europe slowly was engulfed by the Soviet sphere of influence. Doceff thought that in order to change foreign policy he had to mobilize the Bulgarian voters in the United States to pressure politicians into sympathy; unfortunately, Doceff underestimated not only the small number of Bulgarian voters but also the shifting U.S. foreign policy towards Eastern Europe. Similar to the Bulgarian-Americans, the Polish-Americans had difficulty rallying enough influential support to alter foreign policy. The Polish American Congress was successful during the 1940’s in gaining sympathy from the American public because of their hostility towards the Soviet Union. Professor Lester Milbrath of the University of Buffalo remarked on this issue:

The ability of interest groups specializing in foreign policy to affect broad public opinion on foreign policy was severely limited. Compared to the power of the President in this respect, their direct impact on opinion is miniscule...the basic difficulty is that few people listen to group propaganda. Only as part of a concerted campaign, in close collaboration with public officials, are group propaganda efforts likely to attract sufficient attention to have even a slight effect.¹⁵⁷

In reality these ethnic lobbyist groups had little to no affect on American diplomacy. Ironically, this attitude towards ethnic lobbyist groups contradicted the principles of the United States. American historian John Snetsinger argued that:

¹⁵⁶ Stephen A. Garrett, *From Potsdam to Poland: American Policy toward Eastern Europe*, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Lester W. Milbrath, “Interest Groups and Foreign Policy, in *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. James Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1967), 250.

The right of ethnics to lobby for policies they desire no longer seems questionable. Why is the attempt by ethnic minorities to influence the direction of foreign policy and less legitimate than the lobbying efforts of any number of economic interest groups? Why should it be any less legitimate to vote from ethnic considerations than for economic or social reasons?¹⁵⁸

Snetsinger's argument is valid, however, not plausible considering the little affect these lobbyist had on U.S. foreign policies. The putative ethnic pressures on American diplomacy toward one's homeland are simply a tactic to gain internal respect. An example being the phenomenon of Polish jokes in the U.S. It was been argued that these jokes have had profound affects on the Polish-American community. Such an influence had halted the desire for some Polish-Americans to dismiss their Polish heritage and to become fully assimilated.¹⁵⁹ Such mental dismantling causes ethnic lobby groups to question their role and influence in American society. Following WWII an entirely new generation of Polish immigrants immigrated to the United States; their arrival caused strains between immigrant generations. According to Polish-American sociologist Feliks Gross, the new Polish immigrant was political and "even those who were not 'politically active' had to escape because of political changes in their homeland and this fact also left its mark on affiliations, attitudes and interests."¹⁶⁰ These new arrivals expected all of the Polish-American community to fight for Poland; many émigrés moved to the U.S. in order to await Poland's liberation. This massive immigrant generation was not welcomed as an elite of political exiles but as future workers and U.S. citizens.¹⁶¹ Upon arrival this new generation became quickly disillusioned with the notion that the society they had pictured, one which wanted to protect Poland's future, had not come to fruition. Instead they found a society that

¹⁵⁸ Garrett, 47.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen A. Garrett, 40.

¹⁶⁰ Feliks Gross, "Notes on the Ethnic Revolution and the Polish Immigration in the U.S.A.," *The Polish Review* 21:3 (1976), 161.

¹⁶¹ Stanislaus A. Blejwas, "Old and New Polonias: Tensions within an Ethnic Community," *Polish American Studies* 38, no.2 (Autumn, 1981), 78.

subjected them to derogatory terms like *Polack*. The new arrivals viewed the old Polonia as assimilated and “Americanized.”

