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Peter Sawicki

University of Windsor, sawickip@uwindsor.ca

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"SO LONG AS WE STILL LIVE: POLISH EFFORTS IN ESTABLISHING A
MILITARY RECRUITMENT CENTER IN NORTH AMERICA DURING THE
SECOND WORLD WAR."

By

Peter Sawicki

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MILITARY RECRUITMENT CENTER IN NORTH AMERICA DURING THE
SECOND WORLD WAR

By

Peter Sawicki

APPROVED BY:

A. Pole
Department of History

R. Nelson, Advisor
Department of History

September 24, 2021

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ABSTRACT

Following their retreat to Great Britain in 1940, the Polish government and its military sought out fresh reserves to reinforce their depleted armed forces. With mainland Europe being overrun by the enemy, the Poles turned to the prospect of recruiting from the Polish émigré community on the American continent (Polonia). A generation earlier, over 20,000 Polish-Americans had enlisted to fight for the liberation of their homeland in the Blue Army. Seeking to recreate this success, the Poles established a recruitment center in Windsor, Ontario and a training camp in Owen Sound, Ontario. Despite their efforts, by 1942, the Poles only managed to attract just over 800 recruits to their military. The lack of recruits can be linked to several factors such as the Polish government's mistreatment of Polish-American veterans from the First World War, a changing and more North Americanized youth within the Polonia, and a lack of cultural awareness on the part of the Polish government in terms of what North American Poles prioritized.

*Dedicated to the volunteers and members of the Polish Armed Forces that served in
Canada and the United States during the First and Second World War.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
HISTORIOGRAPHY	3
SOURCES/METHODOLOGY	6
POPULATION ANALYSIS	9
1917 RECRUITMENT	13
BUILD UP TO RECRUITMENT: NEGOTIATIONS AND PREPARATION	20
THE MILITARY.....	32
CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE POLISH SOLDIER	39
CONTROVERSY	43
CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS.....	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
VITA AUCTORIS	55

Following the two month invasion of Poland in 1939, a large contingent of the Polish military as well as the majority of the Polish Navy managed to escape through Romania, Lithuania, and Latvia, eventually regrouping in France and Britain. In 1940, after losing the majority of its military strength following the disastrous defeats during the Battle of France, the Polish military (under the direction of the Polish Government in Exile, which itself was fleeing from Paris to London) sought new sources of labor to fill the ranks of its depleted armed forces. While early attempts to free the thousands of Poles interned in the Soviet Union proved unfruitful, the exiled Polish government in London turned to the New World. With the memories of Haller's Blue Army, which had brought over 22,000 volunteer soldiers from North America to the Polish banner during the First World War fresh in their minds, many in the Polish military and political leadership thought that the North American Polonia (Polish émigré communities) in the United States and Canada would once again answer the call to arms.

In 1941, after negotiations with both the Canadian and United States governments, the Poles opened a military mission in Windsor, Ontario, which attempted to recruit Americans and Canadians into the Polish military. The expectations were enormous. Military officials estimated that tens of thousands of men would volunteer, and millions of dollars in gold and currency were earmarked and deposited into the Bank of Canada to pay for the recruitment and training of soldiers. One year later, in 1942, the recruitment center closed its doors having only recruited just over 800 people. The Polish government turned its attention to the new army forming in the Soviet Union under General Anders, but the question as to why the North American effort during the Second World War failed has gone relatively unanswered.

There are several factors that, in combination, despite the massive success in recruitment during the First World War, led to the failure of the recruitment effort, which this paper seeks to explore. One was the relative mistreatment, or rather, failure of the Polish Government to take care of demobilized Blue Army volunteers following the First World War. Second, the Polonia had changed throughout the interwar years in terms of culture and economic status, which led to a disconnect between Polish officials and the Polonia's leadership. The methods used in recruitment, especially the patriotic propaganda that can be found in the Polish army newspaper *Odsiecz*, also prove that Polish officials overestimated the patriotism and loyalty towards the London based government-in-exile by the average Polish-American. Their efforts did little to sway the majority of Polish-Americans to risk their lives for Poland. The North American recruitment differed from the more successful later recruitment of General Anders' Polish army, which emerged from the Soviet Union following war being declared between the USSR and Germany. Recruits in Anders' Army were almost entirely comprised of Polish Siberian exiles, political prisoners, and those who had survived Soviet purges such as the Katyn massacre, and were therefore far more eager to join the Polish military and undertake the harrowing journey to the British Raj where they would find freedom. Those in North America already lived in the free world and had far more left to lose in terms of material possessions and liberty when joining a foreign army. By examining these issues, one can draw a clearer picture of the general mood of Polish-Americans in the early 1940s and recognize how detached the Polish Government in Exile was to the situation on the ground.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The topic of the Polish North American recruitment during the Second World War is one that has been barely examined by historians. Józef Smolinski, wrote a historical overview of the events in his book *Polonia Obu Ameryk W Wojskowo-Mobilizacyjnych Planach Rządu RP Na Uchodźstwie (1939-1945)* [The Polonia of Both Americas in the Military Mobilization Plans of the Polish Government-in-exile (1939-1945)] published in 1998. Smolinski points to four reasons as to why there has not been much written on these events. First, he blames censorship in the Polish People's Republic which discouraged historians from promoting the Polish Armed Forces in the West and their role in helping defeat fascism. Second, he explains that Western historians, researchers, and politicians of the North American Polonia shy away from topics that do not show a story of triumph or success on their part. Third, he points to the physical restraints employed on Polish historians behind the Iron Curtain and their inability to access archival sources in the West. Finally, he comments on the scattered nature of the sources that pertain to the recruitment effort and the difficulty of finding and gathering them from the various and often hidden repositories found in different Polish organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere.¹

Censorship and a taboo regarding writing about the Poles who fought on the western front, has led to this topic being largely ignored by Polish historians until very recently. While there were periods of exchange between Polish and émigré historians, the mutual trust and cooperation between the two camps fluctuated depending on the

¹ Jozef Smolinski, *Polonia Obu Ameryk W Wojskowo-Mobilizacyjnych Planach Rządu RP Na Uchodźstwie 1939-1945* [The Polonia of Both Americas in the Military Mobilization Plans of the Polish Government-in-exile 1939-1945] (Warsaw: Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny AON, 1998), 5.

government in power, the power of the Catholic Church in Poland, the power of the USSR in Polish politics, and the rise of and crackdown against democratic forces such as Solidarity. While there was a gradual thaw in the availability to travel overseas and therefore access archives, the nationalist émigré Poles and Marxist Polish historians rarely struck a collaborative tone with one another.² Since there was great difficulty in obtaining visas and passports in order to travel to the West, only those historians who were seen as being friendly to the established historical and political narrative were allowed to travel outside of the Iron Curtain. The émigré communities, aware of this fact, were mistrustful of visiting Polish historians and guarded their archival sources.³ After the Potsdam Conference conceded political control from the London Polish government to the Lublin Poles, the government-in-exile was left in a defunct state with no real income and without political authority. Many documents and sources were left without a proper home and many disappeared or were taken home and forgotten about before the Sikorski Institute in London could be established and serve as a keeper for the Western Polish sources. Fortunately, since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, organizations such as the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej [Institute for National Memory] have pushed for historians to write on the many aspects of Polish history which were ignored during the Cold War.⁴

Some historians, such as Frank Kmietowicz in his 1984 book *Polish Armed Forces in Canada During World War II* have attempted to frame the recruitment efforts

² Adam Bromke, *The Meanings and Uses of Polish History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 13-14.

³ Bromke, 112-13.

⁴ Bohdan Wroński and Ryszard Dembiński, "The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London: Historical Antecedents," *The Polish Review* 30, no. 2 (1985): 175-77.

as a success. As an émigré historian writing for the North American Polonia, he attempted to explain why only 722 men (his estimated number) joined the Polish military in Canada. He cites three difficulties that had to be overcome by the Polish military including issues surrounding citizenship and nationality; patriotism and economic status; and population size⁵.

Kmietowicz as well as others like A. Balawyder in his 1980 *The Maple Leaf and the White Eagle* attempt to frame the actions of the North American Polonia as successful, while in reality, despite the past precedent from the First World War, the expectations of the Polish recruitment in North America were not met⁶.

When looking at the issue of recruitment in Canada, it is hard to ignore several logical factors. One, when looking for soldiers in a foreign land one must rely only on volunteers, and not recruiting through compulsion. Two, good results in recruitment can be achieved especially when the volunteer finds themselves living in a difficult economic situation, or is unusually patriotic. Three, under normal circumstances, you can expect those that volunteer to be around one percent of the people capable of military service. Looking through this angle at the Polish recruitment in Canada should not be characterized as a failure. [...] After only three months, of action, they created and ran 36 Centers of the Friends of the Polish Soldier, which brought around one thousand volunteers to Windsor in the span of nine months.⁷

Furthermore, Kmietowicz also highlights the generosity of the American and Canadian Polonia, citing many material gifts such as ambulances and cars, and also the financial contributions which contributed to the recruitment effort closing its doors with a surplus of CAD\$63.79 and USD\$1052.98.⁸

⁵ Frank Kmietowicz, *Polskie Siły Zbrojne W Kanadzie Podczas Drugiej Wojny Światowej [Polish Armed Forces in Canada During World War II]* (Windsor: Komitet Windsorczyków, 1984), 55 - 6.

⁶ Aloysius Balawyder, *The Maple Leaf and White Eagle Canadian-Polish Relations, 1918-1978* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 111 – 20.

⁷ Kmietowicz, 55.

⁸ Kmietowicz, 58.

