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FOREIGN NATIONALITY GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES
MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
FROM THE FOREIGN NATIONALITIES BRANCH

Number B-268

4 December 1944

THE POLISH QUESTION

IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

As viewed by the Polish-language press

S. J. ...
[Handwritten signatures and initials]

Testifying to the vitality of the foreign-language press and to its ability to contemplate European problems through American eyes, Polish-American newspapers, with the exception of organs of the extreme Right and Left, treated the explosive Polish-Soviet issue with comparative moderation. No paper made the issue the sole criterion in deciding which of the rival Presidential candidates to support

THAT the foreign-language press in the United States provides for an important sector of the American community a lively and useful forum on foreign policy was strikingly illustrated by debate in the Polish-language press which preceded the recent Presidential election. Although the press summary which follows is limited to views touching the Polish question, it should be borne in mind that the views of the Polish-language press, like those of its English-language counterpart, are strongly affected by the positions of the various papers on domestic issues. Discussion of the Polish issue in the election was strongly conditioned by the facts that the Polish-American readers of the press are in great majority farm and factory workingmen, during the past decade traditionally Democratic; that the majority of the Polish-American papers

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are the official organs of Catholic and lay fraternal organizations with mass memberships, and that the Polish-American publishers of non-organizational papers are business men.

Four groups of papers may be distinguished:

- 1) The ultra-conservative and bitterly anti-Soviet papers speaking for the ~~KNAPP~~ National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent). These papers are independently owned.
- 2) The Polish-language organ of the ~~IWO~~ International Workers Order and other traditionally pro-Soviet papers.
- 3) The Catholic press, largely made up of Catholic fraternal organs.
- 4) The lay fraternal press

The ~~KNAPP~~ist papers were staunchly anti-Roosevelt in discussion of the Polish question, while the ~~IWO~~ and Soviet-friendly papers were equally firmly pro-Roosevelt on the same issue. The bulk of the Catholic press, following adoption of a resolution of confidence by the ~~Polish~~ Polish Roman Catholic Union, second largest Polish-American fraternal organization, swung from a neutral stand to more or less strong support of President Roosevelt on the Polish issue, with a minority officially neutral but in fact supporting his opponent. The lay fraternal press, represented by the organ of the Polish National Alliance, the largest of the Polish-American fraternal societies, was officially neutral, but tended to support Roosevelt on the Polish question.

*Post-Election
Comment* Press comment following the election varied widely in its interpretation of the significance of the Polish issue in the campaign. The ~~KNAPP~~ist dailies, the New York ~~City~~ ~~Saint~~ and the Detroit ~~Michigan~~ ~~Polish~~, which had supported Dewey, made no attempt at interpretation and merely promised the President continued loyalty. Two

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important Chicago dailies with fraternal connections, *Dziennik Zwinnborg* and *Kuzinost Chicago*, neither of which had taken an official stand, expressed satisfaction that the Polish question had not been an issue in the campaign at all. The Left-wing IWO organization *Glos Ludowy* of Detroit and the liberal Detroit weekly *Free Slat* counted the result of the Polish vote a great defeat for the KNAPP. The pre-election delegation of the Polish American Congress had, said the *Glos Ludowy* 18 November, carried to the White House a threat of 6,000,000 votes. However, although millions of votes had been cast, in Detroit 90 per cent of the workers had voted for President Roosevelt and the same had been true in other areas with heavy Polish populations, such as Cook County, Illinois; Erie County, Pennsylvania; Wayne County, Michigan; and even in New Jersey.

The KNAPPist
press

The regular KNAPPist dailies, the New York *Nowy Swint* and the Detroit *Dziennik Polski*, based their arguments for support of Dewey on three of his statements on Poland — two made at the Pulaski Day celebration in New York 8 October, and one at the New York Herald Tribune Forum 18 October. The *Nowy Swint* of 26 October called him "a champion of the same ideals for which Woodrow Wilson had fought so nobly a quarter of a century ago". Dewey's "outspoken friendship for Poland" was contrasted with the President's silence on the same issue in his address before the Foreign Policy Association in New York 21 October. "For a long time," said the *Dziennik Polski* 25 October, "we sincerely believed that Poland had a true friend in President Roosevelt. It is difficult to retain this faith when not even a word of sympathy, let alone help, is forthcoming". The KNAPPist press also criticized the President's statement to the *Polish American Congress* delegation, referring to his admission of lack of

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information on the present situation in Poland, and countering his reference to the Poland of the future as a "representative and peace-loving nation" with a query: "Did the President mean to infer that he supports baseless Russian charges that Poland has aggressive designs on territory to which she is not rightfully entitled?"

