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# Integration and acculturation of the Polish veteran of World War II to Canadian society.

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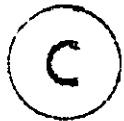
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INTEGRATION AND ACCULTURATION OF THE POLISH  
VETERAN OF WORLD WAR II TO CANADIAN SOCIETY

by



Sarah Van Aken-Rutkowski

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Degree of Master of Arts  
at the University of Windsor

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## ABSTRACT

This study qualitatively examined the Polish veteran of World War II and his or her integration and acculturation into the Canadian society. An interview oral-history approach was used to describe the amount of social dislocation, status incongruence and cultural retention experienced by this particular group within this specific ethnic community.

This group of 20 veterans was unique in its life cycle. Immigration involved multiple displacements, forced incarceration followed by participation in battle and conflict. Some endured a prolonged stay in yet another nation before their eventual permanent placement in Canada.

Indicative variables intervening in the acculturation process, such as educational aspirations, family attitudes, primary and secondary relationships, exogamy, and ethnic community ties were influenced by the individual veteran's pre-war social positioning, war-time experiences, and subsequent migration experiences.

Gradual acculturation, and to a lesser extent, assimilation into the dominant English-Canadian culture group, was a persistent pattern within this study. This present sample indicated a tendency toward Canadianization without becoming fully Canadian in all value orientations.

DEDICATION

In memory of

Stanley Michael Krysa

1916-1981

a veteran of the Polish II Corp

To my husband Henry and to Elizabeth,  
Andrew and Chester who were always  
loving, always supportive, always  
understanding.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous individuals deserve special recognition for making this work possible.

I wish to thank the members of my thesis committee for their guidance and encouragement. Dr. Rudolph A. Helling, my chairperson, exhibited enormous patience as he assisted me in my journey through the massive amount of materials accumulated in preparation for this study. It was a privilege to be allowed access to his discussions of the ethnic situation within Canada and the Polish-Canadian situation in particular.

I would also like to thank Dr. Gerald Booth and Dr. Vincent Chrypinski for their thorough reading of the final draft of this thesis and for their assistance, each in his own area. For Dr. Chrypinski, a Polish veteran of World War II, it was an opportunity to correct erroneous facts written about this period in history, while adding valuable and much appreciated constructive criticism. Dr. Booth's assistance in the area of qualitative methodology was greatly valued.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. William Makowski for his encouragement and co-operation in the areas of both factual accumulation and respondent networking.

I also wish to thank the members of the Canadian Polonia, especially the pastor and parishioners of the parish involved in this study, and those within the Polish Veteran's Association of southern Ontario for allowing me to view their individual communities, making this research possible.

Finally, I will always be grateful to Henry Edward Rutkowski for being himself.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	ABSTRACT	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
	LIST OF TABLES	viii
	LIST OF FIGURES	ix
Chapter		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Present Problem	1
	The Evolution of Multiculturalism	1
	The Polish Veteran	5
	Social Dislocation	5
	Cultural Retention	7
	Status Incongruence	11
	Methodology and Personal Background	14
II	THE ROOTS OF THE POLISH VETERAN OF WORLD WAR II LIVING IN CANADA: BACKGROUND VARIABLE COMPONENTS	27
	Geographical Origins	27
	Poznan	27
	Slask	27
	Kielce	29
	Tarnow	29
	Warsaw	29
	Bialystok	29
	Biala Podlaska	29
	Terespol	29
	Lublin	29
	Lwow	30
	Social Origins	30
	POLAND 1918-1939	31
	Political Problems	31
	Economic Problems	34
	Social Problems	35
	The Gentry	36
	The Intelligentsia	37



TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter		Page
	The Peasants	40
	The Proletariat	41
	Ethnic Minorities	42
	The School System	43
	The Army	45
	Traditions and Values	47
	The Family	47
	The Church	48
	SUMMARY	51
III	THE WAR YEARS: 1939-1945	55
	Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East	55
	Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East - Britain	66
	Poland - Soviet Union - Britain	66
	Poland - Germany - Middle East	68
	Poland - Germany	70
IV	THE TRANSITION PERIOD, DEMOBILIZATION TO CANADIAN ENTRY	75
	Migration Pattern	75
	MIGRATION EXPERIENCES	76
	Britain - Canada	76
	Britain - Brazil - Britain - Canada	78
	Britain - Germany - Canada	78
	Germany - Canada	79
	Germany - France - Canada	79
	Germany - France - Italy - Britain - Canada	80
	Germany - Italy - Britain - Canada	80
	Italy - Britain - Canada	81
	Italy - Britain - Argentina - Canada	82
	Italy - Canada	82
	Middle East - Britain - Canada	82
	Education Variable	
V	ARRIVAL IN CANADA & PERMANENT ADJUSTMENT	88
	Arrival	88
	Farm Labor Agreement	89
	Additional Entry Situations	93
	VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AS ENTRANCE AIDS	97
	Formal Associations	97
	Informal Associations	98

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter		Page
	EDUCATION VARIABLE	99
VI	PERMANENT ADJUSTMENT TO CANADA	106
	Language Maintenance	107
	Family Attitudes	109
	Home Ownership	110
	Cuisine	112
	Primary and Secondary Relationships	112
	Name Changing	114
	Exogamy	116
	Ethnic Community Ties	117
	Veterans	118
	Others	118
	View of Present Day Poland	123
	View of the Canadian Culture	124
	View of Canadians as Individuals	130
	View of the Canadian Culture	130
VII	CONCLUSION	139
Appendix		
A	IDENTITIES	145
	REFERENCES	151
	VITA AUCTORIS	158

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Years of Education Completed as of September 1st, 1939	45
2	Circumstances Affecting the Composition and Location of the Polish Army in Europe	56
3	Migration Pattern of Polish Veterans - 1939-1945	58
4	The Migration Pattern from Demobilization to Canadian Entry	77
5	Amended Education Variable - 1945 to Arrival in Canada	83
6	Amended Education Variable - After Arrival in Canada	100

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Origin of Polish Veterans of World War II (moving west to east)	28

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Present Problem

Canadians think of themselves as the proponent of an ethnic mosaic, as leaders in the concept of cultural pluralism. This situation suggests a society composed of many ethno-cultural groups all able to preserve and maintain their cultural distinctiveness within the overall Canadian society.

The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, in his address to the Canadian House of Commons on October 8, 1971, initiated a multicultural outlook when he announced that Canada would henceforth be ethnoculturally diverse; officially bilingual but no longer a bicultural society. Canada must safeguard

the contribution by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution .... A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create confidence in one's own individual identity. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.

The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all (House of Commons Debates: 8545, 1971).