It seems as though, despite the objective failure of the North American Polonia to enlist into the Polish Armed Forces, revisionist history in North America is attempting to downplay the disaster and frame it as a, at least partial, triumph. Perhaps it is due to the personal connection these historians had to the Polonia which could be an attempt to preserve their community's record.

Recently, Dr. Sławomir Moćkun's 2015 book *Bezpieczna Przystań* [Safe Haven] breathed new life into the research on this subject. Moćkun described Polish-Canadian diplomatic relations during the Second World War as confused and disjointed, showing the chaos which the government had been plunged into following its defeats on the European Continent. Moćkun describes the historiographical state of the subject as "[...] incomplete and chaotic. Even monographs on the diplomatic dealings of Poland during the war pay little attention to Polish-Canadian relations."⁹ *Bezpieczna Przystań* also describes several of the social issues that the recruitment effort encountered from the Canadians and the Polonia. These issues are mainly drawn from the information mentioned in reports and dispatches to the government in London from recruitment centers in Canada and serve to reinforce the narrative that the government in London acted without much thought to the wants and customs that had developed within the North American Polonia.

SOURCES/METHODOLOGY

As there is little written about the Polish military presence in Canada during the Second World War, much of the information discussed in this paper will come from

⁹ Sławomir Moćkun, *Bezpieczna Przystań [Safe Haven]* (Warsaw: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2015), 7.

primary sources. Memoirs, newspapers, and military/diplomatic reports and cables exchanged between the Canadian and Polish governments are the primary means to piecing together what happened. Many sources have since been lost to time, or silenced and lost in the climate of censorship and mistrust that followed the Second World War.

The memoirs of Franciszek Arciszewski, who was the first Polish officer to spearhead the recruitment project on the ground, and Marian Walentynowicz who was the illustrator for the military newspaper *Odsiecz*, both which cover the recruitment, were written after the war, were consulted. They are useful in terms of being more candid about the experience of being a Polish soldier stationed in Canada as well as discussing some personal problems and reservations both had about how the mission was being led. On the other hand, their experience, as discussed in their memoirs, can be clouded in bias, retrospectively knowing that the mission would ultimately fail, and their memories affected, for better or worse, by the time that had elapsed from the events to the time of their writing.

Newspapers, both the army newspaper *Odsiecz* that was published by the Poles and the local papers such as the *Windsor Daily Star* and *Detroit Free Press* contain the daily occurrences around the camp in Owen Sound and the recruitment centre in Windsor. They report on special events and exercises that the Polish soldiers and recruits participated in and display the public face of the recruitment effort. The army newspaper *Odsiecz* is especially useful to help analyze the propaganda messages the Poles wished to send to potential American and Canadian recruits. It is mainly through their writings in the military newspaper that one can see the romantic and revolutionary character of the government-in-exiles' message.

A chronicle of the commandant of the Owen Sound training camp has also been preserved. This document spans the greater part of the training camp's operation and provides insights into its management and the disposition of the soldiers it housed. The chronicle discusses problems such as desertion, ethnic tensions, and the relationship with the local Canadian population of Owen Sound among more mundane goings-on in the camp. Along with other dispatches sent from officers in Canada to England, the chronicle must be treated with some caution. As the recruitment effort failed to achieve its goals month after month, some documents begin to assign blame to particular methods and people within the organization. As documents, they should be treated with a slight suspicion of making the writer appear as the competent party, while describing others actions as being those that brought about failure. While the blame put on some people/events may indeed be warranted, and can provide reasons as to why the endeavour failed, it lacks an account from all members of the recruitment, and so must also leave room for the defense of those whose record are unavailable by letting their actions speak for themselves¹⁰.

Military and diplomatic reports, while containing statistical information and event logs, are often confusing and sometimes contradictory. Historians, using different source materials and methodologies have put the amount of recruits between 700 and 4000.¹¹ The amount of recruits gathered in North America tends to change from report to report, and orders sent to North America contradict previous established procedures or seem unaware of the situation on the ground. Arciszewski discusses the problems of

¹⁰ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, in The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum London England, C-28.

¹¹ Kmietowicz, 55.

communicating with the European continent during the Second World War. Transatlantic diplomatic cables were slow and the Poles were low on the priority list when it came to sending them; regular transatlantic flights did not become the norm until midway through the war.¹² These delays in communication often confused the plans of the men in North America with those supervising the project in London. In many cases, telegrams with amended orders arrived weeks or months after they were dated, creating a frustrating cycle of scrapping and restarting parts of the program.¹³

The lack of communication also led to planning problems and a lack of mutual understanding of the scope and breadth of the project. In one case, Arciszewski planned for one division to form which was to be commanded and staffed by Polish Americans: that is until new orders arrived telling him that a cadre of Polish officers would be arriving in Canada to command three divisions, ultimately scrapping his plans and breaking promises that he had made to the American Polonia about the vision of the army forming in Canada.¹⁴ These lapses in understanding not only highlight one of the ways that confusion of purpose plagued the recruitment effort but also how unreliable and confusing reports between officers in Canada and the commanders in London were without the understanding of the full breadth of the project.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

In order to properly gauge the success or failure of the Second World War recruitment drive, some baseline facts must be established. According to the decennial

¹² F.A Arciszewski, *Patrzac Krytycznie [Looking Critically]* (London: Sklad Główny Katolicki Ośrodek Wydawniczy Veritas, 1972), 214.

¹³ Arciszewski, 221.

¹⁴ Arciszewski, 223.

census, the population of foreign-born Poles residing in the United States was 1,184,412 in 1910 and 1,400,495 in the year 1920.¹⁵ This means that the 23,000 recruits that joined the Blue Army during the First World War far exceeded the proposed 1% threshold that Kmietowicz argues would join during an ideal voluntary recruitment. Unfortunately, the census may not provide an accurate count of Poles living in the United States in this era, as Poland was still under the occupation of the partitioning powers in 1910 and in several territorial wars in 1920. Therefore, the returns may have included several different ethnic groups aside from Poles that lived in the area such as Ukrainians, Belarussians, and Germans. Polish as a mother tongue of the foreign-born population was 943,781 in 1910 and 1,077,392 in 1920.¹⁶ The total number of Polish speakers in the United States in the year 1900 was approximately 1,903,000 counting both foreign and domestic born peoples (self reported). The threshold of 1% is indeed close to accurate when considering what proportion of the population would join on a voluntary basis.

The 1940 census shows a more detailed analysis of the Polish-American population. Having achieved nationhood, it was now possible to properly ascertain who identified as being of Polish descent. The census also breaks down the male to female ratio, adding further clarity to how large the pool of recruits actually was, as the Polish military mainly targeted young men.

In 1940, the United States was home to 993,479 people born in Poland (523,543 males) and 969,360 American people born with at least one parent born in Poland

¹⁵ Jung and Gibson, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-2000* (Washington: U.S Census Bureau, 2006), Table 4.

¹⁶ Jung and Gibson, Table 6.

(513,560 males). This means that there were at least 1,037,103 men of immediate Polish descent living in the United States at the time the recruitment effort took place.¹⁷ According to the recruitment rolls found in the commandant's log from the Kościuszko camp in Owen Sound, there were only 812 men that were trained and transported to England: 30 officers, 92 non-commissioned officers and 690 privates.¹⁸ This number also includes some Polish soldiers that had been sent to Canada from England to help run the camp. Eight hundred and twelve recruits are much lower than the expected 1% of the population (10,371) that Kmietowicz hypothesized and far lower than the tens of thousands that were expected to enlist by the heads of the Polish military.

The Canadian Polonia was much smaller than the one that existed in the United States. In total there were approximately 175,000 persons of Polish origin in Canada.¹⁹ According to the 1941 census, there were only 87,735 European born Poles residing in Canada.²⁰ Just under half of these were women, and there was also a large proportion of older workers who would be unfit for frontline service.²¹ Although these men were not turned away by the Polish military, they were relegated to rear echelon roles such as office workers, telegraph operators, radio operators, aircraft technicians, mechanics, electricians, and cooks, tailors, carpenters, locksmith, etc., often against the will of the recruit who wanted to serve in combat.²²

¹⁷ 6th Census of the United States: 1940, *Population: Nativity and Parentage of the White Population, Country of Origin of the Foreign Stock*, 3.

¹⁸ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, C-28.

¹⁹ *Documents on Canadian External Affairs 1939-1931*, Volume 8 Tome 2, 980.

²⁰ Eighth Census of Canada 1941: Vol. 2 *Ages of the Population*, 260.

²¹ Eighth Census of Canada 1941: Vol. 2 *Ages of the Population*, 261.

²² Smolinski, 67.

The Canadian Polonia was much younger in terms of establishing themselves in their adopted country compared to their counterparts in the United States. This meant that the community in Canada, while enthusiastic, would not be in a position to fulfill the demands placed on it by the Polish military, a fact not lost on the London government. Major J Sobecki noted this in a memo titled *Biuletyn Zjednocenia Zrzeszen Polskich W Kanadzie* [Bulletin on the Unification of Polish Organizations in Canada] from London in 1941.