While professing neutrality, the Cleveland daily *Indepesent Codzienna*, which stands close to the KNAPPist group, left no doubt in its treatment of news and in occasional comment that its sympathies were with Dewey. Dewey's statements on the Polish question were featured prominently, and the paper noted (19 October) that "Governor Dewey was just as favorably disposed to the Polish problem at a time when neither he nor anyone close to him knew that he would be a candidate for the Presidency." It questioned (1 November) the value of Roosevelt's statement to the Polish American Congress delegation.

The Buffalo *Kosciuszka dla Amerykanow*, largest Polish American daily, also professed neutrality but praised Dewey's statements on Poland and commented critically on Roosevelt's "silence" in his Polish American Congress interview.

*IWO and Other
Leftist Papers*

The IWO organ *Glos Ludowy* and the papers traditionally aligned with it questioned the value of Dewey's statements on Poland, and compared them with the position of what they called his isolationist backers, who, they said, had allowed Germany to carry out her designs of aggression. Attention was called to Herbert Hoover's participation with Dewey in the Pulaski Day Parade in New York, and the action of the Polish American Congress Committee in sending a delegation to the White House was criticized as a move intended to embarrass the President. The delegation, said the weekly *Gazeta Polarna* of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, 26 October, had shown no interest in the President's stand on domestic

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problems, but had concentrated its attention entirely on the Polish-Soviet controversy. The paper praised the President for not making any campaign promises "unworthy of a statesman and a real American patriot."

*The Catholic
Press Split*

A sharp swing in support for President Roosevelt appeared in a strong sector of the Catholic press 17 October when the Chicago weekly ~~Wiennik~~ *Wiennik* Polski, organ of the ~~Polish~~ Roman Catholic Union of America, published a resolution of the Union's board of directors expressing "faith in the judgment of F.D. Roosevelt relative to the future of Poland," and declared that in conformity with this decision the paper was supporting the President. The Chicago Catholic daily ~~Wiennik~~ *Wiennik* Chicago, which had previously indicated some support for Dewey, then came out clearly for Roosevelt, and thereafter conducted a vigorous campaign for his re-election. The value of Dewey's remarks on Poland was questioned in view of the fact that he was not burdened by official responsibility for his statements. His declaration to the Herald Tribune Forum that "admittedly Poland has differences with Russia that go deep in history and for which there is no single solution" was cited as showing that "Mr. Dewey is not yet sure of the justice of the Polish cause."

A declaration of the clergy of the Polish Catholic Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, defending Dewey against the assertion of House Majority Leader McCormack that the Republican candidate had raised the Polish issue in order to win Polish votes, and published in place of the usual editorial in the *Army Signal* 3 November as a "very significant declaration," was generally passed over by the Catholic press.

Other Catholic papers were almost completely impartial. The organ of the Franciscan Order, the Milwaukee daily ~~Wiennik~~ *Wiennik* Polski, whose comment on Polish-

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Soviet relations has been sharply anti-Soviet, showed no preference whatever, though it was the only daily to print (26 October) an Overseas News Agency dispatch from Washington reporting German propaganda talks against Roosevelt and for Dewey heard over the Nazi-sponsored Polish-language radio station "White Eagle." The Pittsburgh Catholic independent weekly Pittsburgh Courier endorsed no candidate, but its comments on the campaign appeared to favor Dewey. Comparing (27 October) Dewey's speech at the Herald Tribune Forum with Roosevelt's address to the Foreign Policy Association, the Pittsburgh Courier saw in Dewey's attitude "good will" and "justice," while Roosevelt's address was "disappointing" in its failure to mention the Polish question.

The Catholic weekly Przegląd Katolicki, in an editorial 20 October, declared that both parties were "generous with words, but promise the Poles nothing concrete in the event of victory."

Polish National Alliance Organ

Most important of the papers which took no party stand on the election was the Chicago daily Dziennik Zwiastowy, organ of the powerful Polish National Alliance. The Dziennik Zwiastowy 11 October praised Dewey's statements on Poland, and called him "a warm and objective promoter of the Polish cause." On 16 October it commended Roosevelt for his statement to the Polish American Congress delegation as an "important political document." And on 30 October the paper published without comment, a statement made by Charles Troziarek, president of the Polish National Alliance and of the Polish American Congress, that he would vote for President Roosevelt.

Place in Poland

The New York Socialist weekly Pracownik, which has been consistently anti-Soviet, supported the Liberal Party ticket headed by President Roosevelt and carried no paid advertising favoring Dewey.

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It did, however, comment favorably on Dewey's Pulaski Day statements on Poland, and acclaimed as "an important political event" the visit of the Polish Congress Committee's delegation to the White House.

In its first issue since its temporary discontinuance in August, the New York weekly ~~of~~ 29 October, endorsed the re-election of President Roosevelt in an editorial by Michael ~~X~~ Pankiewicz. Pankiewicz praised the President as "the strongest and best exponent of America's interest in international affairs," but the paper carried in the same issue a paid advertisement for Dewey quoting the Moscow ~~X~~ *Pravda* as opposed to Dewey's election because of his friendly attitude toward Poland.

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