#### The Evolution of Multiculturalism

"Prior to 1971, policies towards 'other Canadians' ranged from sup-

port to hostilities and restrictions depending upon the political climate of the day .... In the 19th century acceptance or rejection of groups and individuals depended on religion, rather than ethnicity" (Helling, 1978, p. 2). "France recognized this and granted French citizenship rights to all Roman Catholics residing in North American in 1717" (Cornell, Ouellet, & Trudel, 1967, p. 11). "After the conquest, Britain continued the policies of attracting settlers of diverse background, provided they were Protestants" (Helling, 1978, p. 3). In the early nineteenth century the government was mainly concerned with loyalty toward the British sovereign and not ethnicity.

After World War I heightened imperial sentiments created policies of Anglo-Conformity. All non Anglo-Celts were expected to assimilate an Anglo-Celtic world view. However, with the onslaught of World War II industrial expansion and changing population patterns hastened the breakdown of ethnic barriers. Expanding urbanization brought together both early arrivals and newcomers. Ethnic segregation in the cities soon lost its legitimacy as "fair accommodation practices outlawed differential treatment on the basis of ascribed criteria" (Helling, 1978, p. 7). A post-war attitude reflecting a stronger commitment to Human Rights fostered a move toward greater equality for all Canadians.

Canada's changing social climate brought about a parallel shift in immigration policy. These policies provided the context and terms under which the Polish veterans came to Canada at the close of the Second World War.

Throughout most of Canada's history, immigration policy has tended to favor citizens of the United Kingdom, France, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. It was felt that these immigrants would

fit most easily into Canadian society (Sheffe, 1975, p. xiii).

The Federal Order in Council of October 25, 1918, prohibited those who were deemed "undesirable, owing to their peculiar customs, habits ... because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian Citizenship within a reasonable time after entry." Their presence within the country was at best restricted to rural areas and slow integration was expected.

The immigration regulations as of September 17, 1954 reiterated the aforementioned 1918 prohibitions and designated place of birth as an indication of preferred status stating that:

Subject to the provisions of the Act and to these regulations, a person who seeks to be admitted to Canada may be so admitted if he is found by an immigration officer in charge to fall within one of the following classes of persons ....

- a) British subjects by birth or by naturalization in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand or the Union of South Africa and citizens of Ireland;
- b) citizens of the United States of America;
- c) citizens of France born in France or in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon Islands .... (P.C. 1954-1351).

The nonpreferred category was made up of other Europeans, including Polish citizens and non-Europeans. Their presence within the country was at best suffered and their eventual equality not sought.

John Porter (1968) summarized some of the available facts about the treatment which minority groups received in Canada.

The first group to come into a new relatively unpopulated territory becomes the effective possessor of that territory as well as the charter group of the society with the privileges or prerogatives to decide who is going to be let in and what he or she will be permitted to do.

This theory indicates that the ethnic structure of a community in

terms of its charter (in Canada's case, English and French) and non-charter groups (all other ethnic groups) is determined early and tends to be self-perpetuating. This hypothesis is open to investigation as an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon. The French were the first European settlers in Ontario but Scottish merchants arrived later and usurped their position.

Porter goes on to say that in social processes of this kind, there gradually develops a reciprocal relationship between ethnicity and social class. One of the tools used to keep the non-charter members in their place was the ethnic stereotype, or as Porter calls it "the mythology of races". This mythology encompassed the belief that the supposed individual and social development of a person's country or origin determined his or her superiority within a group. If their country was considered more advanced by the Canadian immigration policy makers, the new immigrant was considered innately superior. Regretably, advancement was defined mainly in the industrial/economic sense.

As Canada advanced economically, the immigration policies allowed for an entrance status to be assumed by the less preferred ethnic groups.

"This entrance status implied lower level occupational roles and subjection to processes of assimilation laid down and judged by the charter group" (Porter, 1968, p. 64). Newcomers who entered the country as lawyers, doctors and professors often found themselves relegated to lower level occupational roles until they could prove their abilities to the larger society. Often they were expected to update their educational level beyond that expected of the average Canadian within the same field in order to gain acceptance back into the professional ranks. "At least 20 percent of the post-war Polish immigrants came with higher



education, professions or other specialized qualifications. These individuals could enter into their professions or occupation only in rare instances" (Radecki, 1976, p. 55).

Immigration and ethnic affiliation were important factors in the formation of social classes in the Canadian setting. Ethnic differences were important in building up the bottom layer of the stratification system in both the agricultural and the industrial milieu where labor was difficult to obtain. This method of allocation affected the post-war Polish immigrant. The Canadian government agreed to accept a number of Polish veterans and refugees provided they agreed to work for a certain length of time as farm hands, in textile industries or in other menial jobs.

#### The Polish Veteran

According to the 1976 census there were 99,845 Canadians whose mother tongue was Polish. This study dealt with only part of this group - namely the Polish World War II Veterans who found themselves in Canada sometime after the close of the War.

These Polish immigrants arrived in Canada from another society which had developed within them habits and attitudes which often differed widely from those of the established members of the community to which they came. The results of the social dislocation, incongruous status and degree of cultural retention implied in this situation was tempered by the social dislocation he or she had experienced before their arrival in Canada; the severe dislocation of social norms and social control caused by their experiences during the Second World War.

Social Dislocation. Forms of social control are based on the

stability of a social network and are effective only in so far as this stability is real. Once social stability is shattered and one encounters crisis → change → crisis → change in an ever more accelerated fashion, there is no time for gradual control and stable social reality is shattered. The deciphering of the validity or abnormality of a cultivated norm becomes a hopeless task when it is suddenly realized that this norm has lost all social significance and that some other norm has appeared in its place.

For the Polish veteran many of their cultivated social norms were shattered in 1939. Their sphere of practical acquaintance had broadened considerably causing their experiences to run counter to the situation stated by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in their study of Polish-American immigration at the turn of the century.

The individual's sphere of practical acquaintance with social reality, however vast it may be compared with that of others, is always limited and constitutes only a small part of the whole complexity of social facts. It usually extends over only one society, often over only one class of this society; this we may call the exterior limitation (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 5).

Geographical dislocation and long term stress during the war years allowed these veterans to eliminate much of this exterior limitation and to temper the tendency toward "insufficient generalization" (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 294) where the immigrant harbors an image or perception of particular classes of people but not of man in general.

Many of these veterans had experienced extended periods of incarceration in either German or Soviet prisons. This was coupled with starvation, terror, medical experimentation, forced marches and labor where retaliation and relief were impossible.

The Polish veterans were also the exception from any other veteran's group because they were a group formed outside of Poland resulting in the unavailability of troop reinforcements and limited rest and relaxation. For many there was a sojourn after the War in displaced person's camps for as long as five years. Those who were not dwelling within displaced person's camps endured an initial immigration experience previous to their Canadian one in either England or South America. Some underwent both dislocations.