By July 16th, 1945, the Potsdam Conference, held at Cecilienhof in occupied Germany, was underway and issues concerning postwar Europe were being discussed. In addition to many postwar territorial disputes, the Polish Question once again arose. Stalin urged that the case of the Polish Government should be given a hearing. The proposal of the Polish Government for the Oder-Neisse Line must be either accepted at Potsdam, according to Stalin, or representatives of the Warsaw government must be invited to present their case.¹⁶² Churchill, however, believed that the border issue should not be discussed at Potsdam but at a later date; he knew that the Oder-Neisse Line would not only be bad for Poland but would disrupt the Germany economy due to the massive degree of the resulting German resettlement. By 1945-46, roughly 4 million Poles lived within the Recovered Territories; additionally, 2 million Germans reamed in the Recovered Territories making a balance in population difficult to accomplish. On February 14th, 1946, the first Polish population census was conducted and revealed that 2,725,000 newly arrived Poles had entered the Recovered Territories.¹⁶³ This new influx of Poles in addition, to the 1.5 million permanently residing Polish population, challenged and lead to revisions of Poland’s newly acquired territories. Hostilities between the Poles and Germans completely changed the structuring of the Recovered Territories. By 1957, seven and a half million Poles were living in the Recovered Territories, including more than two million children already born in these territories during WWII.¹⁶⁴ These population changes were implemented under the provisions of the Potsdam Conference. Whether or not Poland agreed it followed the necessary

¹⁶² Wolfgang Wagner, *The Genesis of the Oder-Neisse Line: A Study in the Diplomatic Negotiations during World War II* (Germany: Brentano-Verlag Stuttgart, 1957), 143.

¹⁶³ Alfons Klafkowski, *The Potsdam Agreement* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1963), 256.

¹⁶⁴ Alfons Klafkowski, *The Potsdam Agreement*, 257.

procedures laid out by the Allied Powers. Poland, although, wished to contribute its claims during the conference. On April 10th, 1947, for example, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Adam Tarnowski stated the following to the other powers in order to define Poland's claims during the conference:

...as regards the American delegation, it was second, after the USSR, to approve the Polish frontiers on the Oder and Neisse. When President Truman was reading the decision of the Big Three concerning Poland's frontier in the West, he stressed explicitly that the formulation "under Polish administration" was only a formal expression, since the formulation of "frontier" is a matter for the peace conference. This is why the decision concerning Poland's frontiers on the Oder and Neisse, taken in Potsdam, was considered by all the signatories as final, calling for the formal endorsement by the peace conference...¹⁶⁵

This statement according to the Poles constitutes a basis for the demand to validate Poland's rights to the areas up to the Oder and Lusatian Neisse, and to provide guarantees of international recognition of that frontier. First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party Władysław Gomułka, in one of his speeches¹⁶⁶ in regards to the recognition of Poland's claims, stated that "...Poland has not only been waiting for it for a long time, but had every right to demand it from the western states. We should receive such an act with profound satisfaction..."¹⁶⁷ The discussion came to a standstill in which each side held firmly to their opinions. Truman was in favor of postponing this decision until the Foreign Ministers' Conference which would take place in September. The British Government did not wish to wait that long; Churchill agreed that the new Poland should advance her frontier to the Oder but not to the Neisse. Truman could not

¹⁶⁵ Klafkowski, 268.

¹⁶⁶ Report of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers made on March 10th, 1959, at the Third Congress of the PUWP.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 268.

consent to Polish occupation of parts of Germany which “had been carried through before the peace treaty and without consulting the ‘Big Three.’”¹⁶⁸