The Polonia in Canada is worth much for our cause, it is relatively young, very generous, strongly tied with Poland, and much more idealistic than the Polonia in the United States. On the other hand, the [Canadian] Polonia cannot carry out [their mission] It does not have the people to organize it and does not have the funds needed to begin the process. If we wish to use the Polonia in Canada for this goal, if we wish to keep their support for us and to form our army in their country, then we need to plan our propaganda campaign with the help of these people and begin paying for it from our own sources of funding.²³

Indeed, the Canadian Polonia maintained close relations with the Polish military presence in Canada, especially the communities between Windsor and Toronto. They raised money through fundraisers and supported the cause with material means. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions placed on the recruitment effort by the Canadian government there were only 12 Canadian citizens who managed to enlist in the Polish Military, while just over a hundred Polish citizens in Canada answered the call to arms.²⁴

Both sources of population statistics can be problematic as they examine metrics such as birthplace and citizenship in order to ascertain nationality rather than what the individual's family identified as. Interwar Poland was a cosmopolitan area, with its borders artificially created out of the old European empires. This meant that many

²³ General Sosnkowski Collection. National Ossoliński Institute Wrocław Poland, 16515.

²⁴ Smolinski, 73.

different ethnicities such as Jews, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, etc. were counted as being Poles. It could be argued that some of these people would lack a sufficient enough connection to the Polish state to join her military.

1917 RECRUITMENT

In order to effectively critique the Polish government's recruitment effort during the Second World War, one could use the 1917 Blue Army recruitment as an effective benchmark to gauge what could be expected from the Polonia and to look at the key differences between the two attempts. Examining the relatively successful 1917 recruitment also provides clues as to why a similar attempt failed merely 24 years later.

During the First World War, the American Polonia was integral in pressuring President Wilson to include a promise to reinstate a sovereign Polish nation in his Fourteen Points. The American Polonia was very active even in the years before the war.²⁵ Organizations such as the Polish Falcons of America promoted a revolutionary spirit amongst young Polish-Americans. They promoted a martial lifestyle and held training exercises in military drills, marksmanship, and tactics, thus preparing for what they believed to be an inevitable war for Polish independence. The Polish Falcons and other similar organizations had chapters all throughout the United States, and had tens of thousands of members involved in their paramilitary programs where they trained as 'toy soldiers'²⁶ in anticipation for real combat.

²⁵ Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland 1914-1920: A Study in the Influence on American Policy of Minority Groups of Foreign Origin* (Yale: Archon Books, 1972), 10-3.

²⁶ Anna Jaroszynska – Kirchmann, *Letters from Readers in the Polish American Press, 1902-1969* (New York: Lexington Books, 2014), 485-86.

With so many young Polish men ready, trained, and inspired for war, it was not unexpected that in 1917, there were 38,000 men signed up for the Polish Army forming in Canada. The plan was very grass roots in nature. Officers had been secretly trained in a school set up at Cambridge Springs, as well as at the University of Toronto, and were drawn almost entirely from qualified Polish Americans.²⁷ A military camp was constructed at Niagara-on-the-Lake where Polish Americans would arrive, train, and prepare for their departure to France.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski, the world renowned pianist and the future Prime Minister of the Polish Republic, became the figurehead of the recruitment effort, donating from his vast fortune and traveling the United States in order to rally the Polonia to the cause. Paderewski called for an army of 100,000 Poles to rise up and take the fight to their homeland.²⁸ The camp commander was Colonel Arthur LaPan, a Canadian who soon began to see the Polish Americans as a capable and dedicated fighting force. In the end, around 24,000 Polish Americans made it through training and departed to join the army forming under General Jozeph Haller in France. The army was equipped by the French government and was given surplus sky-blue uniforms, thus gaining the moniker: Haller's Blue Army.

Morale and enthusiasm about the independent Polish army forming in Canada was high. Entire Polish-American communities would hold long and ceremonious parades from recruitment offices to Mass at the local church, and then to the train station, wishing their sons well in their crusade to liberate their long lost homeland. The entire

²⁷ B.M Biskupski, "Canada and the Creation of a Polish Army, 1914-1918," *The Polish Review* 44, no. 3 (1999): 356.

²⁸ Stanley Pliska, "The 'Polish-American Army' 1917-1921," *The Polish Review* 10, no.3 (1965): 49.

recruitment process was funded by grass roots means as a Polish government with any substantial cash flow did not yet exist. The Polonia would raise funds through social events, canvassing in local businesses, and passing around donation baskets at local Polish Roman Catholic Churches, which were in many cases the central hub of Polish-American communities.²⁹

While technically under French high-command, the Blue Army maintained independence by having their own officer corps and funding the majority of their expedition. The American volunteers joined with thousands of Polish soldiers already engaged in the fight from Europe and diaspora communities from all over the world. Despite their late arrival, the Blue Army saw combat during the final months of the war. The Blue Army had sworn loyalty to the Paris based Polish National Committee headed by Roman Dmowski. Their loyalty to the Paris government would eventually cause problems for the American volunteers. Jozef Pilsudski and his legionaries had seized power in Warsaw and declared an independent Poland before Dmowski could arrive and establish his own government. Pilsudski viewed the Polish National Committee with suspicion and opposed the Blue Army's arrival in Poland as he believed an opposition with their own military could mean civil war in the young nation.³⁰

Although the North American soldiers under General Haller fought in several engagements in France, they were robbed of their dream of marching victorious into Poland as its liberators. The interwar period was especially harsh for the *Hallerczykcy* as the soldiers were to be known as. The mutual mistrust between Pilsudski and Dmowski

²⁹ Teofil Lachowicz, Czyn Zbrojny *Amerykańskiej* Polonii (Lecture, 100th Anniversary of Armed Effort of American Polonia, Troy Michigan, October 15 2017).

³⁰ Kmiotowicz, 7.

led to several formations of the Blue Army to be merged with the regular Polish Army, losing its identity. Other formations were sent to the Lodz region where they would eventually be interned and disbanded. The ostracization as well as frustration felt by the legionaries can be best summed up by Wojciech Dziuba who wrote to the Polish American Press in early December 1920 "Instead the truth is that everyone, officials as well as the civilian population, treated us like foreigners and officers ridiculed us that we came to Poland for acres of fields."³¹ This distrust and suspicion of North American Poles only coming to liberate the lands for the spoils of war can be further seen in the shocking move to disband the army as well as intern its members during the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. Despite losing the Kiev expedition and cutting a retreat back towards his eventual last stand at the Battle of Warsaw, Jozef Pilsudski ordered that the Blue army be officially demobilized in March of 1920 (despite most of the unit being already disbanded) and its members interned near the town of Skierniewice in central Poland where they stayed for the rest of the year.³²

Abandoned and most likely feeling unappreciated by the new Polish nation, the *Hallerczykcy* languished in internment with no place to go. The Polish government was busy fighting a war and the United States did not recognize them as American soldiers and therefore had no obligation to aid them in their return to the United States. The American Polonia, seeing its sons in disgrace, lobbied the American Congress to bring about their return to the USA. On March 10th, 1920 the 66th Congress passed a resolution that read:

³¹ Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, 492.

³² Kmietowicz, 7.

Whereas there are now in concentration camps at or near Warsaw, Poland, and have been since November, 1919, upward of twelve thousand residents of the United States of Polish origin who were equipped and transported at the expense of Great Britain and France from the United States to Poland and who were engaged in active service in behalf of the allied cause during the war; and whereas they are desirous of returning to their homes in this country and are without means to accomplish such repatriation: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that authority be, and hereby is, given to the Secretary of War to use such Army transports as may be available to bring back to the United States from Danzig, Poland, such residents of the United States of Polish origin as were engaged in the war on the side of the allied and associated powers.³³

The wording in the resolution makes clear that the *Hallerczykcy* were fighting on behalf of the allied cause, and the inclusion of the term concentration camp shows that their internment was the result of political and ethnic mistrust and not that of acting dishonorably in wartime. The internment of the American Poles shattered the beliefs and opinions held by many in the Polonia that they would be recognized as an integral part of bringing about the rebirth of Poland. Demobilization came as a shock to many of the North American volunteers. They did not understand why they had been asked to leave the ranks while war was still being fought and new conflicts were just over the horizon. They were not draftees or conscripts, but volunteers trained in the Falcons for years in anticipation of this war of liberation and independence for their ancestor's land.³⁴

Out of the approximately 20,720³⁵ North American volunteers that had made it through basic training and into France, 12,546 returned to the USA through the American Navy.³⁶ The final group of volunteers arrived back in New York on February

³³ Statutes at Large 66th US Congress. Session Two 1919-1920. Chapter 96, March 10, 1920.

³⁴ Teofil Lachowicz, *Polish Freedom Fighters on American Soil: Polish Veterans in America from the Revolutionary War to 1939* (Minneapolis: Harbors Press, 2011), 92.

³⁵ Kmietowicz, 8.

³⁶ Lachowicz, 118.

16, 1921 with 1285 men and 24 wives on board.³⁷ Before the final ship departed, General Haller came to the camp to bid the departing soldiers farewell; his speech underlines the sorrow and frustration he felt on behalf of each of his veterans:

I know that you have experienced a lot of heartache here, you often were treated badly by certain people, but you must not forget that, because you were soldiers of your own will. Poland gave you nothing because it is a country ravaged by war. You are taking along with you to America scars, wounds, lost health, but remember everywhere and at all times, that you are a soldier, and as a soldier, must suffer for all.³⁸

Polish-Americans that came out to see their sons returning from Europe in glory were instead met with disheveled veterans without military honors or pay. Their former sky blue uniforms were faded and literally falling apart at the seams due to the corrosive nature of the delousing baths each passenger was subjected to on their return voyage.³⁹ The Polish community rallied and pooled together money in order to buy the veterans a new suit as well as train tickets and pocket change to cover travel expenses back to their hometowns. In the end, each soldier received a combined total of approximately \$25.00 worth of money and goods and each officer approximately \$50.00 combined from the Polish state and donations from the American Polonia.⁴⁰

Upon returning to their hometowns, the struggle for reintegration into American society amplified. Returning veterans of the Blue Army were two or three years late to securing jobs and taking advantage of the positions that had become available for American veterans of the Great War. Many *Hallerczykcy* had difficulty explaining and proving their status as veterans as they were not veterans of the U.S Army and had little documentation proving or explaining their role in the war. Many Polish-Americans

³⁷ Lachowicz, 118.