Cultural Retention. In his study of Italian Americans during the latter 1930s, Irvin Child stated:

The newcomers may at first form a transplanted segment of a foreign nation; in time they may become an integral part of American society with virtually nothing to mark them off from others. But this change is gradual, and both the immigrants and their immediate descendants are certain to be profoundly affected by the duality of social traditions they encounter and by the distinctive position of their own group within American society. (Child, 1943, p. 1).

This distinctive situation is also true in the Canadian social setting within the Polish ethnic group. A clash of cultural traditions causes a confusion within the immigrant which necessitates gradual immersion into the host culture. With each generation both cultural retention and cultural rejection occur enabling individual and social equilibrium. The springboard for this equilibrium is the ethnic community.

"We first learn how to act in a collective which thereafter peoples our memory and shapes ourselves. It is our human fate that ... we are not solitary but social" (Novak, 1973, p. 57). "A person is born into an ethnic group, becomes related to it through emotional and symbolic

tics, and this position serves as a platform for self-conceptualization which represents a set of psychological states as well as social roles" (Radecki, 1976, p. 201). This tie with the home community is a starting point for all immigrants but among the Polish veterans in this study there were various levels of identity and interaction with the Polish community in Canada from the time of their arrival. The acculturation process was affected by many factors but the degree of education obtained before immigration proved to be very significant.

"The higher a man's social rank, the more frequently he interacts with persons outside his own group" (Homans, 1950, p. 185). The intellectuals in this study, those whose educational level had exceeded the undergraduate university level, experienced acculturation at a much swifter pace and were able to choose their contacts and contact times within the ethnic community. They were better able to select the traditions they wished to maintain and those they chose to discard. They contained the self-confidence to decide when and where they needed to either give or receive assurance and support from their ethnic counterparts.

Conversely, those whose educational level was lower experienced lower status recognition, established greater dependency on the ethnic community and acculturated or assimilated at a slower pace. These tightly knit ties within the ethnic community affected value orientations for at least one generation.

Another factor which played a large part in the individual veteran's degree of cultural retention was their desire to live in Canada on a permanent basis. The majority of post-1945 arrivals were political

refugees or exiles, many of whom initially harbored hopes of returning to Poland if there was an alteration in the political situation.

The individual immigrant's rationale for the terms "political refugee" or "exile" was extensive. "There were those who came to stay because of peace and stability. Some were refugees tired of running and waiting. Others wanted no part of Europe and her destruction and suffering. Some came because of a spirit of adventure" (Helling, 1964). There were those who came because their pre-war status recognition would be severely affected by a return to post-war Poland and there were those who feared for their lives or faced possible imprisonment for their pre-war social standing or political beliefs.

The majority of Poles who found themselves outside Polish borders in 1945 did in fact return to Poland.

Of the Polish armed services abroad, 94,000 were repatriated, and of the millions of forced labourers only approximately 380,000 remained as refugees or stateless persons .... Great Britain assumed responsibility for Polish military personnel and their dependents who did not wish to be repatriated. The choice was to remain in Great Britain or emigrate elsewhere under an assisted passage plan (Radecki, 1976, p. 32).

"They and their dependents numbered 223,000 persons" (Vernant, 1953, p. 353). But pressure was brought to bear on Great Britain by the new Polish Government which demanded that the allies repatriate all Polish citizens under their jurisdiction. The allies, in many cases, attempted to comply with this request. One respondent from this study who found himself residing in a displaced person's camp in Germany at the close of the war stated:

Representatives from the government of Great Britain and other officials within the camp tried to persuade us to return to Poland or go to France. We went to France.<sup>1</sup>

Canadian immigration from this group dramatized the variable of self-selection. The Polish officers, often members of the Polish elite, chose Canada by a percentage greater than 15 to one, the usual ratio for officers over enlisted men.

They came with a highly developed self-identity as Poles, often seeing themselves as trustees of the unencumbered Polish culture and heritage, believing that it was their sacred duty to remain Polish in order to preserve and foster their values abroad since it was no longer possible in Poland itself (Radecki, 1976, p. 202).

Consequently, the motivation toward assimilation for those who decided to settle in Canada was less in the initial stages. Many veterans intended to return to Poland if the Soviet form of government ever changed. The longer they stayed, the more they acculturated with the result that most respondents in this study considered themselves to be Canadians, although the degree of de-Polanization varied from respondent to respondent. Using Henry Radecki's typology, most of the respondents within this study evolved from being "Poles in Canada" to "Canadian Polish". None within this study considered themselves members of the last two categories - namely "Canadians of Polish Background" or "Statistically Polish". Both of these last two categories indicate almost total assimilation and usually refer to those either born in Canada or persons who arrived as very young children. (See Appendix-A).

Given the preceding situation, the working theory for this study adjusts itself in the following manner: The Polish immigrant arrived in Canada and established contact with a network within the Polish community. Eventually through job experiences, their childrens' educational experiences or other social means there was a tenuous journey into the Canadian community and culture. Those respondents with higher educa-

tional levels ventured into the majority situation faster and maintained looser ties with the ethnic community. In the ensuing years this latter group returned to the ethnic community as advisors. They re-entered the ever assimilating ethnic community with a Canadian Polish outlook. They found "a community in which the primary groups, the basic sources of any genuine socialization, had become weakened by the development of a depersonalized mass society ...." (Matejko, 1980). While a number of Poles in Canada avoided being blended into a melting pot, for many North American individualization, the cult of the individual, began to creep in and Canadian aspects of culture were more readily accepted.

Most respondents within this study felt the Canadian cultural mosaic allowed them the freedom to retain or discard whichever traditional patterns they chose at a pace commensurate with individual social equilibrium. They found that in Canada they were expected to adapt to one or another of the two dominant cultures but they were not expected to become part of the melting pot phenomenon which is present in the United States. Canadians had a pride in their ethnic pluralism. "Loyalty to one's own ethnic origin was generally acceptable, or at least tolerated by the two founding people. Over time, this emerged with an even higher degree of tolerance for ... different cultures and values ...." (Radecki, 1976, p. 200).

Status Incongruence. According to Homans:

Status congruence is realized when all stimuli presented by a man rank better or higher than the corresponding stimuli presented by another, or when all the stimuli presented by both rank as equal. The less fully this condition is realized the greater the status incongruence (Homans, 1961, p. 248).

According to such a definition, "the status of the same individual may be congruent in relation to certain people and incongruent in relation to others" (Bendix & Lipset, 1966, p. 303).

"Early Polish immigrants who arrived before the Second World War were mostly of a lower class background" (Radecki & Heydenkorn, 1976). They had lengthy exposure to the Canadian material and social values. As a consequence they did not easily accept the leadership aspirations of the post-war new arrivals from the intelligentsia. This has led to some misunderstanding and even tension within the Polish ethnic community, as well as adaptational problems for this latter group.

The post-war Polish immigrants contained a larger proportion of individuals from the ranks of the middle class. They differed greatly in their value orientations and commitments from Poles belonging to previous immigration groups. Consequently, they exhibited differences in their approaches to their Polish heritage, their understanding of Polish patriotism, socio-cultural upbringing and aspirations.