On July 24th, the delegation from the Polish Government, President Bolesław Bierut, the deputy Prime Minister Mikołajczyk and Foreign Minister Wincenty Rzymowski, presented themselves to the Foreign Ministers. Bierut argued and defended Poland’s claim to East Germany; in addition, Bierut remarked that Poland, including the whole of the territory she claimed, would still be smaller than before the war. Mikołajczyk also supported the view that Poland should be awarded the territory as far as the Neisse. The Polish-American community was unsure whether Mikołajczyk’s participation in the Warsaw regime was a treacherous decision or a selfless patriotic act. Regardless of the disputes, the Polish American Congress persevered. By the fall of 1945, the number of affiliates reached 3,832 fraternals, local societies, clubs, and parishes dispersed throughout twenty-eight states. The Polish American Congress sided with the prevailing opinion of Dr. Starzyński of the Polish Falcons, who told the FNB that “I and my people are fully convinced that Mikołajczyk knew what he was doing when he accepted a post in the Lublin [Warsaw] Government.”¹⁶⁹ Mikołajczyk, the Polish-American Congress vice president stated, “is a nationalist and Poland not being able to express its own will, Mikołajczyk can at least be depended upon to do all the good that can be done.”¹⁷⁰ This opinion of Mikołajczyk was not shared by every Polish-American organization. Rozmarek had become a vociferous critic of American foreign policy for he blamed Poland’s status as a Soviet satellite on the U.S. government. By steering clear of the Mikołajczyk controversy, Rozmarek hoped to keep the Polish American Congress unified.

¹⁶⁸ Wolfgang Wagner, *The Genesis of the Oder-Neisse Line: A Study in the Diplomatic Negotiations during World War II*, 144.

¹⁶⁹ Szymczak, 65.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 65.

The Polish Government feared that the pressure from the Soviets and their Polish confidants would overwhelm the United States and Great Britain. Secretary of State James Byrnes in a conversation with Molotov, at which Truman was present, proposed an American-Soviet agreement which would allow Poland to administer the territories as far as the Oder and the Eastern Neisse.¹⁷¹ Molotov would not concede, arguing that he did not wish to give Poles control over an area which was already under Soviet control. Both the U.S. and Great Britain were unable to convince or persuade the Soviets to grant concessions which might give Poland semi-autonomy.

Truman, during his August 9th, 1945, radio address declared that the United States in Potsdam had been naturally bound to certain compromises which were already agreed upon at Yalta in respects to the Polish Question. In the spirit of compromise, Truman mentioned that a section of Germany would be given to Poland “for administrative purposes,” and that nearly every international agreement has in it the element of compromise. The agreement on Poland is no exception. No one nation can expect to get everything it wants. It is a question of give and take...of being willing to meet your neighbor half-way.”¹⁷² In response, the Polish American Congress saw this statement as a confirmation of the “partition of an Allied nation and the destruction of her legal government.”¹⁷³ The members of the Polish American Congress demanded that the United States withdraw its recognition of the Warsaw regime; this was dependent on the outcome of actual democratic elections under Allied supervision. Historian Richard Lukas noted:

Rozmarek urged Truman to insist upon guarantees that would enable Allied supervision of the Polish elections. No such guarantees had been provided at Yalta, and Truman did no press the matter in Potsdam. Whatever opportunity may have still been left to alter the

¹⁷¹ Wolfgang Wagner, 146.

¹⁷² Wagner, 149.

¹⁷³ Szymczak, 66.

conditions that would make Poland more independent was lost as the Potsdam Conference when the United States failed to link its agreement to the Odra-Nysa River line to concessions from the Communist side concerning the political future of Poland.¹⁷⁴

The growing antagonism between the Polish American Congress towards the new regime change was heightened with the appointment of Oskar Lange as the new Polish ambassador to Washington in October 1945. An appeal was issued by the National Committee of Americans of Polish extraction (KNAPP)'s New York Division which promised the following in response to the placement on the Warsaw officials:

The doors to our meetings and manifestations shall be closed to them because they do not represent what is good and noble in the Polish nation, they do not represent the traditions of the nation which never in its history submitted voluntarily to foreign domination, but has always fought for its independence, valuing its freedom above everything.¹⁷⁵

Such hostility on the part of the Polish-American community was not received well by the general public. Many Americans were confused by this embitterment for they felt that the overall triumph of the Allied powers over the Axis should serve as a major victory for the United States. The outcry by the Polish American Congress was often seen as anguished ranting from a disgruntled ethnic group who was too concerned with sectarian interest as opposed to the greater good of the American nation. The continued bombardment of the Truman administration by petitions proved useless and only caused significant rifts between the general public and the Polish American community. The American public was appreciative and sympathetic to the costly Soviet contribution to victory; in addition, they realized that the Rooseveltian vision of a better a more secure post-war world was much more important than the internal resentment of one ethnic group. The Foreign Nationalities Branch, which was still tracking the Polish-American community, was unable at this point to monitor the eventual transition of the Polish

¹⁷⁴ Pienkos, 121.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 66.