³⁸ Chojanacki J, "Jak Nas Zegnał General Josef Haller [How General Haller Bid Farewell]" *Weteran*, March 1940, 2.

³⁹ Lachowicz, 117.

⁴⁰ Lachowicz, 116.

struggled for work in the post-war years and often found themselves fighting for jobs with other marginalized groups such as African Americans as was the case in the city of Detroit.⁴¹ In order to aid their veterans, the Polish-American community once again created grassroots charitable organizations to take the place of official governmental assistance.

The Polish Army Veterans Association of America was created as a veteran's club that aided and funded veteran care for veterans of the Blue Army. It consisted of 141 posts scattered throughout the cities of the USA and was divided up into 10 districts.⁴² The Polish Army Veterans Association of America provided funding for medical treatment for wounded veterans, made stipends available for the widows of those killed in action, and aided veterans in securing jobs and positions in the communities they lived in.

Surprisingly, the Polish Army Veterans Association of America continued, for the most part, to be fervent and patriotic supporters of the Polish state, despite their treatment by the Post-War Polish government, and was an integral tool to recruit and spread information for the Polish military efforts in North America during the Second World War. The veterans of the Haller's Army were, just like in their formation in 1917, self-sufficient and separate from the Polish Government, and it was not until 1998 when the Polish Government finally officially acknowledged their contributions to the liberation of the Polish state by erecting a monument to them in Warsaw.⁴³

⁴¹ Thaddeus C Radzialowski, *Ethnic Conflict and the Polish Americans of Detroit, 1920-1942 in The Polish presence in Canada and America*, (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1982), 200-02.

⁴² Lachowicz, 141-42.

⁴³ Teofil Lachowicz, "Czyn Zbrojny Amerykańskiej Polonii" (Lecture, 100th Anniversary of Armed Effort of American Polonia, Troy Michigan, October 15 2017).

By examining the disaster and dishonour that befell the Polish-American volunteers during the First World War, one can begin to piece together a historical reality that shows why many Polish-Americans did not trust the recruitment efforts of the Polish military during the Second World War. Veterans of Haller's Blue Army were imbedded in the social fabric of the North American Polonia and in many cases held positions of respect in local communities. The story of their mistreatment and the lack of support shown towards them by the Polish government was widely known and turned off many young people who, despite patriotic zeal, did not want to risk a repeat of history. Twenty years after the *Hallerczykcy* returned to America, General Duch, who at that time was in charge of the recruitment efforts of the Second World War, acknowledged that "the living memory of the hurt inflicted by the Polish state to the volunteers from America, [...] who after the end of the World War and the Polish-Soviet War returned to the USA without their matters being settled [...] remains a considerable roadblock to recruitment."⁴⁴ Thus, the scars of the 1917 recruitment, which itself had been a success, contributed to the failure of the recruitment in 1939.

BUILD UP TO RECRUITMENT: NEGOTIATIONS AND PREPARATION

A major reason that the North American recruitment effort failed was the long delays in negotiating and establishing the scope of the mission with the Canadian government. Having already entered into the Second World War themselves, the Canadians were willing to allow the Poles to set up recruitment infrastructure on their territory, yet they remained wary about the details of how the Polish recruitment could potentially negatively affect their own attempts at building an army.

⁴⁴Smolinski, 81-2.

The first contact between Canadian and Polish officials on the topic of recruitment in Canada came in the form of a memorandum from the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson to the Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King dated September 18, 1939. It expressed that the Consul General of Poland, Victor Podoski, had, on the 16th of September, inquired about the Canadian's position recruiting Poles to serve in the army forming in France. The request made clear that the Poles were only looking to recruit from the Polish citizens living in Canada and not from those Canadians of Polish ancestry.⁴⁵ The telegram from Consul Podoski also sought to include Polish citizens living in the United States in the Canadian recruitment, a fact that the Canadians were hesitant to agree to unless first agreed to with their then still neutral southern neighbour.⁴⁶

The negotiations proceeded quickly. The Canadians, understanding that the majority of the training would be done in France, which currently was still in the war, had little to worry about in terms of letting small units of recruits travel through Canada before departing to Europe. By late January 1940, the Poles and Canadians had come up with preliminary rules and regulations for the recruitment drive. The agreement outlined four points, the first being that "there is no objection to their recruiting their (Polish) own nationals within Canada."⁴⁷ This meant that the Canadians acknowledged that their Polish allies could recruit on their territory.

Second, "That no action with a view to recruiting in the United States should be taken within Canada and that in this connection the following understanding would have

⁴⁵ Documents on Canadian External Affairs 1939-1941, Volume 8 Tome 2, 972.

⁴⁶ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 973.

⁴⁷ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 978.

to be accepted."⁴⁸ This section outlined that the Poles were to refrain from using any means of communication linked to Canada i.e., radio, letter, advertisement etc., to recruit American citizens, a point pushed by the Canadians in order not to interfere with the American stance of neutrality in the war. The Canadians also reserved the right to object to the recruitment at any time if it threatened to cause "embarrassment to Canadian-United States relations."⁴⁹

Third, "that the Polish Government should accept the following conditions with regard to the degree of training to be permitted within Canada, the recruiting of British subjects and the recognition of service in the Canadian forces as discharging obligations for training services."⁵⁰ This section outlined that Canadian and British citizens would not be targeted by Polish recruiters and that the Polish recruits would be assembled in Canada with the majority of the training happening elsewhere.

Finally, section D of the agreement outlines "That the Canadian Government should undertake no financial obligations in connection with the enlistment of Polish nationals in Canada."⁵¹ This continued as a point of contention between the Canadian and Poles. The Polish, having lost the majority of their wealth during the September 1939 campaigns were in desperate need of loans to fund their military. Funds were scarce to come by and the Poles assumed that the Canadian government would help fund the recruitment; the Canadians on the other hand were busy finding funds for their own armed forces and could not spare any for a foreign power.⁵²

⁴⁸ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 978.

⁴⁹ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 978.

⁵⁰ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 979.

⁵¹ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 979.

⁵² Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 989.

Initially the plan for recruiting North Americans to fight for the Polish military were very similar in nature to the Polish-American volunteer force that was created during the First World War. The camp was to be set up and funded primarily through the American and Canadian Polonia. The force was to be led and trained by its officers drawn primarily from North America and maintain some semblance of independence from the Polish armed forces in terms of its recruits not being blended into existing units but fighting as a military unit solely formed from North American stock. The concept was coined the Kosciuszko Legion and it garnered support and enthusiasm from the Polonia especially amongst the Polish Falcons of America which had spearheaded the 1917 Blue Army recruitment.⁵³ Enthusiasm rose further when Franciszek Arciszewski, who was a known leader in the Falcon movement during the build-up to 1917 was dispatched from Europe to start establishing the framework for the Legion. Arciszewski contacted former comrades from the Blue Army as well as some Canadians, like Lieutenant Colonel Arthur La Pan, who had served as instructors at the Niagara-on-the-Lake camp who were eager and optimistic about the idea. Arciszewski wrote in his memoir, "I was convinced that as a former Hallerczyk and as the President of the Sokolstwo (Polish Falcons), along with my good friend Dr. Teofil Starzynski, President of the Polish Falcons of America, and one of the masterminds behind the first mobilization, we would achieve the results we were after."⁵⁴

Unfortunately for the Poles, following the capitulation of France, the situation on the ground changed. The Polish government barely escaped Paris and set up their operations in London. The defeat of France was a hard blow to the morale of the

⁵³ Arciszewski, 198-99.

⁵⁴ Arciszewski, 196.

Polonia and it became even more pressing to recruit soldiers in North America to make up for further losses sustained during the evacuation.

On the fourteenth of July 1940, Colonel Franciszek Arciszewski arrived in Halifax, sent there by the Polish government to speed up the negotiation process and start preparations for recruitment. Arciszewski's arrival can be seen as anecdotal to the chaos and miscommunication that plagued cross Atlantic traffic in the early war and therefore the Polish recruitment effort as a whole. When Arciszewski arrived in Canada he was shocked to find out that there was no one there to greet him and that there were no accommodations ready for him. Contacting the consulate, Arciszewski realized that the Polish diplomatic corps in Canada had no prior knowledge of his trip and that they had not received any orders from London regarding his role in the recruitment negotiations or of the funds that had been freed up for his use.⁵⁵ Poor communications like those that Arciszewski describes led to the initial process of establishing recruitment stations taking much longer than was necessary, outliving the initial excitement of the Polonia, and wasting time that could have been better spent garnering support from the United States and training new recruits.

The United States also made it difficult to negotiate an agreement. Much to the Poles' dismay, believing that their cause was just, and despite the willingness of many Polish Americans to aid them, the American government refused to meet with any delegation that was not a part of an embassy or consulate. Visa applications were repeatedly denied for Polish diplomats as the Poles lacked the means or refused to go

⁵⁵ Arciszewski, 208.

through proper diplomatic channels.⁵⁶ The Polish diplomatic embassy and consulates inside the United States were also problematic. Their loyalty to the government-in-exile was questionable and a lack of trust and faith from the Polish embassies and consulates towards the Polish military mission in Canada became apparent. The embassy presented their loyalty to the neutrality of the United States, they respected the United States' government more than their own in London, with President Roosevelt ranking paramount.⁵⁷

The embassy and consulates in the United States would continue to seemingly undermine the recruitment effort for the remainder of its existence often refusing to issue visas, limit resources that they were told to put towards recruitment in their jurisdiction, and obstruct the recruitment process in various other ways. From the outside, the actions of the diplomatic corps in the United States seem to be incompetent at best and treasonous at worst; however, the political situation and the establishment of the government-in-exile was chaotic and loyalties between party and nation were often complex. The embassies were looking out for their own and trying not to offend their American hosts. Because there was no recognized Polish government in 1917, there were no bureaucratic hurdles for the recruitment effort to overcome. The community based recruitment during the First World War was a combination of grassroots efforts from various cities, pooling their local resources towards a common goal.