The social and cultural transformation made mandatory by the decision to live in Canada brought with it a feeling of status incongruence within many of the demobilized soldiers. This was especially true among the intelligentsia who brought with them traditional cultural and social aspirations and social roles which were understood and at least partially accepted within the Polish ethnic community. However, these same roles, aspirations and traditions were not applicable to the Canadian scene.

This incongruence was felt by those whose status shifted downward from their pre-war position, particularly if this downward shift meant



acquiring nonprofessional or manual employment. The pre-war work ethic was notably present and had a psychological impact. Zygmunt Bauman states:

In pre-war Poland - the lofty scorn for hard work was deeply ingrained in the traditional gentry culture. The contempt for hard work, especially manual, was something like the first commandment in the decalogue of the dominating culture. Making one's living at this kind of work was sufficient to exclude one from well-bred society. The other side of the medal of the same cultural system was the extremely high prestige ascribed to all kinds of clean jobs, cleanness being a value in itself, independent of any estimate of the social utility, rationality and appropriateness of the job and its role in increasing wealth (Bendix & Lipset, 1966, p. 535).

For those of the former gentry who were unable to obtain "clean" jobs, compensation was exhibited by a tight alignment with the Polish organizations where pre-war traditions, titles and/or behavior were not only accepted and respected but quite often encouraged. The participants felt they were among peers where their present status was tolerated and understood. However, at least on a secondary level, this effect of status incongruence precipitated a dilemma and an area of tension among Canadian Polish organizations.

Organizationally the aims of each Polish association reflects the needs and views of people who see themselves either as Poles in Canada, or as Polish Canadians. The intellectuals found themselves alienated from both groups for there were very few cases of accommodation of professionals within the framework of traditional associations. The intellectual felt "the spectrum of socio-cultural activities remained narrow and in several cases of a mediocre quality oriented towards common tastes and not up to the elitist preferences" (Matejko, 1980). In this

instance the status incongruence was more keenly felt within the Polish community than within the Canadian social setting. "The higher the degree of status incongruence among group members the lower will be the degree of mutual friendship" (Bendix & Lipset, 1966, p. 308).

Social class incongruence was also felt in the choice of a suitable marriage partner. The combination of availability of an acceptable spouse in pre-war terms and Canadian individualization caused psychological as well as social strain. Stanislaw Ossowski explains the pre-war attitude toward mate selection as follows:

In Poland, as elsewhere in the first half of the nineteenth century, the two terms class and estate were often used interchangeably. People referred to the middle class or the middle estate, or spoke of seeking wives (or husbands) from the women (or men) who belong to their own estate or their own class (Bendix & Lipset, 1966, p. 88).

Many among the post-war immigration compensated for this class incongruence by marrying upward on the Canadian ethnic social ladder. If a suitable spouse could not be found within the ethnic community they totally accepted North American individualization by entering into a love match devoid of all past social strictures and ethnic considerations.

#### Methodology and Personal Background

My reason for choosing the qualitative research method was primarily to avoid the pitfalls of the detached observer - to alleviate a fear about social scientists expressed by Gino Barone: "They end up knowing as much about the social groups they study as someone studying the mating habits of tropical fish by observing the ten gallon tank on top of a television set" (Wrobel, 1979, p. xiii). Participant observation, my first methodological choice and the most effective method available to solve this

dilemma, was limited by time sequences and geographical difficulties which necessitated not only the limitation of my findings to southern Ontario but instigated the need for additional systems of research.

The study culminated as a socio-history/community study supplemented by oral testimony and interviews.

Because of the singular lack of written information on this topic, particularly in the English language, oral testimony became a research necessity. Robert F. Harney, of the University of Toronto, OISE, and a historian who has studied ethnic groups in Canada, points out that in addition to the informational benefits in the oral testimony process, the understanding of the social phenomena of ethnicity is heightened. No document can give us an indication of the immigrant's frame of mind.

In an interview-oral testimony situation, the person conducting the interview can select his or her informant and questions can be asked with a specific purpose in mind. The following remarks by Harney were particularly appropriate for this sample of Polish veterans.

Undoubtedly the best source for the study of the cluster of motives which led to the decision to migrate ... is the immigrant himself. Passing through political jurisdictions, often clandestinely or anonymously, immigrants alone had a total view of their ... path from country of origin to arrival in the New World .... The trip did not end at the border or ... in Halifax ... (Oral testimony) makes it possible to study immigrant adjustment - to measure the poverty, prejudice, and exploitation encountered by various groups at the time of their insertion into North American society .... Oral testimony can elicit the perceptions of personal and group history, of identity, and of response to immigrant life which shape and cause ethnic persistence. The record of the gradual altering of identity and culture forms the interior history of immigrant groups; it is ethnicity, and it is especially accessible through interviewing (Harney, 1979, p. 2).

Oral history or the interview method works best for gathering impressions, opinions, and attitudes rather than a process for determining fact. It is possible to delve into the very depth of people and learn what makes them like they are.

Since the qualitative knowledge of an ethnic group necessitates a very personal extended involvement, over time, with the community under study, a summary of the author's personal socio-history inside the Polish community bears repeating.

The author's actual immersion into the Polish-American community began 25 years ago, in 1956, when she enrolled in sociology at Wayne State University, expressed an interest in the Polish-American community and was placed in a field experience as a group worker in a community house run by the Chrysler Corporation, near the old Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck, Michigan, a community largely populated by Polish-Americans.

She entered this experience as a non-Pole with no previous experience or contact with anyone in the Polish ethnic community. Other than reading a few books about Poland in the Hamtramck library, her knowledge of Poland, Poles or the Polish-American community was severely limited. Ethnically she was Anglo-Saxon, she was a Protestant and a rank outsider in the community she had set out to explore. In terms of social research, this scenario fit very neatly into Thomas and Znaniecki's typology, a methodologically pure approach toward the study of society and its problems.

In studying the society we go from the whole social context to the problem, and studying the problem we go from the problem to the whole social context. And in both types of work the only safe method is to start with the assumption that we know absolutely nothing about the group or the problem we are to investigate except such purely

formal criteria as enable us to distinguish materials belonging to our sphere of interest from those which do not belong there (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 19).

From a participant observation standpoint, Dodge House was an interesting place to start her journey. Dodge House was run by and for the Presbyterian Church. In the 1950s, when religious lines were very tightly drawn, it was somewhat of an anathema to the Polish community which was by and large Roman Catholic. The children in the Polish community surrounding Dodge House were often warned not to attend the sessions where they would be forced to mix not only with non-Catholics, but blacks as well. (The Polish community bordered on the black community, a largely Protestant ethnic group with strong ties to Dodge House.) Frequently this warning came from the local priest but more often it came from the neighborhood and family units within the community. This also gave her the opportunity to witness the role of religious proselytizing within an ethnic community, often perpetrated by a colonial-paternalistic mentality of the dominant group toward a minority.

