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CHARLES ROZMAREK, ALOYSIUS MAZEWSKI AND  
EDWARD MOSKAL: LEADERS OF THE POLISH AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE POLISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The scholarly literature published during the past half century on Polish immigration to the United States and the Polish ethnic experience in this country is rich and substantial in many respects.<sup>2</sup> One area where more research needs to be done is on the subject of political leadership in *Polonia* (a word used to characterize the community of Polish immigrants to the United States, their

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note:

In addition to his many scholarly publications on Poland and Polonia, Prof. Donald Pienkos was an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Polish National Alliance (1987–1995). He has also served as a National Director of the Polish American Congress for more than twenty years. The text presents therefore the views of an “insider”. It is worthwhile to note that Edward Moskal (as noted in the text) was a controversial figure. For more information on the Polish American Congress see studies by Joanna Wojdon, “*W imieniu sześciu milionów...: Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej w latach 1944–1968*,” Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2005; “*W jedności siła: Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej w latach 1968–1988*,” Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2008. In 2010, Prof. Pienkos received the Krzyż Oficerski Orderu Zasługi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej from the President of Poland.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is adapted from a presentation titled “Charles Rozmarek, Aloysius Mazewski, Edward Moskal: Leaders of American Polonia,” given at the annual meeting of the Polish American Historical Association on January 6, 2012 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers. Among the numerous sources of scholarly research on the Polish experience in the United States an excellent place to start is the compilation of published research in the field going back more than a quarter of a century that appears at five year intervals in the academic journal, *Polish American Studies*. The most recent of these exhaustive listings, all of which are by Mark Kulikowski, appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of that publication. Another is *The Polish American Encyclopedia* (Jefferson 2011) published under the general editorship of James S. Pula.

offspring and descendants, along with the ethnic organizations, secular and religious, they have created and maintained from the 1860s, when immigration from Poland first assumed substantial proportions).<sup>3</sup>

The subject of political leadership in American Polonia is particularly interesting. This is because it does not involve only the election of persons of Polish origin to office at the local, state and national levels in the United States, or their appointment to positions of public trust in government.<sup>4</sup> Genuine political leadership has also emanated out of the many voluntary associations the Polish immigrants, their offspring and descendants created and maintained in America. Most notable among these organizations have been the Polish American fraternal benefit societies. (The overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Polish immigration was also served by the diocesan clergy and Polish religious orders in the hundreds of parishes that the Poles established in this country. The list of dedicated priests who were active both in their parishes and in the larger community is a very long one. Many of these individuals also played key roles in working with elected officials, the fraternal and with other Polonia organizations on behalf of causes that extended far beyond their explicitly religious and spiritual responsibilities).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This subject is covered very well in H. Znaniecka Lopata, *Polish Americans: Status Competition in an Ethnic Community*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1976 and 1994; and J. S. Pula, *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community*, New York 1995.

<sup>4</sup> On persons of Polish origin winning elective office, see D. E. Pienkos, *Polish-American Ethnicity in the Politics of the United States* [in:] *America's Ethnic Politics*, eds. J. S. Roucek, B. Eisenberg, Westport – London 1982, pp. 273–305. The first Polish American elected to a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives was John C. Kleczka, a Republican from Milwaukee in 1918. From then through 2012 fifty-four Polish Americans, the great majority of them Democrats, have served in this body, most from the states of Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. Among the more prominent Representatives one can mention Daniel Rostenkowski, Edward Derwinski, and Roman Pucinski of Illinois, Thaddeus Machrowicz and John Dingel of Michigan, Clement Zablocki of Wisconsin, and Marcy Kaptur of Ohio. Five Polish Americans have served in the U.S. Senate: Edmund Muskie of Maine (earlier that state's governor), Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, Frank Murkowski of Alaska (also a governor), his daughter Lisa Murkowski, and Chuck Hagel of Nebraska. In addition, hundreds of Polish Americans, most overwhelmingly from heavily Polish ethnic constituencies, have won state and local public office going back into the 1870s. D. Pienkos, *Polish Americans in Congressional politics: Assets and Constraints*, „The Polish Review” Autumn 2003, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 185–194. Also *Ethnic Politics in Urban America: The Polish Experience in Four Cities*, A. T. Pienkos ed., Chicago 1978.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, W. J. Galush, *For More Than Bread: Community and Identity in American Polonia, 1880–1940*, Boulder 2006; J. Radzilowski, *The Eagle and the Cross: A History of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America*, Boulder 2003.

## THE POLISH AMERICAN FRATERNALS: THEIR FUNCTIONS AS MUTUAL SELF-HELP SOCIETIES

The very first Polish fraternal society, the Polish Roman Catholic Union in America (PRCUA, in Polish, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce*) initially named the Polish Organization in America), was founded in Detroit, Michigan. After the PRCUA came the Polish National Alliance (PNA, *Związek Narodowy Polski*), founded in 1880 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and establishing its permanent headquarters in Chicago in the same year. By this time, the Polish population in the U.S. was estimated at 400-500,000, about one percent of the country's population.

A third fraternal, the Polish Falcons Alliance (*Związek Sokolów w Ameryce*), came into existence between 1887 and 1894 in Chicago; in 1912 it relocated its national office to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A fourth was the Polish Union in America (*Unia Polska*), founded in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1890. In 1898–1899 the Polish Women's Alliance of America (*Związek Kobiet w Ameryce*) was established in Chicago.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these five organizations whose aim was be national in scope, a number of smaller, locally oriented fraternals were already operating by 1900.