The majority of the Polish nation's monetary wealth had been captured during its September 1939 defeat. The consecutive defeat in France had seen much of the Polish military's equipment and supplies once again abandoned and the Polish military and

⁵⁶ Arciszewski, 210.

⁵⁷ Smolinski, 56.

government fleeing with their lives to safety in England. The Canadian government, unwilling to extend loans to cover the Polish recruitment in their lands, demanded that the Poles present some kind of financial assurance that they had the means to pay for the planned camps in Canada. Financial difficulties on behalf of the Poles continued to be a sticking point which delayed the beginning of the mission. The Poles had assumed, perhaps naively, that their Canadian allies would have no problem helping fund their recruitment drive, but the Canadian government continued to affirm that it was not possible for them to do so.⁵⁸

Much has been written in recent years on the Wawel treasures, cultural artifacts dating back from the age of the medieval Polish Jagiellonian Dynasty, being sent to Canada during the Second World War for safe keeping. These historical and cultural treasures arrived by ship in Halifax on July 12, 1940 and were secretly stored in Ottawa until the war ended.⁵⁹ Little has been written on the large amount of Polish gold which was sent to the Bank of Canada in order to insure financial solvency on behalf of the Polish military mission in Canada. Indeed it was not until the Polish government had deposited \$4.5 million worth of gold into the Bank of Canada that the Canadians finally gave permission for the recruitment to begin on January 24th 1941.⁶⁰ Unfortunately the rest of the gold earmarked to be sent to the Canadian bank was seized by French authorities in Dakar and then surrendered to the Germans.⁶¹ Over a year was wasted in extended negotiations between the Canadian and Polish governments which mainly

⁵⁸ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 1002.

⁵⁹ Moćkun, 7.

⁶⁰ Arciszewski, 224.

⁶¹ Arciszewski, 207.

revolved around the matters of finance and the Polish optimism and expectation that their allies would shoulder the financial burden.

Once the financial difficulties were worked out, progress on establishing the recruitment camps accelerated. Led by Arciszewski, the mission established their headquarters in Windsor, Ontario, and a training camp in Owen Sound approximately 400km to the North. A seasoned negotiator, Arciszewski managed to use his influence in the North American Polonia to strike deals with local governments.⁶² In Windsor, he managed to secure three buildings rent-free from the city, promising to renovate them and put them to use in the war effort. The first was the old East Windsor City Hall for administrative offices, and medical inspection rooms. Second was the 'Henckel House' mansion on Sandwich Street (now Riverside Drive) and George Avenue as a headquarters and officers residence. Finally he secured the top floor of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company as a barracks which could hold up to 300 recruits before they were to be sent to their training camp in Owen Sound.⁶³

In Owen Sound, he managed to rent the recently closed North American Furniture Company building for \$450/month.⁶⁴ Owen Sound was chosen for its proximity to the Camp Borden Canadian Military Base which was supplied with state-of-the-art military equipment. The Poles hoped to work closely with the Canadian military and gain access to training and equipment from the base. *Camp Kościuszko*, as

⁶² Arciszewski, 227-28.

⁶³ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 2012.

⁶⁴ Arciszewski, 224.

the camp in Owen Sound was named, had room to house 2,000 officers and men with additional room for tents to lodge 3,000 more men in the summer months.⁶⁵

The size of the camp in Owen Sound, as well as the extra accommodations in Windsor, point to the fact that the Polish military mission in Canada expected that there would be a massive surge of recruits arriving and joining the Polish military. The extensive renovations and use of large manors and municipal buildings show that the Polish military was looking at establishing itself long-term in Canada and clung to the romantic hope that their ranks would soon swell with North American soldiers.

The issue of pay points to another reason why some have argued the majority of North American men joined the militaries of Canada and the United States instead of the Polish military. The Canadian military paid its Privates \$1.30 per day with an incremental raise of ten cents every three months until a rate of \$1.50 was reached. Bonus pay was provided for skills and trades as well as a bonus for having a spouse and children.⁶⁶ The Polish military only provided a pay of approximately \$1.00 CAD/day for a private: a wage much too low to attract anyone who had the option of joining the Canadian military instead. In order to make their rates more attractive, the Polish military decided to provide a 'Canadian bonus' to anyone recruited in Canada. The rates ranged from \$0.31 to \$0.55 cents per day⁶⁷ and made the pay comparable to that offered by the Canadian and American militaries. Despite comparable pay, rumors about the financial instability of the Polish mission worked to discourage potential recruits which opted to join the Canadian military instead.

⁶⁵ Documents on Canadian External Affairs, 2012.

⁶⁶ Library and Archives Canada, *Lest We Forget Information Package Second World War*, 19.

⁶⁷ Smolinski, 84.

Despite bonuses, the Canadian and American militaries still offered other incentives for their own enlistees. Lack of bonuses for families, and no guarantees for the care for widows and orphans, as well as later initiatives such as the GI Bill further served to make the Polish military a less than attractive alternative for those living in North America. Aware of these problems, Arciszewski wrote a letter to General Sikorski on September 14th 1940 explaining the situation:

...The money we need will chiefly be used to insure families of enlisted men which will cost about \$35 a month. Without this insurance we can only count on a small number of bachelors, a sure number of older people such as veterans, and an element of adventurers and jobless people that will almost certainly cause us trouble in the future... The other side of the financial matter that will have a bearing on the amount of recruits we will receive is the perceived military standards of the Polish force. Col. La Pan, the former commander of the Niagara on the Lake camp (in 1917) believes that it is absolutely necessary for the Polish military standards to be as high as in the Canadian military.⁶⁸

This letter and its later less than enthusiastic response from London shows that on one hand Arciszewski and the men on the ground in North America were aware of the realistic limitations of their current resources. Without securing extra funding for pay, the Polish military mission would not attract thousands of Polish patriots as was hoped, but instead was doomed to attract undesirable elements of society which would lead to a breakdown of morale and professionalism, further hurting the cause.

The remnant of the Polish military that had sought safety in England was comprised mainly of members of high command and highly skilled specialists who had managed to escape captivity. General Sikorski outlined the situation as follows: "Our army in England is *Par Excellence* an army cadre, in terms of our high numbers of officers and petty officers, and from the fact that 70% of our soldiers have some kind of

⁶⁸ Arciszewski, 216.

higher education or training. When fresh soldiers begin to arrive, and with the help of new materials, we will be able to quickly grow the military threefold.”⁶⁹ Since the aim of the North American recruitment was to fill the empty ranks, the main target for the Poles was attracting young enlisted men, not more officers and experts. Sikorski’s main objective was to replenish the depleted 1st Corps in the UK, others such as Sikorski’s rival General Kazimierz Sosnkowski believed that the mission in North America should be very focused and have predetermined goals. Furthermore, they believed that it should be aimed to recruit the Polish Americans and Canadians that were highly qualified and specialized into more specialized services such as an air force. Sosnkowski also put forward the idea of not using the recruits from North America to reinforce the depleted First Corps but instead form their own Second Corps in North America. This idea however was shut down by Sikorski because it meant the eventual depletion and destruction of his First Corps.⁷⁰

While Sosnkowski’s argument for an independent and specialized North American Corps fell on deaf ears, it may have been far more successful in terms of inspiring a Polonia led military buildup and also in giving Polish-Americans their own distinguished identity within the Polish military. Sosnkowski also understood the American psyche better and knew about the challenges faced by the veterans of Haller’s army upon their return to the USA. Sosnkowski wrote about the need to provide technical training as an incentive for Americans to join up.

The average American (and Polish American) blindly believes that what is modern is not only better, in terms of use more comfortable, but also reliable and safe. When creating the army, and especially in the sphere of American recruits, it must be noted that they will be no doubt most interested in and trust most in equipment and weapons that they

⁶⁹ Smolinski, 38.

⁷⁰ Smolinski, 14.

perceive as modern, chiefly mechanization. (...) For the average American the most important issue is specialization. In America, a worker with qualifications is somebody, a worker without qualifications is a something. Specialization and training means better fortunes in the job market and almost guarantees him a steady job. For the American worker, lack of specialization often means periods of unemployment and threatens him with hunger and death. Statistically, 35% of those that join the US army do so to learn a trade or get specialized training in certain fields. It is no surprise therefore that the US army pays special attention to developing programs that train people in the forefront technical jobs.⁷¹

American recruits were interested in opportunities to learn skills, take on leadership positions, or fill highly skilled and technical positions such as being a pilot or mechanic. As the recruitment program was forced to expand due to a lack of interest, technical schooling was introduced alongside a training course for NCOs.⁷² *Odsiecz* also began to shift away from articles promoting the war as a patriotic duty and showcased more articles on the training that recruits were receiving and especially on profiles about its air force recruits. One article in particular proclaims the uniqueness of the training school, the role that graduates will play in modernizing the Polish military, and the development of skills that can be transferred civilian life.