American Congress into an anti-Communist lobby. However, during the FNB's existence, nearly 16,000 field reports, memoranda, and analytical studies were produced on more than two dozen ethnic groups. Of these 16,000 reports, 1,560 (10%) were studies on Polish-American activities.¹⁷⁶ Many focused on the Polish American communities' response to both Yalta and Potsdam. By the end of the Potsdam Conference, the Polish-American community had felt betrayed by the United States and their strong resentment was reflected in national newspapers across the nation. Prior to the April 1947 Council of Foreign Ministers meeting, the *Głos Ludowy*¹⁷⁷ had branded the Oder-Neisse line as the "acid test" for the Polish-Americans to either show themselves as "genuine sons of Poland," or "pro-German fascists."¹⁷⁸ In sections of the Midwestern industrial belt, in 1946, Polish-Americans began to question the incorporation of Eastern Europe into the Soviet satellite system leading to an ethnic revival in Milwaukee, Chicago, Michigan, etc. Many Polish-Americans started to re-consider their membership in the Democratic Party's New Deal coalition. Both Roosevelt's and Truman's conciliatory position towards Stalin's subjugation of Poland caused many Polish-American leaders to accuse the Democrats of "abandoning Poland's right to postwar independence at the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences."¹⁷⁹ Even though WWII sparked an ethnic revival within the Polish-American community, working-class Poles did not share the same apprehensions exhibited by the middle-class. For example, the Polish-American CIO¹⁸⁰ labor leader, Leo Krzycki was sympathetic to the Soviet activity in Eastern Europe. Krzycki believed that Stalin would eliminate the aristocratic influence in Poland and usher in a new 'progressive' force. Under this

¹⁷⁶ Szymczak, 67.

¹⁷⁷ "The People's Voice," a Polish-American newspaper.

¹⁷⁸ "Treachery in Time of Crisis," *Głos Ludowy*, English Version, January 18th, 1947, p.2.

¹⁷⁹ Robert D. Ubriaco Jr., "Bread and Butter Politics or Foreign Policy Concerns? Class versus Ethnicity in the Midwestern Polish American Community during the 1946 Congressional Elections," *Polish American Studies* 51, no. 2 (Autumn, 1994), 6.

¹⁸⁰ Congress of Industrial Organizations

belief, Krzycki tried to rally working-class Poles into accepting the legitimacy of Stalin's claims in Poland.¹⁸¹ The middle-class, however, consider Krzycki's ideas as a "fifth column whitewash movement dominated by communists,"¹⁸² which supported a regime that was destroying Poland's chance for future independence. In May 1946, the Polish American Congress invited General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski to speak before 200,000 passionate Poles in Chicago's Humboldt Park to commemorate of the 155th anniversary of the Polish constitution. The sheer number of participants indicates the persistent devotion of Polish-Americans who still wanted to fight for Poland's independence and postwar frontiers.