This first group, in terms of the Polish perspective, was one of "outcasts" or "rank newcomers" - newly arrived from Poland. They lived within the Polish-American community but either refused to conform or were still relatively unaware of the social consequences of participation within the Dodge House complex. In many cases the independence of spirit which the author later found to be a dominant characteristic within the Polish community was simply coming into play.

This first experience was a participant observation experience with a daily log rendered to the community house each evening.

With her eventual membership in the Roman Catholic Church, followed

two years later by her marriage to a member of the Polish-American community, she became what could be termed a marginal member of the Polish community. The name change alone made a substantial difference in terms of acceptance within the ethnic community. It instigated non-acceptance within the macro Anglo-Saxon community; the first step toward forced empathy with the group. Access to the Polish-American community became significantly more available and the trust level rose but she was still a non-Pole, an outsider or at best a newcomer to the community.

Because she was now considered a Polish-American by the macro-community, she was able to experience and internalize, as a Polish-American, much of the symbolic interaction from this larger community. As George Mead and Charles Cooley might now indicate, she saw herself in terms of significant others in a different light than was heretofore perceived by her earlier life experiences (Dushkin, 1974, p. 104). She was perceived and acted upon by others as a Polish-American but internally she still reacted and perceived herself as a non-Pole. This state of confusion is perpetrated on every immigrant who ventures from one culture to another.

In terms of her observation of the Polish-American community, she had now taken a large step toward viewing the whole group as it really was and not compartmentalized on a questionnaire or in an artificial research laboratory. She was now an integral part of the group. She made decisions and reacted to significant group symbols in on-going social acts, and she had established kinship relations with the community.

The next 20 years were to develop the Verstehen qualities necessary to fulfill the phenomenologist's portion of the able participant observer: She attempted to explain variables from within the culture.

These marginal feelings allowed her to maintain the dual role so necessary to the sociologist. She could understand the group, its symbols and its many nuances but she could pull herself out of the group as an objective outsider.

Her scholastic endeavors with the ethnic community continued into the 1970s when she prepared for her B.S.W. degree from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan, with a year of intensive field experience in the Polish-American community.

Placed under the tutelage of Dr. Paul Wrobel, an anthropologist whose interests included the Polish community, her first experience began in mid-September of 1976, with a community organization near the heart of Detroit's Polish-American community. This relatively new community organization represented a collaborative effort to do something about neighborhood problems - crime, vacant buildings, red-lining, etc. - in a specific area of Detroit.

She found this community organization through her involvement in the larger Polish-American community. Using the Hamtramck library as a base for community exploration, she discovered some direction and proceeded to become involved as a participant observer.

Upon Dr. Wrobel's suggestion, she enrolled for graduate study at St. Cyril and Methodious Seminary within the Orchard Lake Schools complex located in Orchard Lake, Michigan, a suburb located north of Detroit. Orchard Lake was the only high school, college and seminary complex stressing the Polish culture outside of Poland.

Called upon to fill a position as Acting Dean of Studies at the college, she was able to view the Polish-American community from an entire-

ly fresh viewpoint. Essentially, she worked with the students in a counselling type situation, primarily academic, but often personal and/or emotional as well.

In this academic situation the social class and cultural differences between the Polish-Americans and Poles directly from Poland were readily observable. This situation allowed her to act and react as a participant observer in the Polish-American community. She was allowed access to an extensive network of leaders both public and private within the North American Polish community and in Poland. At the close of her tenure she spent one month in Poland with family contacts made at Orchard Lake, and while there obtained ready access to various social classes and regional cultural differences.

Knowing that she was soon going to enter the graduate school of Sociology at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, she began to decipher the Canadian ties with Poland. Poles in Poland feel a strong tie with Canada. Many have relatives already living in Canada. To some Canada has become the preferred location of future residence, replacing the United States.

After the return from Poland, her immersion into the Polish-Canadian society continued unabated. Using contacts and reference points from the preceding 25 years, she established contact and was able to function on a marginal level with the Polonia<sup>2</sup> in Canada. Now she found herself to be a marginal person in at least three cultures - Polish, Polish-Canadian and Canadian.

A limited knowledge of Polish was a necessity for her continued research. Having had some contact with the Polish language in her home



and at Orchard Lake, she continued her studies in that direction when she entered the University of Windsor. The Polish language class granted her limited access to younger members of the local Polish community, most of them second and third generation. Through her instructor she established contact and became a member of the local Polish parish choir, a situation where only Polish was spoken. The desire to struggle with the language as a non-Pole was appreciated by the choir members and all subsequent contacts within the Polish-Canadian community.

Along with this quasi-participant observation situation, the best method of research for her purposes lay with the interview-conversational approach.

Over a 25 year period a human bond had been established within the community, but key information needed to be deciphered so that the interviews, although small in number, could in some way indicate the social class, cultural variety and depth within the community. It became necessary to guard against Fred H. Blum's warning that the key informants

should not be accepted at face value but must be carefully screened in the light of the nature of the researcher's relationship to the people to give information and others not do so .... Besides insight into personal relationships the researcher must know something about the position of the people in the community ... the role they play, and the reactions of other people to them (Filstead, 1970, p. 85).

This search led to various areas of the Polish community within the Province of Ontario. The designated sample size of 20 respondents had to be Polish veterans of World War II now living in Canada. The sample needed to include males and females, highly educated, professional and non-professional, and those of moderate or little education. These choices were limited by time and geographic considerations.

In establishing the 20 interviews, the network established over the last 25 years came into play. One contact led to another. The author was soon able to differentiate between public and private key informants. The public informants were the visible leaders within the community. For this study they included a priest, leaders within the Polish veteran's organization, and a university professor. These respondents were perceived by those outside of the community as the persons most aware of the community's functioning and thought. The private informants were often unobtrusive members of the community who had lived within the community for a very long period of time. They simply observed the workings within the community and were not plagued with the ego involvement or limited vision that a public informant or leader within the community was allowed to perceive by those in key positions around them.

The public leaders often screened their information and their suggested contacts very carefully before relaying them to the researcher because of this ego involvement. A "loss of face" could become the possible consequence, depending on the researcher's findings. Accuracy of data from such a source might also be in doubt because such a leader is often so elevated by the community that he or she is shielded from accurate knowledge of the situation.

In assessing the value of items of evidence, the observer's or researcher's role in the group had to be taken into account. The way the subjects of the study defined that role affected what they disclosed to the researcher. If the observer carried on the research incognito, participating as a full-fledged member of the group, he or she would be privy to knowledge that would normally be shared by such a member and

must be hidden from an outsider. On the other hand, if the observer was known to be a researcher, the observer had to learn how community members defined him or her, and in particular, whether or not they believed certain kinds of information and events should be kept hidden from the researcher.