“There were no schools of this type either in pre-war Poland or in the Polish Army in France because this school will take into consideration the motorized warfare. Its students will learn the methods of modern war with the use of motorized equipment and will in a way become specialists of all forms of modern military equipment. The future non-commissioned officers will be the commanders of tank divisions, reconnaissance sections and motorized infantry divisions [...] The graduates of the school will also train for skilled mechanics.”⁷³

The articles promised technical training, leadership, and tactical instruction and thus promised recruits a future beyond service as a private.

The Polish military also addressed the concerns that Polish-Americans had in terms of their reintegration into the USA post-war. A large effort was made to promote

⁷¹ Smolinski, 15.

⁷² *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, 50.

⁷³ “Pierwsza polska Szkoła Podoficerska w Kanadzie,” *Odsiecz* 2, no. 4, Jan 21 1942, 7.

the idea of staying in Poland and helping the nation rebuild after its liberation. Several articles in particular attempted to alleviate the anxiety surrounding what the mistreatment of veterans from the Great War.

We do not need to stress the point that the Polish-American element (with thanks to their knowledge of organization learned in America which will constitute a very valuable contribution to the future Polish achievements) – will be welcomed most heartily especially those who will come to Poland in soldiers' uniforms or as the families of the Polish Army volunteers. It is well understood that those, who at wartime, were first in line ready for sacrifices would also be first in sharing the well deserved fruits of victor.⁷⁴

The Poles foresaw many opportunities becoming available in the rebuilding of their nation to start businesses, find work, and grow its population with foreign educated immigrants. Unfortunately, as it had happened in the previous World War, in the post-war period the North American recruits were once again left to fend for themselves, as the Western Polish government in exile lost control of the country to the Soviet backed Polish Peoples Republic.

THE MILITARY

Frank Kmietowicz writes that those who were recruited into the Polish military in Canada often fell into three general categories.⁷⁵ The first were patriots. They joined regardless of the risks and consequences and answered the call to defend the fatherland. This category included families in which relatives, both close and distant were already participating in the war. Patriots were receptive to the arguments made by the Poles that it was the Polonia's patriotic duty to join in the liberation of their ancestral homeland.

⁷⁴ "It's time to rethink the return influx," *Odsiecz* 2 no. 3, 2.

⁷⁵ Kmietowicz, 20.

The second group was adventurers; these people joined in order to get away from the monotony of everyday life and have an adventure in the war. There were a number of people recruited that did not speak Polish or were not of Polish decent. Foremost is the example of the group of Texans that came to join the Polish air force, having been inspired by the deeds of squadron 303 during the battle of Britain.⁷⁶

The last groups were escapists and opportunists. These people had fallen on hard times and saw the military as a means of get back on their feet. These people also included many of those who saw the military as a means of safety, such as the Jewish refugees from Japan who joined the military in order to have their visas extended.⁷⁷ These soldiers were the least committed to the prospect of going overseas to fight. As the Polish military was mainly concerned with the threat of communist political subversion in their ranks⁷⁸, they would often overlook other issues in a recruit's past. Some of the recruits that fell into this category also ended up deserting, or worse, embezzling funds and posing as fake representatives of the Polish military, causing damage to the respectability of the endeavour.⁷⁹

On 20 July 1941 a cadre of 37 Polish officers arrived in Windsor to take over the recruitment effort from the groundwork set by Arciszewski. Alongside them were 56 NCOs and enlisted men of the Polish military who joined the 152 officers and recruits already assembled by Arciszewski.⁸⁰ The Poles were led by General Bronislaw Duch, a career officer who had distinguished himself during the Battle for Poland and France.

⁷⁶ "Wiatr z nad Michigan [Wind over Michigan]," *Odsiecz* 1 no. 1, 10.

⁷⁷ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, C-28.

⁷⁸ Smolinski, 55.

⁷⁹ Smolinski, 85-6.

⁸⁰ Smolinski, 60.

The officers were mainly drawn from Polish land forces with only a small contingent of navy and air force personnel. This began to cause issues as the army's superior numbers meant that they would often have the deciding factor on the qualification of recruits and which branch of the military they would be assigned to. This would at times, put the different military branches at odds with one another when it came to securing the best recruits and would sometimes go against the wishes of the recruits themselves as to which branch they would be assigned to.⁸¹ Following the closing of the recruitment centers both the navy and air force denied responsibility for the poor outcomes, the air force even managed to strike a deal with the RCAF to maintain a small recruitment center of their own and training facility which continued to operate quite successfully for a few years, delivering badly needed pilots to the Polish air force.⁸²

With the arrival of the Polish officers, plans quickly began to change from the grassroots legion that Arciszewski had envisioned to a more controlled mission led and directed from London. The mission under Duch relied mainly on patriotic sloganeering and appealed to the Polish sense of honour to encourage recruitment. He also espoused the virtue of Poles that fought for the Americans during the Revolutionary War and linked the current struggle of the Polish nation to that of the birth of the United States. "The American Polonia is first in line when it comes to aiding our struggle, for it is compounded by the actions of the Polish Armed Forces, American arms, duty towards the fatherland, and the struggle for freedom, which Kosciuszko and Pulaski both fought for."⁸³ This messaging was accompanied by publishing poems in *Odsiecz* espousing the

⁸¹ Smolinski, 64.

⁸² Moćkun, 379 - 81.













⁸³ "Od Was Zależy," *Odsiecz* 10, no.1, 2.

virtues of patriotism and noble sacrifice for one's fatherland along with photos and images of an undefeated Polish people. Duch also eagerly impressed his beliefs and experiences on the North American Polonia. He personally took to traveling around Canada and the United States, holding rallies and giving speeches to communities of Poles. The cartoon below (Figure 1) asks the reader to consider their situation in life, and whether they satisfied with sitting out the war. It promises steady pay, companionship and the fulfillment of one's duty to their country.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ *Odsiecz* No.21 Vol.1, 21.

COME ON, JOHNNY!

John Sawicki, Ont.

			
<p><i>Co ci słuszny Deiny, Lubiś hasz hama? Jak choma maś cił fony, Zawit do Windosca!</i></p>	<p><i>Tam ci to az parno, Tak się spisz dnozi, Gdy się chłopczy zgroma, Jak zabier do kwoki.</i></p>	<p><i>Cół to az spłis, Wachował do grobu? Tam catak hakey swija Rez wielkiego dżubdu!</i></p>	<p><i>Bierzesz pojdy tajon, Mauserjasa grako, Rtynczysz jak nie-ajisze T'ryjnas jak tacho!</i></p>
			
<p><i>Nadze a tacia wozie, Tyfka był a rubez, Puzyle ci ramie Wierze, az do dnozi!</i></p>	<p><i>A az tacy wozody, Jak hantary zajcas, Drodzdu gery-tyndy Cielizaj hasz kofka!</i></p>	<p><i>Kredy, papierony Bij ci a kachy strony, A az caly stary D'wajajest wazy!</i></p>	<p><i>A az tatak pare Wojna budaie woz: To az kupim hary, Aha tazy rower!</i></p>
			
<p><i>Podzem az az tady W'e hawis -- az chawsky? -- A glosz jony zajdazim. Redz dla nas dnozi!</i></p>	<p><i>A tanych szyn, a tazy Zabijaz az az hazy, Az dla hantary swazy Nie opadzi d'jony!</i></p>	<p><i>A tazy gdy jazy Swisz tacy wozody Nie kupisz hokopy Jak przysizisz do wazy!</i></p>	<p><i>A az! Mylitisz wozka? Tachet był gaj fony? Moi Nio az az zwelkaj! Tobet! Kocz az Deiny!!!</i></p>

Adres Ośrodka Rekrutacyjnego: Post Office Box 363, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Figure 1

Furthermore, Duch's apprehension about the effectiveness of cooperating with Polonia organizations was rooted in mistrust, animosity, and a general lack of organization and operating consequences. This state of being troubled General Duch who believed that the Polish organizations should be reorganized. He thought many members and leaders were not qualified for their positions, as they were not capable of organizing a larger action. On the other hand, many of Duch's methods and operating procedures were considered too outdated to attract the younger members of the Polonia who did not feel the same kinship with the Poles as they did with them.⁸⁵ The military would at times work with different Polonia organizations, but since the leadership was typically comprised of the older generation, the needs and desires of the young, military aged men, were not communicated as being a priority.

Another issue that worked against the recruitment was the poor language skills of the Polish officers sent to Canada. While there were some English speaking soldiers and NCOs, they were, for the most part, assigned to the publication of *Odsiecz* or recruitment intake. Duch, and his attachés which traveled with him to visit different Polish communities spoke poor English and relied on giving speeches in Polish. The commander of naval recruitment, in Windsor, Cdre. Zajaczkowski, mentioned this in one of his dispatches to London.

General Duch personally took on the task of traveling and visiting the Polonia in the USA himself. He (Duch), not being fluent in English adds to the difficulty of connecting with the youth of the Polonia, furthermore since he is surrounded and advised by Polish organizations almost exclusively made up of the older generation, he cannot be expected to see the situation clearly." (...) In my opinion, we are making a mistake talking to and treating the emigrants here as if they were Poles, and we Poles forget that the youth here are not Polish but rather Americans. In order to target them and find any kind of

⁸⁵ Smolinski, 55.

common ground with them one would need to understand America and American customs. One would need to learn their lifestyle, their language, their traditions, and what they like. We do not know any of this and we approach them with the old methods. The chief of propaganda is a Captain who is untrained in these methods and his staff was picked fortuitously.⁸⁶

Zajaczkowski's lament on the outlook of the recruitment exposes that even in late 1941 the Polish officers in charge of the recruitment effort were still not united on what the best approach would be to engage with the youth of the Polonia. It also shows that, as a speaker and representative of the military, General Duch appealed far more to the older generation of Polish-Americans and not to those of military age.