In 1951, labor organizers Stanley Nowak and Krzycki sent a memorandum to the State Department which conveyed the concern, of the Polish-American community, that the new shift in American foreign policy toward the rebuilding of Germany at Poland's expense was divergent from the agreements reached at Potsdam. The memorandum, ironically, was very similar to the petitions sent by the Polish American Congress which highlighted the fear that this new form of foreign policy represented a threat to the U.S., Poland, and the world by the unleashing of German militarism. In addition, the memo also warned the U.S. that any attempts to remove the restored territory from Poland would "be met with terrific resistance not only by the people of Poland but by peace-loving peoples throughout the world."¹⁸³ By 1955, the Polish American Congress established a separate organization which would specifically focus on the issues surrounding the Oder-Neisse line. The Polish Western Association of American lobbied for U.S. recognition of the line. In addition, the organization issued warnings about potential Soviet and German aggression. The Polish-American community, for forty-five years demonstrated,

¹⁸¹ ¹⁸¹ Robert D. Ubriaco Jr., "Bread and Butter Politics or Foreign Policy Concerns? Class versus Ethnicity in the Midwestern Polish American Community during the 1946 Congressional Elections," 8.

¹⁸² Robert D Ubriaco Jr., 9.

¹⁸³ Debra Allen, "An Unacknowledged Consensus: Polish American vies about the Oder-Neisse Line during the Truman Administration," *Polish American Studies* 57, no.1 (Spring, 2000), 82.

according to historian Donald Pienkos, their “ethnic consciousness” by both supporting and participating in events which involved the Oder-Neisse border issue. The Polish-American community was split into two opposing factions by this point: the anti-Soviet Polish Americans “identified themselves as Americans of Polish descent who had fought and dies in the cause of world peace against German militarism, while the pro-Soviet Polish Americans tended to view the issues as an international struggle against fascism.”¹⁸⁴ Regardless of their petitions and memorandums both factions were unable to change American policy. Eventually the issues surrounding Poland would be overshadowed by the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

3.2 U.S. *Betrayal of Poland?*

The most pertinent question for the Polish-American community is whether through its diplomacy and actions the U.S. government had betrayed its promises to Poland. This question, however, has multi-faceted responses considering the different social, economic, cultural and political backgrounds of the members of the Polish-American community. The media coverage of this question figured prominently in almost every major newspaper in the United States during 1943 to 1946. Headlines such as: “Paying the Fiddler for Stalin’s tune”, “Poles Implore FDR to Help Save Homeland”, “Voters Demand a Free Poland”, “FDR’s Double Talk to Poles”, “Why Mr. Roosevelt Let Poland Down”, “Polish Group in U.S. Charges Big 3 ‘Sell-Out,’ Asserts FDR Outsmarted in Grab of Poland”, “FDR Betrayed All at Yalta”, “FDR Charged with Blame for Polish Misery”, “Poland Being Sacrificed”. Since the Polish-American community was diverse, it is difficult to see the extent to which the community as a whole felt betrayed. Polish émigrés were especially upset during the war by the political inactivity of the Polish-Americans for they

¹⁸⁴ Debra Allen, “An Unacknowledged Consensus: Polish American vies about the Oder-Neisse Line during the Truman Administration, 83.

insisted that all Polish-Americans “still had a political obligation to Poland.”¹⁸⁵ The majority of Polish-Americans respected or at least acknowledged the U.S.-Soviet alliance; most members of the community saw their ethnicity as ‘American,’ and therefore chose not to challenge American foreign policy directly. Many moderates, however, became openly anti-Soviet after the 1943 Katyn Forest massacre. These moderate Polish-Americans were disturbed by the activities of the pro-Soviet Polish-American organizations, such as the American Slavic Congress and the Polish American Labor Council. The Foreign Nationalities branch issued a memorandum to the U.S. government in 1944, expressing their concern about the Polish-American community’s increasing hostilities towards the Soviet Union:

Concrete manifestations of a new movement taking form, which after the mammoth meeting in Buffalo next month may become seriously disturbing in American politics, include a shoving aside of the moderate leadership in the Polish-American fraternals and the alignment of these powerful organizations with the ultra-nationalist, openly anti-Soviet leadership of the numerically small National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent (KNAPP).¹⁸⁶

The growing anti-Soviet resentment coincided with the belief that the U.S. had betrayed Poland in favor of a communist Great Power. Roughly 200,000 Poles immigrated to the United States during and after WWII; around 120,000 ethnic Poles entered the U.S. under the 1948 Displaced Persons Act. Of those allowed into the U.S. between 1946 and 1954 only 3% listed Poland as their previous residence. One man explained that, “he was patriotic, believing he was living for Poland free, not under the communists. Our stay in America we consider as a protest.”¹⁸⁷ This example shows that many Poles did not list Poland as their previous residence because for them Poland no longer existed.