When this author called one respondent to ask for a possible interview and the latter discovered she was a sociologist, he responded, "What is this another expose of the Poles?" She reassured him it wasn't and answered several of his questions using a limited amount of Polish. "When he discovered that my husband was of Polish descent he assured me that he would give me an initial audience." Later it was discovered that he was one of the community's key private leaders. He was moderately useful to this researcher as an informant but other respondents alluded to him often as a person of assistance to them when they first arrived in Canada. Outwardly he did not seem tied to the community but privately he was very protective of it and helpful to its members.

Rapport, once access was allowed, was readily established and the hours and hours of interview-conversations continued apace until the goal was accomplished. The average interview lasted about 4 hours with the longest lasting 7 hours.

Years of experience within the American and Canadian Polish communities allowed the fulfillment of the requirements for a thorough qualitative methodology as stated by William Filstead:

Qualitative methodology refers to research strategies, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, field work, etc., which allow the researcher to obtain first hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the re-

searcher to 'get close to data', thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself .... (Filstead, 1970, p. 6).

In this way the discovery is made that "the cause of a social or individual phenomenon is never another social or individual phenomenon alone, but always a combination of a social and an individual phenomenon" (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927, p. 44). Values evolve or change as the social setting or social conditions are altered.

This study indicated that many first or immigrant generation Polish-Canadians went through an evolutionary process. They started out completely tied to the culture of origin and out of loneliness or a feeling of isolation became completely immersed in their work experience and/or their families and their ethnic community. The next stage was an extended period of Canadianization followed by a withdrawal from active participation in Polish institutions. A few cases experienced a period of denial of their Polish heritage. Eventually they re-established ties with the ethnic community realizing that at this point the community and they themselves were now different. The re-established members now considered themselves to be half Canadian and half Polish. Their advanced age allowed them to look and emotionally react to situations from a historical perspective. They were able to combine the two cultures and insure the continued existence of the ethnic community in a rapidly changing environment.

The above description denies the perceived stereotype of the average member or, more particularly, the leader within the Polish community - the image of a person completely tied to the culture of their past, alienated from the macro-community surrounding them. Many perceived

leaders held to this stereotype but much of the private leadership came from the former description.

Alexander Matejko, in his study of the Polish-Canadian intelligentsia observed the following differences between the intelligentsia and members of the marginal intelligentsia or the working class.

The selected population of the Polish intelligentsia that was included into our survey showed a relatively high level of ethnic commitment of an informal nature. They spoke Polish, were interested in Polish issues, read Polish and had many friends among Poles. Their ethnic identity went together with the more or less successful adaptation to the local Canadian environment. At the same time a considerable part of this intelligentsia remained lukewarm to the Polish ethnic institutions, even including the Polish Catholic parishes. Those Poles who belonged to the working class or who were only on the margin of the intelligentsia showed in several cases a much higher level of devotion to the Polish institutionalized life in Canada (Matejko, 1980, p. 19).

These important nuances within the community were derived through the second stage of Qualitative methodology.

In order to predict behavior, sociologists have to understand the complex processes that precipitate human interaction. To understand these complex processes, sociologists must obtain information relevant to the various attitudinal, situational, and environmental factors that compose the real world for those under investigation. Failure to obtain such information subjects the sociologist's data to a challenge of credibility (Filstead, 1970, p. 7).

This study attempted to decipher to what degree this small sample of Polish veterans had accepted the behavior patterns, beliefs and values of Canadian society in place of their own.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Summarization of Case No. 5 and all further quoted Cases are derived from full protocols in the hands of the author.
- 2 Polonia - the term Polonia is the Latin translation for Poland and has come to be applied to Polish communities or colonies planted outside of Poland.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ROOTS OF THE POLISH VETERAN OF WORLD WAR II LIVING IN CANADA BACKGROUND VARIABLE COMPONENTS<sup>1</sup>

#### Geographical Origins

The Polish veterans of World War II were individually as distinct and varied as the sections of the country from which they emanated (see Figure 1).

The geographical location, starting from the Western areas and moving East, from which each veteran emerged and the respondent's status within that location, reads as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Poznań (3 respondents) - a large industrial city located in the north-western section of the country-capital of the Poznan voivodship<sup>3</sup> with a voivodship population, in 1931, of 2,106,500. A university was founded in Poznan in the year 1919. The father of one of the respondents was a member of its faculty until the fall of 1939. The other two respondents were of rural peasant lineage.

Slask (Silesia) (3 respondents) - a large industrial area located in the southwestern section of the country-voivodship capital, Katowice. Katowice city population in 1921 was 44,000. Katowice was a rail center as well as a center for the mining of coal, iron, zinc and lead. One respondent was born in Katowice. His father was the deputy governor of the Bank of Poland. The other respondents came from small rural communities within the voivodship.



Figure 1. Origin of Polish Veterans of World War II (moving west to east)

<u>Origin</u>	<u>No. of Respondents</u>
Poznan	3
Slask or Silesia	3
Lodz	2
Southern Poland	1
Kielce	2
Tarnow (Krakow)	1
Warsaw	1
Bialystok	1
Eastern Poland	1
Biala Podlaska (Lublin)	1
Terespol (Lublin)	1
Lublin	1
Lwow	2



Kielce (2 respondents) - southwest central Poland, capital of voivodship, voivodship population in 1931 of 2,935,697. Kielce was a large trade center surrounded by a large agricultural area. Both respondents were from the rural areas of the voivodship.

Tarnow (1 respondent) - a small city in south western Poland, Krakow voivodship. A rural trade center. The one respondent was from the rural area surrounding the city of Tarnow.

Warsaw (1 respondent) - capital of Poland, with a city population in 1939 of 1,289,000. Warsaw is located in the west central area of the country. Warsaw was the political, commercial and intellectual center of Poland. This respondent was from an upper-middle class family from within the city. The father was a member of the legal profession.

Bialystok (1 respondent) - north central Poland, the capital of Bialystok voivodship, with a city population in 1937 of 100,101. The city population was 80 percent Jewish. Bialystok was a major center for the textile industry. The respondent lived within the city but gave no indication of social class.

Biala Podlaska (1 respondent) - east central Poland, Lublin voivodship, a trade center with a city population of 50 percent Jewish. The respondent dwelt in the rural area on the family farm.

Terespol (1 respondent) - small village in Lublin voivodship, located on the Bug River in east-central Poland, and a small agricultural trade center. The respondent's father was an engineer of agriculture for the Polish government, an administrator over a large range of farms.

Lublin (1 respondent) - located in central Poland, capital of Lublin voivodship with a voivodship population in 1931 of 2,085,746. The city

population was 50% Jewish. Lublin was a trade and intellectual center. The respondent came from a wealthy family. In 1935 this respondent became a doctor in the fields of neurology and internal medicine.