Another controversy surrounding the recruitment was regarding the Poles' aversion to commission American officers even from amongst veterans and reservists who had previous military experience. American officers, even though they met or exceeded all the qualifications were sent home or relegated to some other institution to where they could be needed. The reason behind this was the already large numbers of Polish officers which had made their way to Britain. Due to being so officer heavy, many Polish officers were already working on matters more suited for NCO and even privates.⁸⁷ Turning back officers and not including Poles from the Americas in positions of command sowed seeds of resentment in even the older members of the Polonia.

The issue with officers brought back the feelings of abandonment that had stung the veterans of Haller's army and by proxy the Polonia as a whole. Arciszewski summed up the general mood of the Polonia on the issue.

I wrote before that Poland always wanted something from the Polonia, but never gave anything back in turn. American Poles in Poland suffered losses in many different areas and ranges. Our good and simple Polonia never asked for much. All that was needed

⁸⁶ Report from Kmdr Zajaczkowski to Chief of Navy 18.12.1941. Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (PISM) London. A. XII. 22/49.

⁸⁷ Smolinski, 84.

was some type of gesture from the Polish government whose goal was to fix everything. (...) The Polish government should by special directive reinstate Gen. Starzynski and Fonczakowski (Former leaders of the American Falcons Movement). Then the old dormant knightly spirit of those emigrants would reawaken. It would spark debates, people would write about it, speak about it, and discuss it. By acknowledging the old generation of freedom fighters we would encourage the new generation to step up. AMERICA HAS ALREADY GIVEN US 6 POLISH AMERICAN GENERALS, BUT POLAND NOT ONE. The Poles have lost faith that serving Poland will pay off. If in 1917 they had instead gone to the American army, they would have bonuses, raises, and privileges, help in finding a job, an easier time in the American political system and many more post war benefits. Those that, as civilians, returned to Poland after the war with their own capital were often ignored and in some cases robbed of their wealth. All of this stays in the Polonia's memory. This must be fixed. Because if we eventually create a Polish Legion in Canada, it will lack any kind of moral support.”⁸⁸

Arciszewski observed that the Polonia was proud of its accomplishments. It celebrated its members' achievements; it recognized Polish American talent such as the Polish- Americans which had become generals in the US military. While they saw the successes in America, they saw the Polish government sideline their talented sons, while at the same time, expecting a sacrifice from the émigré community. The Polonia often held beliefs that were at odds with the ruling political class in Poland and during the interwar years, many in the American Polonia were unable to secure Polish citizenship or be recognized by the Polish government.⁸⁹

CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE POLISH SOLDIER

While the Polish military's top-down takeover of the North American recruitment issue chafed against the Polonia organizers attempts at rallying and leading their communities in a grassroots movement, not all those that remembered the fiasco of the Polish veterans of the First World War were against the attempt. Many veterans from

⁸⁸ Arciszewski, 262-64.

⁸⁹ Smolinski, 23-4.

Haller's army eagerly organized aid for the mission in Canada. In order to draw attention to the opportunity to enlist in Canada, members of the Polish Army Veterans Associations formed the Centres of the Friends of the Polish Soldier (FPS). The organization was given permission by Sikorski to set up information centres in many of the major Polonia population hubs across the USA and Canada. At its peak, 28 centers operated in North America.⁹⁰ The mission of these centers was threefold: to rouse the fighting spirit amongst the youth of the American Polonia, provide information to those interested about the conditions of recruitment in the Polish Armed forces in Canada, and direct people to the Centres of the Friends of the Polish Soldiers and thereafter help them with transportation to Canada.⁹¹

A major issue that emerged from the FPS was, despite the dedication of the volunteers manning many of the information centres, they were not properly trained in the art of propaganda in enticing the youth for military service. Those that had experience in running successful recruitment or organizing already worked professionally and did not have the time to focus on the stations full time. In that case the information officers were often people with low levels of experience and little qualifications in the work they were expected to perform.⁹²

The FPS was very disorganized: they did not know how create a climate necessary for the recruitment to occur. They also did not know how to take advantage of the propaganda material that was coming out of the central station in Windsor. Their disorganized nature made it so that many other Polish organizations did not want anything to do with them. For example, some Polish radio personalities, after contacting

⁹⁰ *Odsiecz* 2, no.12 March 22, 1942, 14.

⁹¹ Smolinski, 74.

⁹² Smolinski, 78-9.

their local FPS and receiving contradictory information, refused to broadcast military communiqués.⁹³

After finding out about the shortcomings of the volunteers, General Duch deployed some of his own officers which held US citizenship in order to better organize the failing outposts. The approximate 25 officers that eventually staffed these centres⁹⁴ were far more successful in building a relationship with the youth of the local Polonia, as they were often younger and, as American citizens, could relate to the situation of their potential recruits.

The naval commander of the Windsor mission, W Zajaczkowski, analyzed the expenditure of each FPS station, and found that their cost far outweighed any benefit they brought in terms of recruiting power:

“The management for this society (FPS) received an advance of \$25 000 from various funds in Canada which were to be spent at about \$25 per volunteer. You cannot say that the ideological-behavioral work we are doing in the America is not born out of a well-conceived business. The society in question has delivered to us only a negligible amount of recruits, spent the entire advance, and are asking for another. I reckon that if these facts happened to become known to the political opponents of the Veterans Association and the matter reached the press, a large scandal would erupt against the entire recruitment effort.

The Veterans Association, like the name suggests, is built around the old generation, they do not have any, or very little contact with the youth. Also, the volunteers that the Association is sending to us are from the previous age, in my opinion they are not at all fit to fight today’s wars. The fact that ‘we do not have contact with the youth’ is heard more often, and the apparent failing of the recruitment effort adds further evidence to that.⁹⁵

By March 1942, facing dwindling numbers of recruits, funding to the FPS was cut drastically, essentially enough money was provided to purchase transportation for recruits

⁹³ Smolinski, 77.

⁹⁴ Smolinski, 76-7.

⁹⁵ Report from Kmdr Zajaczkowski to Chief of Navy 14.10.1941. Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (PISM) London. A. XII. 22/4.

to Canada, despite the cuts, many of the FPS branches continued to be operated by their dedicated, however out of touch, volunteers.⁹⁶

While the FPS may have failed in its goals of mustering recruits, it, as well as the greater North American Polonia, did very well in terms of raising funds and resources for the military. Almost on a weekly basis, the station in Windsor or the camp in Owen Sound would receive donations of money and material from various organizations and individuals. Money was raised through benefit concerts, holding a soldiers day parade and rally at the local park, and by passing the proverbial hat during meetings of Polonia organizations. Items such as medical supplies, including new ambulances, were donated by the local Red Cross station in conjunction with the Polish community, and both Canadians and Poles visited the station to see the strangely uniformed soldiers and pay a small donation.⁹⁷

This surge of material support, but concomitant lack of enlistment by members of the Polonia, was predicted by Dr. Joseph Retinger, an advisor in the Government in Exile in 1940 when he pessimistically wrote “True, they will surely give, they will offer a lot of material aid, but they won’t join the Polish Military, under no circumstances should we expect a massive surge in enlistment.”⁹⁸ While the money sent by the Polonia helped offset the costs of running the mission in North America and in some cases went to improving conditions of the camp mess⁹⁹, it was soldiers that the Poles were after. Donations, no matter how generous, do not win wars.

⁹⁶ Smolinski, 74-6.

⁹⁷ Marian Walentyowicz, *Wojna Bez Patosu* (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1974), 124-25.

⁹⁸ Smolinski, 41.

⁹⁹ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, 74.

CONTROVERSY

Several controversies also threatened to undermine and even halt the recruitment efforts in Canada. These controversies can be broken up into three categories: political issues, ethnic tensions, and desertion. From early on in the recruitment effort, it became apparent that not everyone joining the Polish military had noble or patriotic intentions in the service. The threat of political dissidents such as communists was foremost in the minds of recruiters. They feared that dissidents may disrupt training, spread misinformation and ruin morale, or at worse commit acts of aggression or sabotage from inside the armed forces.¹⁰⁰ Recruiters were therefore very careful when selecting potential recruits. Each recruit went through a rigorous physical fitness test and examination, a standard for all militaries, but also went through a psychological exam which was used to ascertain the political leanings and background ideology that was driving the recruit. Efforts were made to find out more about the family and friends of a recruit as well as which social circles and clubs that they were a part of. Those that failed to satisfy the curiosities of a recruitment officer had their files marked with a “P.P” for *Polityznie Podejzany* (politically suspect) and were sent home.¹⁰¹ The secretive nature of this interview and the criteria for which a person could be failed led to several instances of earnest applicants being rejected for no apparent reason and their indignation followed them home where they would speak ill of the Polish military, potentially convincing others to avoid enlistment.

Ethnic tensions also created notable problems for the Poles, specifically with their relationship with Ukrainians and Jews. Ukrainians, despite many being Polish citizens,

¹⁰⁰ Smolinski, 85.