¹⁸⁵ Mary Patrice Edmans, *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnics in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 40.

¹⁸⁶ Mary Patrice Edmans, *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnics in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990*, 41.

¹⁸⁷ Mary Patrice Edmans, 44.

In the past 200 years two distinctive themes have defined American diplomacy: idealism and realism. The realist approach is best understood through the statement made by John Quincy Adams in 1823 in response to the global pressure on the U.S. to assist the Greeks in their war of independence against the Ottomans:

Wherever the flag of freedom may unfurl, the heartfelt sentiments and sympathy of the American people would go out to those struggling for freedom. On the other hand the United States should and could not assume direct responsibility in such struggles...America goes not abroad in search of a monster to destroy.¹⁸⁸

This realist approach to American foreign policy does not regard moral concerns as relevant to the real objectives of a balanced national diplomacy. Therefore, foreign relations must focus on power considerations. In strong contrast, the Wilsonian or idealist concept of American foreign policy asserts the notion that relations should be based on more than just the balancing of powers. American foreign policy should uphold the principles of democracy, which in the original case were dictated under President Wilson's 1917 comment before entering WWI that the United State is to "make the world safe for democracy."¹⁸⁹ The idealist concept tries to advocate altruistic solutions to the problems affecting international stability. The polarity of American foreign relations, as seen in the use of both realism and idealism, has been central to understanding decisions reached by the United States. Eastern Europe serves as the best example of how this polarity of politics can shift dramatically. In 1978, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Luers stated before the House International Relations Subcommittee on Europe, that Eastern Europe was vital to the United States "for two fundamental reasons: security and humanitarian concerns."¹⁹⁰ The humanitarian concerns are reflected in not only President Wilson's Fourteen Points, where the thirteenth point calls for an independent Poland, but also

¹⁸⁸ Garrett, 129.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 129.

¹⁹⁰ Garrett, 130.

Wilson's sympathetic reception of Tomáš Masaryk and Władysław Paderewski at the White House. The United States during World War II had a humanitarian concern in respect of Poland's future, but sometimes realism outweighs idealism. The Soviet Union's role as a future superpower became increasingly evident during WWII resulting in a specific method of treatment by United States. Regardless of the outcomes at Yalta, the United States under the Declaration of Liberated Europe (DLE) had pressed Stalin to call for free elections and democratic formulations for postwar Eastern European regimes, which obviously included Poland. The DLE stood as a symbol of the American concern for the future of Eastern Europe.

The decisions made by the U.S. at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam have been seen by both the members of the Polish-American community and prominent U.S. officials like U.S. Ambassador to Poland Arthur Bliss Lane as a betrayal. Lane for instance argued that Roosevelt's actions at Teheran were in direct violation of the U.S. Constitution for Roosevelt had not reported his agreement reached with Stalin to the Senate.

The United States was placed in a thorny political arena considering their late involvement in the war. Many questioned if the U.S. had the right to oppose Stalin's demands, considering the 20 million sacrificed by the Soviet Union in the effort to stop Hitler. In this scheme of realities the United States had no real say in the future of Eastern Europe. It is possible to argue that the United States did not readily betray Poland since promises made to the Polish government in exile and the Polish-American community became overridden by U.S.'s responsibilities as a member of the "Grand Alliance" in which context Eastern Europe was no longer a major concern for the U.S. The outcome of the wartime and postwar conferences would later haunt U.S. policy makers grappling with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. At the same

time, while many felt all along that American idealism would circumvent any contravening forces, Poland's postwar future was never truly in the hands of U.S.