Lwow (2 respondents) - capital of Lwow voivodship, and an important commercial and cultural center. One respondent came from a middle class urban background. Her father was a lawyer. The second respondent came from rural peasant lineage.

### Social Origins

A summation of the social class and occupational variables exhibited, again, a significant level of diversity.

Six respondents came from families where the father was a member of the professions. Included in this group were a bank executive, a lawyer, university professor, medical doctor and an engineer of agriculture, placing them professionally and intellectually, if not financially, within the middle and upper-middle classes.

One respondent described his father as "a well known Polish partisan in the Slask area. Our family had a history of underground partisan activity during the era of the partitions and during the German occupation."<sup>4</sup> Social class, in this instance, was not specifically stated but this author concluded from the tenor of the interview indications of a middle-class environment.

Nine respondents indicated they were from rural peasant stock.

Four respondents preferred to give no indication of pre-war occupational or social class standing.

An individual must be born into an organized group which is geographically, historically and culturally defined. This group perpetuates tradition, the sum of all that has been learned by preceding generations. Traditions - group mores and folkways - permeate the atmosphere in which any person or group of persons exist, giving that individual or group the sense of identity and direction so necessary for their survival. Conditions and environment affect and mold individuals. The Polish veterans of World War II did not present an exception to this situation. They too were born into a particular cultural setting and were very much affected by the conditions and environment in which they found themselves, not only upon their arrival on Canadian soil but previous to this, on Polish soil between the two major wars of the century, World War I and World War II.

Their formative years were spent between these two historical landmarks and their attitudes in the political, economic, social and educational spheres reflect the attitudes of the inter-war period.

This narrative is the sum of the subjective observations of the participants. It must be remembered that 42 years have passed since 1939. Their perception has changed and, in most cases, their values have been reorganized.

#### POLAND 1918-1939

##### Political Problems

In November 1918, an independent Poland re-emerged after 123 years of political partition. The new nation and the new government were immediately faced with unsolved political problems.

The first major problem evolved in the eighteenth century, namely the necessity of remaining independent of both Germany and Russia.

Geographical proximity coupled with the history of domination incorporated in these two powers made foreign policy problems a dominant part of Polish political life. The gut feeling within the new independent state was that there should be no alliance with either neighbor. To a people who had tasted independence after such a lengthy stretch of foreign domination, this feeling was not surprising or unusual. They fully savored this feeling of freedom, independence and nation building. After hundreds of years of crying in the wilderness, Poland, the hope and dream of the Polish peoples for centuries, was now a reality. But the problems which lay ahead loomed large and in many cases involved insurmountable odds.

The "Second Republic of Poland", which emerged after the First World War in the aftermath of the collapse of the three partitioning powers, took shape under difficult conditions which did not carry promise of a long life. Without defensible frontiers in the east and in the west and weakened by the discontent of national minorities which constituted thirty per cent of her population, Poland was a small and impoverished bourgeois State, a creation of the Versailles system standing against Bolshevism on the one hand and against German policy of revenge on the other (Kieniewicz, 1968, p. 771).

In the area of foreign policy Polish independence was almost nonexistent. Pressures were always brought to bear from Berlin and Moscow and English or French assistance could not be relied upon. England, historically fearful of a strong France, tended to favor Germany in any economic or political decisions.

Poland tried to rely on its own strengths but internal disunity played havoc with any external unified stance. The years of partition had left too many problems in their wake. Poland was dealing with three

diverse units. These three units were brought together but they did not fit together. Some areas of the country were well developed and some were so primitive they were nearly a throw-back to the middle ages. The process of nation building had to begin from scratch.

Schooled for more than 100 years in disobedience toward foreign political rulers, most citizens were not ready for the constitution and the parliamentary form of government accepted and set up in 1921. Those in power, while possessing great patriotic feeling, were ill equipped in the areas of practical political experience and political responsibility. "They were ready to concern themselves with the abstract welfare of the nation but frequently disregarded the concrete needs of the living people" (Barnett, 1938, p. 21).

Consequently, democracy failed and was replaced in 1926 by a semi-dictatorial government led by Jozef Pilsudski based on army support. Pilsudski saw himself as a proponent of Left Wing political thought but he wanted to rule above any particular party doctrine. He saw

... in his own person and in a strong administration, a guarantee of government independent of sectional interests. In reality this conception suited the interests of the upper ruling classes. As a result the opposition to Pilsudski, which at first was conducted by the Right Wing now took a Left Wing character (Kieniewicz, 1968, p. 678).

Even though the ruling groups within the Pilsudski regime rose mostly from the intelligentsia and landed gentry, it turned out that the Polish aristocracy lacked suitably qualified persons to take advantage of the opportunity offered them. Few diplomatic posts, the traditional realm of nobility, were held by representatives of the aristocracy. Technically it was possible for a peasant or a worker to rise to the position of prime minister but in reality such a happening was very re-

mote and

The problem of an efficient and able political elite, capable of developing an imaginative program and of foreseeing consequences was to remain unresolved in the years between the two wars (Szczepanski, 1970, p. 22).

### Economic Problems

Before 1918, each of the three parts of the new country had been incorporated into a separate economic organization with different monetary systems. A new Polish currency had to be established.<sup>5</sup> Once a stable currency was established it was hoped that foreign capital would flow into Poland where it would find profitable investment. Such hopes were short-lived.

American capital, which began to play a dominant role in war-devastated Europe, considered Poland, to a large extent under the influence of German propaganda, which called Poland "ein Saisonstaat", a country unworthy of confidence. The Germans had an important voice in these affairs because German banks acted as the intermediary in the investment of American and British capital in central and eastern Europe. As a result an immense flow of American and British capital to Germany took place, while Poland was ignored. From the point of view of international finance Poland was merely a source of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods, an attitude which did not assist the backward economy of Poland .... Poland's balance of payments was now determined by earnings from the export of raw materials rather than by the export of finished goods (Kieniewicz, 1968, p. 659).

Adding to the balance of payment problem, war destruction was extremely heavy during World War I and early efforts at unification and reconstruction were interrupted by a new war against the Soviet Union in 1919.

Under these circumstances direct governmental involvement in the economic life of the country after unification was practically mandatory. Various controls affected almost every sector of the economy of the new state .... factories, railways, forests, mines, banks, and fiscal monopolies ... operations either too large

or too risky for private capital and private initiative (Barnett, 1958, p. 174).

Modern industry had to be developed and managers, technicians and administrators trained while agriculture was accelerated.<sup>6</sup>

As with the political arena the economy was not able to overcome its problems and modernize. Pre-war productivity was never achieved.

In terms of agriculture, inheritance laws permitted almost limitless subdivision of land. Peasant land holdings often dwindled to less than five acres a family. Land usage and ownership was a picture encompassing two extremes. On the one hand were advanced modern estates, and large land holdings which were very productive, and on the other hand were small land holders barely subsisting.