While their beginnings were modest in members and financial assets, by 1914 the Polish fraternals together could count more than 320,000 members in a Polonia whose population had mushroomed to as many as four million, four percent of the U.S. population. By the early 1930s the more than twenty fraternals in operation included more than 650,000 members. Into the early 1950s, more than 760,000 members belonged to all these organizations in a Polish American population (counting immigrants, their children and their grandchildren, the "third generation" in America) that had grown to more than seven million. Only in the 1970s and 1980s did fraternal membership decline; in 1978 total fraternal membership was about 670,000 and in 2010 the total membership of the five largest fraternals was less than 400,000 in a Polish American population estimated at approximately 10 million, of which fewer than five hundred thousand were

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<sup>6</sup> A. Brozek, *Związek Kobiet w Ameryce*, Warsaw 1985; D. E. Pienkos, PNA: *A Centennial History of the Polish National Alliance of the United States of North America*, Boulder 1984; D. E. Pienkos, *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: The Story of the Polish National Alliance*, Chicago 2008; D. E. Pienkos, *One Hundred Years Young: A Centennial History of the Polish Falcons of America, 1887–1987*, Boulder 1987; D. E. Pienkos, *Forward! The Story of the Polish Falcons of America*, Pittsburgh 2012; A. T. Pienkos, D. E. Pienkos, *In the Ideals of Women is the Strength of a Nation': A History of the Polish Women's Alliance of America*, Boulder 2003. On the Polish Union of America, see J. S. Pula, *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, Jefferson 2011, pp. 414–415 and *passim*.

immigrants and many of the others, especially third, fourth and fifth generation identifiers were of mixed ethnic origins.<sup>7</sup>

Organized as not for profit providers of 'burial insurance' (now called life insurance), the fraternal were, however, much more than insurance providers. Individuals who bought a policy were automatically registered as the fraternal's members, not just its customers. They were enrolled into its local lodge unit that was usually located near where they lived. The fraternal lodge was an important community institution. It often operated and sometimes owned its own building and meeting hall where it held its regular monthly meetings. At these gatherings, members socialized, learned and discussed the latest news on a variety of matters of local, national and even international interest and importance.

#### THE POLISH FRATERNAL SOCIETIES AS SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The lodges were themselves organized along democratic lines, with their officers elected each year and held responsible for the unit's financial well being, recruitment of new members, and direction of its broader community-related activities. In addition, the lodges were responsible for electing delegates charged with the duty of representing their members at the fraternal's national convention. At these conclaves, at first held annually but by the 1930s usually occurring every four years, the fraternal's national offices were elected, its budget approved and its agenda determined until its next convention.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, given their democratic and participatory character, the fraternal were different from the parishes, the other mass membership organization the immigrants established. Unlike the fraternal, the faithful in the parishes were directed by priests appointed to their posts by their local bishops. In addition, unlike the fraternal, which sought to be national associations, the Polish parishes were part of the Roman Catholic Church but did not establish their own

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<sup>7</sup> Data on the growth of the Polish American population is in D. E. Pienkos, *Of Patriots and Presidents: America's Polish Diaspora and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1917*, „Polish American Studies”, vol. 68, no. 1 (Spring 2011), pp. 5–6 and *passim*. Also J. C. Booza, *A Profile of Polish Americans: Data from the 2000 U.S. Census*, „Polish American Studies”, vol. 64, no. 1 (Spring, 2007), pp. 63–74; and T. Radzilowski, D. Stecula, *Polish Americans Today: A Survey of Modern Polonia Leadership*, Hamtramck 2010. For fraternal membership figures, see D. E. Pienkos, *PNA...*, pp. 332.

<sup>8</sup> On fraternal and fraternalism see A. Schmitt, *Fraternal Organizations*, Westport 1980; Ch. Kauffman, *Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus, 1882–1982*, New York 1982.

organizational structure on any ongoing long term basis. Thus, these two voluntary Polonia associational systems operated differently from the start, with the fraternal established as schools of representative self government and serving as the earliest forum for ethnic political life and activity in Polonia. Moreover, unlike commercial insurance firms, the not for profit fraternal offered a variety of benefits to their members from the start, among them receipt of the fraternal's own publication, the opportunity to participate in its youth and sports programs, the use of the reading rooms and libraries that the fraternal set up, admission in the night school courses in English language and citizenship that a fraternal might organize, opportunities to apply for home loans at lower rates of interest, and eligibility for student loans and scholarships.)

There was a second aspect to the democratic character of the Polish American fraternal. It involves the fact that politics, the effort to openly and publicly gain leadership positions, to win influence in a social group, and to exercise power in and beyond that group, was from the outset a key part of fraternal life. Politics meant competition for office and sometimes even conflict over leadership. Such behavior played out at all levels of the organization, in the local lodge, in its regional structures, and at its national convention. The all-encompassing place of politics in the fraternal also helps explain why so many Polish American fraternal, over twenty in all, came into existence over the years. If dissatisfied members could not win power in their own fraternal, very often there was an option of form another.