Conclusion:

No other issue placed greater tension between the Soviet Union and the United States during and after the war than the Polish Question. President Truman, for example, spent nearly every day of his first two weeks in office dealing with issues concerning Poland.¹⁹¹ The Polish-American community at the time wielded a relatively powerful political influence with a constant majority in the following three areas: the Catholic Church, the labor movement and the Democratic Party. All three areas were affected by the consequences of the Polish Question that had caused volatile relations with U.S. foreign policy-makers. The anti-Soviet movements perpetuated by Polish organizations caused fissures which began to appear in correspondence with the rise of McCarthyism in the 1950s. The power of the Polish-American community lay not in its population size but in its high concentration in urban centers; these urban centers tended to be in the industrial heartland of the country. In 1945, sociologist Stefan Włoszczewski claimed that “the group of Polish immigrants alive today in the United States together with their living close and distant descendants is probably somewhere in the range of 7 to 10 million.”¹⁹² Five out of six of these Polish-Americans dwelled in nine highly industrialized states: Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.¹⁹³ The Polish-American community made up the “third largest component of the total white stock in population, exceed only by 5.2 million Germans and 4.6 million Italians.”¹⁹⁴ However, the community represented the largest Slav ethnic group which gave it a unique status

¹⁹¹ Peter H. Irons, “‘The Test is Poland:’ Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War,” *Polish American Studies* 30, no.2 (Autumn, 1973), 5.

¹⁹² Stefan Włoszczewski, “The Polish ‘Sociological Group,’ in America,” *American Slavic and Eastern European Review* (August, 1945), 151.

¹⁹³ Peter H. Irons, “‘The Test is Poland:’ Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War,” 7.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

in the United States; the Polish-American population was larger than all the minor Slav ethnic groups combined. Clearly, their presence was felt and later was documented by the Foreign Nationalities Branch as a possible threat to national security. The question that still remains is: to what degree did the Polish-American Community influence U.S. foreign policy?

The simple answer would be: none. However, it is interesting to observe how an ethnic community could mobilize itself through the formation of large lobbyist and cultural organizations. The Polish-American community had existed for nearly 400 hundred years and has given some of the most influential heroes of our time, examples being Pulaski and Kościuszko. The socio-economic stratum of the Polish-Americans, however, was a hindering factor in their ability to engender significant changes. The stereotypical persona of the 'industrial Pole' made it more difficult in relation to other ethnic communities such as the Jews to obtain political positions of power. Regardless of mobilization, without political sway it becomes impossible to guide policy-makers. For the Roosevelt and Truman administrations the Polish Question was not a matter of upholding Wilsonian principles but of preventing rifts in post-war relations. The Irish-American community serves as an example of a national ethnic group which could obtain support for an undivided Ireland; the sheer number of Irish-Americans by 1950 had reached about 30 to 40 million people. The number of congressional hearings which focused on issues concerning the Irish-American community is staggering.¹⁹⁵ Recently, the Jewish-American community has proved to be very successful in influencing American foreign policy towards Israel. So why then, were the actions of the Polish-American community futile when it came to shaping foreign policy?

Prior to World War II, the Irish-American campaign had been effective in creating an

¹⁹⁵ Franklin L. Burdette, "Influence of Non-congressional Pressures on Foreign Policy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 289, Congress and Foreign Relations (September, 1953), 94.