¹⁰¹ Smolinski, 65.

were pre-emptively discarded as being potential recruits early on in the negotiations with the Canadian government. While their population was counted as being of Polish citizenship in the census and population numbers provided to the Poles by the Canadian government, the military brass had little hope that Ukrainians would enlist. Several reasons existed; chiefly amongst them was the well documented mistreatment of Ukrainians during the interwar Polish Republic and the policies of the Polish state in the Kresy regions of the East frontier.¹⁰²

In mid 1941, ships containing skeletal Polish citizens arrived in Canada by way of the Soviet Union and Japan, the Poles having been there prior to the war or having fled eastwards during the Blitzkrieg. Amongst those arrived were also many Jews. Arriving in Canada, they were given temporary visas on the condition that they would be enlisting in the Polish armed forces.¹⁰³ Within the group were several former military officers and soldiers which were eagerly integrated into the military structure. The vast majority of the Jewish recruits were civilians, who had no real intentions to join the Polish military and leave the safety of North America for a war-torn Europe. Such a large influx of unwilling and unmotivated recruits caused havoc in the Owen Sound training camp. Threatened by the Canadian government not to leave the camp on peril of losing their visas, the recruits loudly complained about mistreatment and wrote to various Jewish organizations throughout the USA in hopes of securing a visa. The complaints and inquiries got so bad that the Polish military invited members of several Canadian and American Jewish organizations to tour the camp in order to quash any accusations of

¹⁰² Moćkun, 123.

¹⁰³ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada*, 71-2.

mistreatment and anti-Semitism.¹⁰⁴ Satisfied with what they saw, publication of the complaints ceased.

Following the American declaration of war, several recruits, foremost amongst them the Private Ostrowsky, a Russian Jew wrote to the US government and tried to join the US military. The disgruntled recruits were sent a letter from the US government assuring them that service in the Polish military would fulfill all requirements for service in the US military and would not prohibit them from receiving or keeping US citizenship.¹⁰⁵

The actions of a few disgruntled and misplaced recruits should not however overshadow some of the great efforts made by the Jewish American organizations to support the exiled Polish state. As the atrocities committed by the Nazis in Poland and other occupied territories came to light, support for organizations that opposed Hitlerism, the Polish military mission in Canada being one of them, increased.¹⁰⁶ The accusations of anti-Semitism and cultural mistrust between the Poles and Jews, especially early on in the war,¹⁰⁷ tarnished the reputation on the Canadian recruitment effort and possibly led to people being dissuaded from enlisting.

Desertion amongst the Canadian recruits was far higher than those in Europe or other theatres.¹⁰⁸ Despite the efforts to screen each recruit and ensure that only those who were truly committed were trained, there are numerous examples of individuals or groups of recruits deserting the military. As part of the agreement with the Canadians, the Poles promised not to have the recruits swear an oath of loyalty but rather a promise of

¹⁰⁴ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, 71-2.

¹⁰⁵ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada*, 71.

¹⁰⁶ Moćkun, 140-42.

¹⁰⁷ Smolinski, 52.

¹⁰⁸ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada*, 41.

obedience.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the Polish military had little or no power to go after deserters on Canadian soil, and were forbidden to do so in the United States. Deserters harmed the morale of those soldiers that remained in Windsor or Owen Sound, and many deserters' actions later on led to the reputation of the Polish military being tarnished across various communities. One example of this was Private Szymko Wladyslaw who fled with his uniforms and papers to Chicago where he solicited donations on behalf of the Polish military from various Polonia organizations. Several weeks later the Canadian mission received an alarming response from the Consulate General in Chicago informing them that not only was Wladyslaw fraudulently collecting money on their behalf but he was also spreading rumours about the poor conditions that the camp was in and that "the officers prohibit us from driving the tanks, citing the need to preserve fuel reserves, but at the same time, the officers are getting into accidents when leisurely driving around in the cars donated to them by the Polonia."¹¹⁰ Several incidents on this nature occurred which brought with them bad press or misinformation spread by the deserters which often confused the Polonia and dissuaded its members from traveling to Canada. Other recruits such as Daniel Karwata and Charles Thompson left on leave back to the USA and decided to stay because of family pressure or other personal reasons.¹¹¹ One of the more damaging incidents caused by a deserter was the murder of Joe Borg by two Poles during a botched robbery. Stefan (Steve) Ogradowski was one of the men convicted in the murder; he was listed repeatedly as being a "former Polish soldier" and his last listed address was the barracks in Windsor.¹¹² Ogradowski and his accomplice were convicted

¹⁰⁹ Arciszewski, 198-99.

¹¹⁰ Jozef Smolinski, 85-6.

¹¹¹ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, 41.

¹¹² The Windsor Daily Star (1935-1959), May 07, 1943, 7.

of the crime and were the last two people executed at the Sandwich courthouse. Although the majority of the recruitment effort was wrapped up by the time the case went to trial, the bad press generated by the crime and the sensation of the upcoming trial was the last thing the Polish military needed as their recruitment numbers dwindled even more.

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

By 1942, having obtained only a handful of recruits and only a trickle of volunteers arriving weekly, the decision was made to begin shifting the limited resources of the Polish government away from Canada and towards more promising prospects in South America and the USSR. By March 15th, 1942, only 895 volunteers came to register in Canada. By that time, 335 of them had already been transported to their units in Great Brittan. Amongst the 560 remaining, only 337 were deemed eligible for service. One hundred and thirty nine eventually deserted, and 84 were removed or phased out during training: 249 were Polish citizens, 13 were Canadian, 3 were Czech, 629 were American, and 1 was Cuban.¹¹³ This fell far short of the several brigades Sikorski had hoped to raise to reinforce his Corps and far fewer than the 20,720 volunteers that had joined Haller's army during the First World War.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbour many Polish-Americans began to seriously consider returning to the United States and joining the American armed forces instead of the Polish military. The opportunity and pay was enticing as well as the memories of the treatment of those that had deferred US service for Polish service and the mistreatment

¹¹³ Smolinski, 73.

they had undergone upon their return. On December 9th 1941 General Duch visited Camp Kosciuszko in Owen Sound in an attempt to still the disquiet. The camp chronicle reads:

General Duch has come, he had dinner with the troops. Talked about the recent events and encouraged those that were leaving us soon. Despite the attack by the Japanese the war will still end with the victory of the Democratic nations. Fighting for the Polish army is the same as fighting for all Democracies. Hitler and his allies feel that the balance of power is falling away from their favor and are becoming more and more brutal. We and our allies will punish them for their crimes, we will be as merciless as them. After the general spoke, the commanders of all the branches spoke as well promising to serve to the end and that their roles are important.¹¹⁴

By examining the numbers of recruits arriving in Owen Sound in 1942, one can see the decreased volume of recruits caused by the American declaration of war. Each month, at most a few dozen recruits would arrive at the camp, numbers strikingly different than the huge shipments of material that was arriving as a result of the lend-lease agreement with the Americans. Sixteen thousand trousers and shirts, 12,000 submachine gun kits, 4,000 mess kits alongside tons of other material were delivered in March 1942. The same month only saw total 94 soldiers leave for Scotland: 20 navies, 38 air force, 36 armored.¹¹⁵ The signing of Lend-Lease with the USA only amplified the overcompensation of material goods being donated and bought in relation to the recruits that were enlisting. More American citizens than Poles signed up for the Polish Legion in Windsor. Poles tended to avoid service but turned out in large numbers to the American army, even before Pearl Harbor. Three hundred thousand people of Polish decent served in the US army, around 17% of the whole.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941-1942*, 71.

¹¹⁵ *Chronicle of the T. Kościuszko Army Recruitment Camp in Canada, 1941 – 1942*, 92-8.

¹¹⁶ Smolinski, 85.

General Duch in March 1942 wrote a reflection on the state of the Polonia's youth and why the propaganda effort had only served to begin a conversation about service for ones fatherland.

Serving in the American army, where Polish youth have the majority of their friends and colleagues, presents a much more attractive offer for a soldier in terms of material worth. Changing the heart of the youth towards service to an invisible Poland after a lifetime of American conditioning takes much effort and time. This youth holds many Polish traits and holds the seeds of sentimentality for Poland. However, years of treating Poles as second class citizens by the established American population has led to many young people erasing this part of themselves and embracing complete Americanization, such as, amongst other things, changing their last name. We must fight this fear. The propaganda campaign we waged alongside our recruitment effort helped fight this trend as well. We have developed a sense of pride within the young Polish population here; through learning about Poland's martyrdom, they learned about the bravery of her soldiers. Many have, on this continent, witnessed that, even amongst Poles that no longer speak the language, they have not only become interested in Poland, but have begun talking to their friends about their Polish roots with pride and praised the glory of Poland's name.¹¹⁷

Duch's reflection serves as an insight into the change that had occurred in the American Polonia during the interwar years. Poles, especially the youth, had fallen for the American dream and had become Americanized and distanced themselves from their Polish heritage and customs. His final farewell letter to the American Polonia published in *Odsiecz* cites the American entrance into the war as the main cause for the mission to be shut down, but also says that factors related to the "internal life of the Poles in America at the present time, as well as, events from the past 20 years were also taken into consideration"¹¹⁸. He bids goodbye to the Polonia by saying that, "Now I know, better than before my arrival in America, that there are millions of warm and true Polish hearts

¹¹⁷ *Sprawozdanie z dzialalnosci Dowodztw... 31/3/1942* in The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum London England, XII/29/4.

¹¹⁸ *Odsiecz*, Vol. 2 No. 16, p.1

beating on this side of the ocean. I know and firmly believe that the Poles in America will always remain a great reserve of our proud and noble nation.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ *Odsiecz.*

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VITA AUCTORIS

Peter Sawicki was born in 1993 in Windsor, Ontario. He graduated from Saint Joseph's High School in 2011. From there he went on to the University of Windsor where he obtained a Bachelor of Art in History and Communications Media and Film in 2016. He obtained a Bachelor of Education from the University of Windsor in 2020. He is currently a candidate for his Masters of Art in History at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in the fall of 2021.