For example, those who disagreed with the PRCUA's primary focus in supporting the construction of parishes in America to the exclusion of its involvement in working for Poland's independence (which had been lost in 1795 following its occupation and territorial division, or partitioning, at the hands of the empires of Russia, Austria and Prussia) did join with other like-minded activists to create the PNA in 1880. Ten years later, several patriotically-minded Roman Catholic priests who had been active in the PNA withdrew to found the Polish Union in America. Their action was due to their conviction that the PNA was not sufficiently explicit in restricting its membership to Catholics. When both the PRCUA and PNA failed to recognize the principle of full and equal membership rights for women, a group of female activists went ahead to create their own sisterhood, the Polish Women's Alliance. Other splits occurred on various occasions when local activists in a fraternal who objected to a policy (or personalities) in place at the national level went ahead to take the next giant step by seceding and forming their own organization.

## THE POLISH NATIONAL ALLIANCE FRATERNAL, ITS SIGNIFICANCE, AND ITS POLITICS

In America's Polonia, the largest and most influential fraternal has been the PNA, which was founded in 1880. Having surpassed the PRCUA in size by 1900, in 1913 the PNA had mushroomed to 100,000 insured members. In 1930, it reported 286,000 members. In 1965 it reached its zenith in membership with over 365,000 members. In 2008 more than 2.2 million members had been PNA members in its 128 years of existence.<sup>9</sup>

The PNA's rise was due to several factors. One involved the attractiveness of its program, which combined working for Poland's political independence, supporting the material and cultural advancement of the Polish immigrant population in America, and encouraging the immigrants' achievement of U.S. citizenship and participation in the American political process. Moreover, while respectful of the Roman Catholic faith, central to the great mass of Polish immigrants, the PNA accepted members of other religious convictions and even persons of other nationalities, so long as they originated from the lands of the old pre-partition and multi-ethnic Polish state (which had included Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews, and others). In 1900, the PNA approved equal membership status for women, twenty years before the passage of the twentieth amendment to U.S. Constitution.

Given these features, the Alliance won for itself a disproportionate share of community's "human capital," that is, its most energetic, talented, educated, ambitious and financially successful men and women. Not surprisingly, many of its activists possessed a commitment to have the PNA lead the entire immigrant and ethnic community. The political character of the PNA gave them ample opportunities to do so.

From the start, however, the PNA, whose early national leadership even formally called itself the 'government' (or *rzqd*) of the immigration met with opposition against this effort. In 1894, the rival PRCUA organized its own national federation, one it called the "Polish League". The league quickly collapsed when the PNA and its allies refused to join.<sup>10</sup> In 1910 the Alliance orchestrated the convocation of what it called a national Polonia congress in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the formal dedication of monuments to Kazimierz Pulaski and Tadeusz Kosciuszko, patriotic icons in both Polish and American Revolutionary War history, and in the presence of the President of the United States, William

<sup>9</sup> See D. E. Pienkos, *Yesterday, Today...*, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> On the story of the League, see W. Kruzka, *A History of the Poles in America to 1908*, Washington, D.C.: 1993, vol. 1, pp. 229–230; Pienkos, *PNA...*, pp. 82–83.

Howard Taft. However, the congress, though not the dedication ceremonies, was boycotted by the PRCUA and its clerical supporters. Despite this problem, the Congress was well attended, with the president of the PNA playing a key role. Following the event, an extraordinary report on its decisions, which included resolutions calling for improving the lot of the Polish population, immigration reform, and Poland's independence.<sup>11</sup> One might say that it was at this gathering that the first concerted effort was made by the leadership of Polonia to operate functionally as an interest group seeking to influence U.S. public policy – both domestically and on behalf of the then partitioned Polish homeland.

Indeed, even before the outbreak of World War I (1914–1918), the entire Polonia, despite its diversity and many internal divisions, had embraced the PNA's programmatic commitment to Poland's independence. When war came, the PNA's role would be on display as a leading force in Polonia's lobbying efforts directed at the U.S. government in support of Poland's restoration to national independence and in its humanitarian activities on behalf of the inhabitants of the war-devastated Polish lands. Moreover, the PNA's leadership role would extend into the two decades after the War in support of the newly independent Polish state.

Again in World War II, which began when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, PNA activists played a significant role in Polonia's humanitarian effort on behalf of Polish war refugees, prisoners of war, and military personnel serving in the armed forces of the Allied powers. At the head of the main Polonia organization, American Relief for Poland (*Rada Polonii Amerykańskiej*) was PNA Censor Francis X. Swietlik, a Milwaukee attorney who served as the dean of the Marquette University School of Law. With the end of the War in 1945, this organization would continue in operation into the 1960s, in assisting in the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. and in providing and distributing food and clothing to Poles in the homeland.

Polonia's political efforts in support of Poland expanded further in May 1944, with the creation of the Polish American Congress (PAC, *Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej*, *KPA*), a massive all-Polonia nationwide federation of secular and religious organizations. The first leader of the Congress, at which more than 2,500 delegates elected by their parishes and by fraternal, social, and cultural

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<sup>11</sup> On the dedication of the Pulaski and Kosciuszko monuments in Washington, D.C. in 1910, that year's Polish National Congress, the activities of the Polish National Defense Committee founded in 1912, the Polish National Department (1916), the Polish American Council (1939), the Polish American Congress (1944), see the essays in J. S. Pula, *The Polish American Encyclopedia...*, pp. 309–310, 319–320, 376–379, 379–380, and 408. Also D. E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish American Efforts on Poland's Behalf, 1863–1991*, Boulder 1991, pp. 51–53.

organizations from around the country took part, was Charles Rozmarek, the President of the Polish National Alliance.