antagonistic relationship between the United States and Great Britain. According to political scientist Yossi Shain, “the nature and range of diasporic involvement in the home country’s affairs depends largely upon the size and the diversity of the overseas community and are highly affected by the ability of diasporic institutions to generate and sustain a sense of communal identity.”¹⁹⁶ Yossi continues to define American patriotism “as the devotion to liberal-democratic and humane principles and not to an ethnically-based, cultural community.”¹⁹⁷ The fact that Congress has a vital voice in U.S. foreign policy, mixed with the access of ethnic groups to American and global media, has provided the possibility for a Diaspora to establish a well structured base which over time could potentially manifest itself into a power political entity. The large Irish-American population was able to form a strong political component, which, in the long run had profound affects on Ireland’s future. The decisions made at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam serve as examples of how the Polish-American community could not gain enough political or public support for the Polish cause. The majority of postwar Eastern European émigrés were unsuccessful in providing freedom to their ‘captive nations.’ The only example, ironically, is the Polish-American support of the eventual 1981 Solidarity movement. By this point, the Polish-American community had obtained enough political leverage, due to the increased number of Polish-American politicians and the unqualified public support against communism. For the Polish-American community to break the shackles of its socio-economic class took time to develop. It was inconceivable that during and after WWII Poland would be spared. The combination of the U.S.’s desire to maintain global stability and the continuous pressure from the Soviet Union made the Polish Question a simple matter of where to draw the line.

¹⁹⁶ Yossi Shain, “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no.5 (Winter, 1994-1995), 815.

¹⁹⁷ Yossi Shain, “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy,” 811.

On December 20th, 1990, Ryszard Kaczorowski, the president of the Polish government in exile, along with an official delegation from London, ceded the insignia of the state to the newly installed and democratically elected President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Wałęsa.¹⁹⁸ Once again Poland was free and the government in exile was officially disbanded. This symbolic moment in Polish history marked the final stages in the on-going hope for an independent Poland. However, this accomplishment did not radically affect the large Diaspora that had formed in the United States and in other nations during WWII. The International Refugee Organization (IRO) indicated that between 1946 and 1952 nearly 360,000 Polish citizens had been resettled in 47 countries; it should be noted that the IRO did not distinguish between Polish Christians and Polish Jews.¹⁹⁹ Some of these Polish communities became disillusioned over the years with the expectation that an independent Poland would still emerge. Similarly, sociologist Egon Kunz argued that around 200,000 Hungarians took mainly U.S., British and Australian citizenship after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 realizing that returning to a free Hungary would not become a reality in the near future. The Polish Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in 1991 took a survey on Polish attitudes toward American Foreign policy. The results of the survey indicated that 70% of Poles favored American foreign policy, while 90% “declared warm feelings towards the United States.”²⁰⁰ Poland today is considered one of the most pro-American nations in Europe. Polish-American organizations, such as the Polish American Congress, The Kościuszko Foundation, The Pilsudski Institute, the American Center of Polish Culture, etc., serve as examples of how the community continues to bridge the gap between the

¹⁹⁸ Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, “The Polish Post-World War II Diaspora: An agenda for a New Millennium,” *Polish American Studies* 57, no.2 (Autumn, 2000), 47.

¹⁹⁹ Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, “The Polish Post-World War II Diaspora: An agenda for a New Millennium,” 48.

²⁰⁰ A. Purvis, “New Europe, Old Economy, Poland is American’s new best friend,” *Time Europe*, May 25, 2003, <http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/030602/story.html>; accessed June 2nd, 2009.

United States and Poland through cultural, economic, or political activities.

The Polish Question during WWII represented a major diplomatic issue that was resolved through the appeasement of a potential adversary rather than forcing through a not altogether well defined promise. The outcome represented the triumph of power politics over diplomacy and as such demonstrated the severe limitations of diplomacy based on Wilsonian principles. If anything, U.S. foreign policy towards Poland during and after WWII constituted a reversion to 'old diplomacy,' whereby leaders of states secretly discussed the future of millions. But whether this method in fact served the long-term interests of the population and national interests of the United States is another matter. The so-called "betrayal of Poland" was an expression of one national group that did not speak for the entire American public. In the end, American foreign policy was not materially influenced by the Polish-American community but by the political anticipation of establishing long-term peaceful relations with the Soviets. American foreign policy towards Poland during and after WWII continues to stir resentment in many Polish-Americans. Yet, developments in U.S.-Polish relations following the end of the Cold War have, to a certain degree, overridden the archaic diplomacy of WWII.

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