CHARLES ROZMAREK, ALOYSIUS MAZEWSKI,  
EDWARD MOSKAL: PRESIDENTS OF THE POLISH NATIONAL  
ALLIANCE AND THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

From this overview, one can conclude that many PNA activists merit inclusion in any discussion of political leadership in the Polish immigrant and ethnic community over the years. In this particular presentation, however, the focus is on three men who as presidents of the PNA rose to become the spokesmen for the Polish American community in heading its political lobbying and humanitarian work on behalf of a free Poland. Their efforts during the Second World War extended through the long Cold War period and only drew to a close when the newly independent Polish democratic state established in 1989 entered into the NATO Alliance ten years later. These three men are Charles Rozmarek of Scranton, Pennsylvania (1897–1973), who was elected president of the PNA in 1939 and served until 1967, his successor Aloysius A. Mazewski of Chicago (1916–1988), who defeated Rozmarek for the PNA presidency in 1967 and held this office at the time of his death, and Chicago's Edward J. Moskal (1924–2005), who followed Mazewski and led the PNA until his passing.<sup>12</sup>

Together these three men presided over the Polish National Alliance for sixty-five consecutive years, with only one brief three month break, from Mazewski's death in August 1988 to Moskal's election that October. Rozmarek served as PNA president for twenty-eight years, Mazewski for nearly 21, and Moskal for more than sixteen.

Rozmarek also led the Polish American Congress from its founding in 1944 until 1968, when he was succeeded by Mazewski. Upon Mazewski's death, Moskal won the office in November 1988 and was president at the time he died in March 2005.

One key to appreciating the importance of these men's success in winning – and holding – these positions is that each had to first win office to the PNA presidency and in highly competitive circumstances.

In 1935 Rozmarek, a Harvard University trained attorney and political activist in Pennsylvania, ran for the presidency for the first time at the PNA's twenty-seventh national convention in Baltimore, Maryland against its incumbent

<sup>12</sup> Extensive biographical entries for Swietlik, Rozmarek, Mazewski, Moskal and numerous other Polonia leaders are in J. S. Pula, *The Polish American Encyclopedia...*, pp. 510–511, 460–461, 295–296, 311–312, and *passim*.



president, John Romaszkiwicz of Boston, Massachusetts. At that conclave, Romaszkiwicz was reelected in a fiercely fought battle waged between two nearly equal factions of the Alliance and by a margin of only eight votes, 260–252. Four years later, in Detroit, it was Rozmarek who prevailed, this time by just seven votes, 269–262. In 1943, Rozmarek, faced Romaszkiwicz for a third time. But by then, he had built a powerful base of support for his reelection by mixing policies that were popular in the fraternal with an energetic leadership style, personal presence, and powerful speaking ability. The result of the election was his overwhelming victory by a 444 to 87 margin. Rozmarek then went on to establish a seemingly invincible political machine that enabled him to win reelection by substantial margins five more times.<sup>13</sup>

In September 1967 at the PNA's thirty-fifth convention in Detroit, the then 70 year old Rozmarek was defeated by another attorney, from Chicago's DePaul University, the fifty-one year old Aloysius Mazewski. Mazewski, a World War II veteran, had worked hard to build a following within the PNA from the time he was first elected to its Board of Directors in 1947. From the start Rozmarek saw him as a political rival; indeed, in 1955 he worked to bring about Mazewski's reelection defeat as national director. Four years later Mazewski, unsuccessfully, backed another Rozmarek opponent for the presidency. In 1963 he ran for president himself, losing badly. But in 1967 things went differently and with a solid coalition that included activists who defected from Rozmarek, Mazewski won office by a 221–189 vote. He then built up his own position within the PNA to the extent that he never faced a serious challenge for reelection at the fraternal's next five conventions.

In October 1988, Edward J. Moskal, the treasurer of the PNA from 1967 and for years Mazewski's wary rival, won the presidency in a special election. This election brought together the 34 members of the PNA Supervisory Council, who, according to the by-laws of the Alliance, were empowered to fill the vacancy. In this election Moskal had spirited opposition from a number of PNA activists, most notably Adam Tomaszkiwicz, himself a former PNA treasurer and Rozmarek's failed opponent in 1959. Tomaszkiwicz's spirited campaign even included his traveling by plane around the country to personally lobby the electors for their votes. In the years after, Moskal, who unlike his predecessor was a combative and sometimes abrasive personality, twice faced serious opposition for reelection. In 1999 he bested his predecessor's son, Director Aloysius Mazewski, Jr. of Chicago.

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<sup>13</sup> D. E. Pienkos, *Brother Against Brother: Conflict in the Polish National Alliance, 1900–1940*, "The Polish Review", vol. 67, no. 3 (Autumn 2012), pp. 49–66. On Rozmarek, Mazewski and Moskal's leadership and leadership styles, see D. E. Pienkos, *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow...*, *passim*.

In 2003 he defeated Vice President Stanley Jendzejec of Coventry, Rhode Island. In both cases he won reelection and by wide margins.

### LEADING THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

From 1944, all three men, despite their different personalities and leadership styles, also presided over the Polish American Congress (PAC). Again, holding this office required great political skill on their part since the PNA, though the largest organization in the massive PAC civic action federation, was only one of its many member organizations. Indeed, the PAC included activists outside the Congress and independent from the PNA who possessed the talents needed to lead the organization and were capable of opposing the president for policy and/or political reasons.

For example, in 1948 Rozmarek arranged a coalition between the PAC and Stanisław Mikołajczyk (1901–1966), a former prime minister of the Polish exile government that had operated in London in World War II. After the War, Mikołajczyk had tried to lead the democratic opposition in Poland against the Soviet-sponsored communist regime imposed on the nation. His herculean effort failed and he was forced to flee for his life after the communists gutted his party and proclaimed victory in parliamentary elections whose results were completely falsified.<sup>14</sup> However, some Polish Americans refused to regard Mikołajczyk as a hero but saw him as a naïve politician whose very presence in Poland and hapless participation in the communist-run provisional government after 1945 had given the regime undeserved legitimacy. They disowned him, criticized Rozmarek for allying with him, and even withdrew from the PAC in protest. Only in the early 1950s did they return to the fold.<sup>15</sup>

Aloysius Mazewski faced his share of criticism too as PAC president. For one example, the early 1970s were years of seeming normalization, or *détente*, in U.S.-Soviet relations. In this environment, the PAC's rejection of the Polish com-

<sup>14</sup> On the January 1947 elections see S. Mikołajczyk, *The Rape of Poland: Pattern of Soviet Aggression*, New York 1948; A. B. Lane, *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, Indianapolis 1948; S. Korbonski, *Warsaw in Exile*, New York 1966; S. Korbonski, *Polish Elections, 1947*, letter published in „The Washington Post”, February 16, 1985. Lane (1894–1956), U.S. Ambassador to Poland at the time of the elections, resigned in disgust in receiving the results. Back in the U.S. he became a tireless voice in support of a free Poland. Korbonski (1901–1989) was a leader in the Polish Peasants Party during and after World War II and led the anti-communist Assembly of Captive European Nations organization established in the United States following his exile from Poland.

<sup>15</sup> A. D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939–1956*, Athens, Ohio 2004, pp. 181; P. Wandycz, *The United States and Poland*, Cambridge, Mass. – London 1980, pp. 338.

munist regime, by then headed by Edward Gierek, its dominant figure from 1970 to 1980, drew fire from some Polish Americans. They argued that the better approach was for Polonia to adopt a similar détente perspective toward the Gierek regime and argued that the PAC's anti-communism had become "unrealistic". Mazewski's refusal to attend a meeting that President Gerald Ford, whom Mazewski knew very well, hosted for Gierek in Washington, D.C. added fuel to this criticism. But Mazewski refused to budge from his position and was later proven correct. By 1980 Gierek's domestic policies were proven failures and his regime faced an unprecedented challenge from the extraordinary Solidarity trade union movement, which quickly won the support of vast numbers of Poles as the champion of a democratic and pro-western orientation for the crisis-ridden country.<sup>16</sup>

Edward Moskal suffered different criticisms for his actions as PAC president. Already in November 1989, his senior vice president, Casimir Lukomski, resigned after publicly stating his objections to Moskal's way of operating. Similar criticisms were directed at him in 1996 following a letter he sent to Poland's newly elected president, Aleksander Kwaśniewski (a former communist party leader who had just defeated President Lech Wałęsa, the one time head of Solidarity whom the PAC had backed in the 1995 election). In 2003 Moskal, again on his own but speaking as PAC president, opposed Poland's entry in the European Union, a move that drew complaints from the Polish government. In a national referendum, EU membership, something supported by Pope John Paul II and Wałęsa, was approved overwhelmingly.<sup>17</sup> However, despite his undiplomatic ways, Moskal was easily and repeatedly reelected PAC president.

At least on one occasion, however, Edward Moskal's blunt speaking style proved to be both necessary and effective. In January 1994 and on the eve of a speech in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that President Bill Clinton was to deliver on U.S. relations with the newly independent and democratic states of Eastern Europe, a special meeting to discuss the issue of the admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak republics into the North Atlantic Organization, or NATO Alliance was held. This writer was invited to attend this gathering. In attendance were several high ranking officials of the Clinton Administration and a selected number of twenty Americans from the Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and Slovak American communities. There, Moskal argued forcefully for Poland's admission into NATO and caught the attention of President Clinton's representatives when

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 400–412, especially 412.

<sup>17</sup> D. E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom...*, pp. 566–567; D. E. Pienkos, *Consensus and Division over Poland's Entry into the European Union*, „East European Quarterly” January 2004, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 461–473.

he declared that to do otherwise would be to make the U.S. responsible for a “second Yalta”.

In the speech Vice President Albert Gore delivered the next day (the President’s absence came as a result of his mother’s death), he gave the Administration’s veiled support to NATO expansion as a policy that was in America’s national interest. Just two months later, President Clinton, just returned from his visit to Europe, met in the White House with members of the “Milwaukee group” and declared that “the door to NATO expansion is open.” Moskal’s strong words at the Milwaukee meeting had been effective in helping to move the United States’ position forward in favor of NATO enlargement.<sup>18</sup>

#### AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS: REPRESENTING THE CAUSE OF POLAND

As heads of the Polish American Congress, Rozmarek, Mazewski and Moskal each in his time became the personification of the organized Polish American community’s support for Poland’s restoration to democracy and full sovereignty. Nothing less to any of them was acceptable.

Charles Rozmarek spoke with every U.S. president on the Polish question, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt through Lyndon B. Johnson. He met on countless occasions with members of the U.S. Congress and in congressional committees that dealt with Poland and Eastern Europe. He spoke for a free Poland at the founding meeting of the United Nations in 1945 and in Europe in 1946. He addressed the platform committees of the two major parties at their national conventions and in 1952 the Republicans backed his call for the “liberation” of Eastern Europe by including it in the party’s program. Rozmarek pushed the U.S. government to provide better treatment of Poles who found themselves in refugee camps in post 1945 Germany and he backed special legislation in Congress to admit Polish refugees into the U.S. The 1948 law that resulted from his efforts allowed more than 140,000 Polish displaced persons and former military personnel who refused to return to communist-run Poland to enter the United States and to eventually become citizens. He worked for the creation of Radio Free Europe and the establishment of Captive Nations Week. Perhaps most significant was his support of the creation of a special committee of the U.S.

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<sup>18</sup> G. Grayson, *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East*, Lanham 1999; L. Kuczynski, *Expansion of NATO: Role of the Polish American Congress*, Chicago 1999; D. E. Pienkos, *Witness to History: Polish Americans and the Genesis of NATO Enlargement*, „The Polish Review” Autumn 1999, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 329–338.

House of Representatives charged with investigating the Katyń Forest Massacre of 1940. In 1952 this committee found the Soviet Union guilty of the killings of more than 22,000 Polish military officers, local government officials, and community leaders. Denounced by Moscow and shelved by the U.S. government for years after, it was only in 1992 that Russia's President Boris Yeltsin fully and formally acknowledged Soviet guilt in this atrocity.<sup>19</sup>

In 1957, Rozmarek, despite his and the PAC's strenuous opposition to communist rule in Poland, backed President Dwight D. Eisenhower's decision to offer foreign assistance to the newly established regime in Warsaw headed by Władysław Gomułka, who had come to power in 1956. Gomułka, who had been imprisoned for questioning Stalinist-style rule in Poland, was seen at the time in Washington, incorrectly as things developed, as an independent-minded communist, even a second Josef Broz Tito, the maverick leader of Yugoslavia. Eventually the United States provided more than \$500 million (\$5 billion today) in economic and non-strategic material assistance to Poland. Rozmarek supported this aid as assistance to the people of Poland, not the regime.<sup>20</sup>

Charles Rozmarek was a fierce opponent of the Soviet Union from the start and saw its regime as a threat to the United States and the free world. On March 1, 1945 President Roosevelt delivered a speech to a joint session of the U.S. Congress where he discussed his just completed summit conference at Yalta with Josef Stalin, the ruler of the Soviet Union, and Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. In his address the President gave a great deal of attention to the issue of Poland's future, declaring that "I am convinced that the agreement on Poland, under the circumstances, is the most hopeful agreement possible for a free, independent, and prosperous Polish state." Already on March 15, 1945, Rozmarek and the PAC leadership publicly denounced the President's actions at Yalta. The Congress' statement began, "We address you, Mr. President, not as Poles but as Americans...An injustice was committed against Poland at the Yalta Conference ...There ...the making of a just peace with freedom and independence to all na-

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<sup>19</sup> Cong. R. Madden, et al., *Final Report of the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre*, Washington, D.C. 1952; (reprinted 1988); J. Zawodny, *Death in the Forest*, Notre Dame, Indiana 1962; *Russian Files Show Stalin Ordered Massacre of 20,000 Poles in 1940*, „The New York Times”, October 15, 1992. See also R. Szymczak, *Cold War Crusader: Arthur Bliss Lane and the Committee to Investigate the Katyn Massacre, 1949–1952*, „Polish American Studies” Fall 2010, vol. 76, no. 2, pp. 5–33.

<sup>20</sup> On the wisdom of the assistance program see S. Kaplan, *U.S. Aid to Poland, 1957–1964: Concerns, Objectives and Obstacles*, „Western Political Quarterly” March 1975, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 147–166; P. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, pp. 365–373. 20.

tions – the basis for our struggle against Nazism – was betrayed.”<sup>21</sup> In so doing, and at time when Roosevelt was almost universally admired, especially among Polish Americans, for his wartime leadership and his earlier efforts to combat the Great Depression, Rozmarek and the PAC became early participants in what eventually became a massive anti-Communist coalition that by the late 1940s would include the Republican party, many of America’s labor unions, the Catholic Church, other Eastern European immigrant and ethnic communities, and many in the Democratic party as well.<sup>22</sup>

The apogee of Rozmarek’s success as a national political leader may have come in the 1960 presidential election campaign. That Spring the Republican party’s presidential candidate, Vice President Richard M. Nixon, spoke in Chicago to a crowd of more than 100,000 on the occasion of Polish Constitution Day, a patriotic event sponsored by Rozmarek’s PNA. That September, both President Eisenhower and the Democratic party’s presidential nominee, Senator John F. Kennedy, addressed the PAC convention in Chicago. All three knew the coming November election would be close. All recognized Rozmarek’s significance in influencing that vote.<sup>23</sup>

During their presidential debates that Fall, the two contenders outdid one another in their anti-communist pronouncements. And in an election decided by fewer than 120,000 votes out of more than 65 million cast the Polish vote proved to be critically important. It went by a 78–22 margin to Kennedy and he was elected, carrying nine of the twelve states having the largest Polish American populations.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For President’s remarks to Congress and for the text of the PAC’s objections to the Yalta agreement, see D. E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom...*, pp. 275–279. This book includes a large number of U.S. Presidential and PAC pronouncements about Poland from 1944 to 1991.

<sup>22</sup> P. Irons, *The Test is Poland: Polish Americans and the Origins of the Cold War*, „Polish American Studies” Fall 1973, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 5–65.

<sup>23</sup> John F. Kennedy and Poland, ed. J. Wszelaki, New York 1964, offers much insight into the role of the PAC in 1960.

<sup>24</sup> In the 1960 election Senator Kennedy received a total of 303 electoral votes, 35 more than the 268 he needed to win election, *en route* to a paper thin popular vote victory over Vice President Nixon. In the twelve states with the largest Polish ethnic populations, Kennedy won nine (Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania) with 184 electoral votes, losing only in Ohio, Wisconsin and Indiana. Polish Americans voted for Kennedy by a 4–1 margin. D. E. Pienkos, *Of Patriots and Presidents...*, pp. 10. In addition to 1960, the “Polish issue” was a considerable factor in the presidential elections in 1944, 1948, 1952, and 1976. For 1944 see R. Lukas, *The Strange Allies: The United States and Poland, 1941–1945*, Knoxville 1978, pp. 126–127 and passim; P. Irons, *The Test is Poland...*, for 1948: G. Janczewski, *The Significance of the Polish Vote in the American National Election Campaign of 1948*, „The Polish Review” Winter 1968, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 101–109; R. D. Ubriaco, *Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: Cold War Political Culture, Polish American Politics, the Truman Doctrine, and the Victory*

During his presidency of the PAC, Aloysius Mazewski met with Presidents Nixon, Gerald Ford, “Jimmy” Carter, and Ronald Reagan and gained a measure of influence with each. An active Republican himself, Mazewski was especially close to Ford. Indeed it was Mazewski who led the nearly successful effort to rescue President Ford’s election hopes after his amazing gaffe in his second debate with Carter where he had seemingly denied that Poland was under Soviet domination. At first marginalized for his partisan efforts on Ford’s behalf by the newly elected Carter, it was President Carter who made the trip to Chicago in September 1980 to speak at the centennial banquet of Mazewski’s Polish National Alliance. There he lavishly praised Mazewski before an audience of more than 3,000 PNA members and well wishers in the hope that it would help him in his reelection campaign against Ronald Reagan.<sup>25</sup>

In December 1981, Mazewski and his fellow PAC officers were in the White House to meet with President Reagan and Vice President George H.W. Bush to discuss the U.S. response to the Polish communist regime’s suppression of the Solidarity movement and declaration of martial law. The story of this meeting appeared on the front page of *The New York Times*, along with a photo of Reagan and Mazewski. More notable, the position taken by the United States government in the crisis was basically the same as that expressed by the PAC.<sup>26</sup>

During his nearly twenty years as PAC president, Aloysius Mazewski not only acted as a respected and recognized national spokesman for the Polish American community in his dealings with the White House, he established and maintained excellent relations with members of the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, and political leaders in Illinois and Chicago. He met with Pope John Paul II on several occasions and with Solidarity’s Lech Wałęsa when he attended the funeral in Warsaw of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński in May 1981 as a member of the official

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*Thesis*, „The Polish Review” Autumn-Winter 2006, vol. 51, nos. 3–4, pp. 273–278 and *passim*; for 1952: S. Lubell, *The Future of American Politics*, Garden City, New York 1955; for 1976, see T. De Frank, *Write It When I’m Gone: Remarkable Off-The Record Conversations with Gerald R. Ford*, New York 2007, pp. 54–55, 61; R. Novak, *The Prince of Darkness: Fifty Years of Reporting in Washington*, New York 2007, pp. 275–277, 292–297; and for all five elections, D. E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom...*, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> President Carter’s September 20, 1980 speech is reprinted in D. E. Pienkos, *PNA...*, pp. 415–419.

<sup>26</sup> The December 21, 1981 article in „The New York Times” appears on page 1. The texts of the PAC memorandum of December 20, 1981 to President Reagan on the Polish crisis and Reagan’s address to the American people on December 23 are found in D. E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom...*, pp. 371–377. Other accomplishments for which Mazewski merits great credit include his support for the maintenance and restructuring of Radio Free Europe and his backing of special Congressional legislation on behalf of thousands of Poles who had come to the United States after the declaration of Martial Law in December 1981. *Ibidem*, pp. 340–343, 212–214.

U.S. presidential delegation. He played a key role in creating the World Congress of Polonia in 1978 and was later one of the two Polish American representatives on the United States Holocaust Commission. The PAC Charitable Foundation that he headed raised more than \$200 million in medical supplies and other needed materials for the Polish people during the time of martial law in Poland during the 1980s.

Edward Moskal's presidency of the Polish American Congress came at a pivotal moment for Poland at the end of 1988, the last months of the Polish communist party-run regime. In February 1989 round table negotiations between the regime and the Solidarity opposition began in Warsaw; that April the Solidarity union was restored to full legal status. Special parliamentary elections were called for June 4, elections that for the first time allowed the democratic opposition to participate openly and freely for all the seats in a new advisory body, the 100 member Senate, and for 161 seats in the 460 member *Sejm*, which on paper had been the government's key decision-making legislative body.

The elections resulted in an overwhelming and historic victory for the democratic opposition. United under the Solidarity umbrella, the opposition won 99 of the 100 Senate seats and all 161 contested places in the *Sejm*. Even more incredibly, the regime's candidates were unable to win practically any of the uncontested 299 seats reserved to them when, on Solidarity's appeal more than half of the voters crossed off their names, in effect defeating them. The June 4 election results were respected by the Polish regime and by the Soviet Union. By September Solidarity was in power.

That October President Moskal led a PAC delegation to meet with the newly established Solidarity leadership and to remind its members of American Polonia's past and continuing full support. Over the next five years, the PAC came out in favor of the Support East European Democracy (SEED) Act that was approved by Congress and the creation of the Polish American Enterprise Fund aimed at providing financial assistance in the rebuilding of the Polish failed state-run economy. On the political policy level, Moskal was an important player in persuading President George H.W. Bush to give his firm support to international recognition of the permanence of Poland's northern and western borders with the newly united German Federal Republic. By 1993 the PAC had become heavily engaged in pressuring Washington to support Poland's entry into NATO, a mission accomplished in 1999 when Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were admitted by the decision of all sixteen of its member governments.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 230–236, 418–422.



## IN CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF POLONIA'S LEADERS IN ACHIEVING ITS HISTORIC MISSION AND DEFINING AN THE ETHNIC COMMUNITY'S FUTURE AGENDA

Following his death in March 2005, Edward J. Moskal was succeeded as president of the Polish National Alliance fraternal by Frank J. Spula of Chicago. That October Spula also assumed the presidency of the PAC.

For his part, Spula recognized that the historic mission of the Polish American Congress and the organized Polish American community had been completed. Poland, which had fallen under Nazi German and Soviet occupation after 1939 and come under Soviet communist domination from 1944 to 1989, had at last won back its independence through the efforts of the Solidarity trade union movement, the courage of the Polish people and the inspiration of Pope John Paul II. In 1999, Poland won formal membership within the transatlantic community of Democratic states by virtue of its admission into NATO.<sup>28</sup>

For the PAC, the task of redefining its aims was not easy. Indeed it was only in November 2011 that its officers and national directors approved a new mission statement. This statement, among other things, affirmed its commitment to cooperation with democratic Poland as a NATO ally of the United States. The statement rings eloquent in a number of ways; however, the Congress' future will be determined not by words alone but by its members' success in re-energizing itself as an organization and in effectively influencing the American public and its leaders about the ongoing concerns that Polonia shares with the government and citizens of Poland.<sup>29</sup>

What is important in this presentation is to reiterate the thesis that Charles Rozmarek, Aloysius Mazewski, and Edward Moskal were truly significant leaders of the 10 million member Polish American community, both nationally and internationally. Their activities were connected to, and a consequence of, Poland's fate during World War II and the decades-long Cold War that followed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In April 1999 U.S. Senate voted by an 80–19 margin to ratify the NATO treaty to allow for expansion (sixty-seven votes were required for approval). The vote in the twelve states with the most substantial Polish American populations was 21-3 for ratification. Only Democrats Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Republican Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania voted against expansion. L. Kuczynski, *Expansion of NATO...*

<sup>29</sup> For the new Mission Statement, which stresses PAC support for post 1989 democratic Poland, see the Minutes of the Council of National Directors of the Polish American Congress, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> While one could argue that the 'Cold War' has its origins in the Bolshevik regime's coming to power in November 1917, this author understands the Cold War between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its clients to have begun with a series of events coming soon after the end of World War II. The first of these was Stalin's confrontational campaign speech of

Of course, Rozmarek, Mazewski, and Moskal were not Polonia's only leaders. There were others – in the many organizations and institutions of Polonia and in elected and appointive national office. But their influence on decision makers for some sixty five years was real and sometimes critical.

Leadership in a democracy is not just leadership by elected public officials or charismatic figures like Martin Luther King, Jr. It is not only the leadership provided by labor union leaders, churchmen, business figures or intellectuals. Ethnic group activists should also be included as potential leaders, so long as they command the active support of their followers and make a difference in influencing the conduct of government policy. By this definition Rozmarek, Mazewski and Moskal all rank as extraordinarily important, if far too little noted, leaders.

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February 1946, an extraordinary address made prior to the perfunctory elections to the rubber stamp Soviet parliament. In March, 1946 former British Prime Minister Churchill delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. In January 1947 the Polish Communists proclaimed their fraudulent victory over the democratic opposition headed by Mikołajczyk in the country's first post war parliamentary elections. In March 1947 President Harry Truman delivered his "Truman Doctrine" speech before a joint session of the U.S. Congress. The Cold War came to a close in stages during Mikhail Gorbachev's regime (1985–1991) but it formally ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. See also J. L. Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, New York 2005.