The land reforms of 1925 and the worldwide depression of the early 1930s forced so many big land owners to sell large areas of their land that by 1939 only one-seventh of the arable land was still in the hands of the large land holders.

This depression, coupled with severe over-population, particularly in the south-central area of Poland, resulted in a level of food production that was not even sufficient to meet local needs, much less provide much in the area of export.

### Social Problems

A pervasive problem affecting Poland during the inter-war period was the social structure. It was a society of unreality and rigidity consisting of basically two social classes, the wealthy land owners and the intelligentsia at the top of the system, and a large peasant population on the bottom. The middle class was enlarging during this time period

but with the onslaught of the Second World War, historically and socio-logically speaking, there was precious little time for drastic social change.

The Gentry. Between 1918 and 1939, the landed gentry, the ziemianie [landowners] continued to be a distinctive social group and a leading political and social force firmly ensconced at the top of society's pyramid. "In 1922, this class accounted for 0.36 percent of the country's land area." (Retinger, 1940, p. 82).

The gentry as a class included those persons who prided themselves on their hereditary aristocracy, even if they had lived in the city for generations and no longer owned land

By the same token, the ziemiania group excluded many actual owners of country estates; because they were of peasant, bourgeois, or foreign origin and not born into the gentry class (Barnett, 1958, p. 364).

They observed a pretentious code of manners and were often meticulous in conforming to external symbols which they considered indicators of superior status and breeding. Marriage regulations stipulating ties between one's own rank and station or social class remained a strong cementing force toward group cohesion.

An act of Parliament in 1638 outlawed the issuing of titles of nobility to any of Poland's citizens. There were no Polish titles of nobility. Hence, functional titles such as governor, treasurer, etc., took on a much greater significance. Paul Super in his book, The Polish Tradition, recalls a typical dilemma caused by just such a fascination during the inter-war period.

I recall a committee meeting in Krakow in which the serious problem arose as to by which title to address a letter to a well-known citizen .... He was a doctor of medicine and a professor .... He had been dean



of his college, rector of the University, a member of the city council, prime minister, and was at that time a senator. This gave him seven life-long titles. Which one to use was a delicate social question. I forgot where we wound up (Super, 1941, p. 31).

One respondent in this study who emerged from the intelligentsia in Poland and had achieved professional status after his arrival in Canada indicated his link with this mind-set when he compared Canadian and Polish society in the following fashion: "Canadians are much more interested in money than Europeans. In Europe family status and education are far more important. In Canada you must have a Ph.D. to receive name recognition. Even with a Bachelor's or Master's degree there is no significance placed on your name."<sup>7</sup>

The *ziemianie* were politically conservative aristocratic families who had a long historical tradition as the ruling element within the nation. However, in 1918, this class had lost much of its prestige. "As a class it no longer played a part in Polish public life, and even its individual members rarely emerged into the political arena." (Retinger, 1940, p. 83). Widespread economic depression made the mere fact of owning land a less viable cause for public activity. The role of the gentry began to be taken over by the intelligentsia.

The Intelligentsia. Prior to 1918, Poland never really possessed a middle class in the classic Western European sense. Between the peasant and the landowner there was a decidedly vast social vacuum. During the inter-war period the functions of the middle class began to become more and more absorbed by the intelligentsia.

A characteristic feature of this class was a relatively high level of education, a lively interest in cultural problems and awareness of the ideological and cultural community.

The intellectuals created the representative culture of the nation. They provided social classes, professional groups, and political parties with ideologies and with political and social doctrines (Szczepanski, 1970, p. 24).

This attitude of cultural responsibility was transported from Poland by members of the intelligentsia and the middle class into the Canadian Polonia. Many of the homes of the descendants of this social group were virtual museums or repositories of artifacts and literature pertaining to Poland and the Polish culture. Often whole life-times were spent directing activities and steering intellectual thought within various key groups within Polonia. Although often well meaning and culturally enriching, this mind set often perpetuated enormous ego involvements by the key figures involved. Their attitudes became entrenched in a particular historical time span. Change took place both within Poland and Polonia but they became stagnant and ego-invested, a situation not lost on most of their adherents. In time their influence waned and their role within the community became that of historian or story-teller, often a respected position but non-functional in terms of community growth or change. These individuals were still living within a pre-war Poland time slot.

When Poland regained independence, it became an urgent matter to set up a Polish administration and cultural apparatus which would link up more or less strongly such varied establishments as the judiciary, the army and the schools. A large core of civil servants became part of the intelligentsia. Intellectually this class became less erudite as the ranks of lower level officialdom began to rapidly expand.

Compulsory education, abundant secondary schools, inexpensive

state universities and democratic principles all played their part in changing the social fabric of the intelligentsia. Traditionally, it embraced professors, writers, artists, journalists, university students, doctors, lawyers, clergymen and other professionals. To its ranks were now added people from lower middle, peasant and worker classes.

Links with the traditions of the nobility became much looser but values of the szlachta persisted.<sup>8</sup> Manual labor and trade were despised as crass and demeaning. Even the poorest white collar job was preferable to business, crafts or manual labor with the exception of production or sale of art objects or participation in the publishing of books.

After 1926, when Pilsudski took power in a military coup d'etat, the governing group of colonels came from intelligentsia families. Professional servicemen, a new group in the ranks of the Polish intelligentsia, now achieved prominence.

They were strongly caste-minded, aspired to a top position in the social hierarchy, and were convinced of their special national mission. This mission extended not only to the defense of the country but also to the right and duty to rule it (Holzer, 1968, p. 31).

The aforementioned feeling of national mission emanated from within the intelligentsia as a whole, not just the military. It manifested itself in a feeling of social responsibility, a need to somehow right some of society's wrongs. These feelings were voiced by a respondent within this present study's sample in the following way, "My family was very wealthy in Poland. I became a doctor in 1935 specializing in neurology and internal medicine. I had plans drawn up to build a sanitarium. Health is more important than money. One day in the late 1930s it was

completely wiped out and I was in the Army."

This feeling of social responsibility, the feeling that health was more important than money, followed this respondent to Canada, where he invested his life into the health care needs of the community. He maintained an office in a modest home where the importance of family and cultural transmission were very evident. He found fulfillment in serving the health care needs of not only the Polish community but also the needs of newly arrived members of other ethnic groups.

In retirement he was able to pursue this medical practice on a part-time basis as he settled into the role of community historian and key-resource person - a mutually satisfying position for both the respondent and the local Polonia.

The Peasants. The peasants, the real base of the pre-war Polish society, constituted over 60 percent of the population, although their numbers did not reflect proportionate influence and overpopulation remained a rural problem.

Regional and economic differences among the peasants were reflected to only a minor degree in the peasant culture. They were, indeed, the most homogeneous of all the Polish social classes. Values, customs, aspirations and life style were all similar whether one was in eastern or western Poland. Ownership of the land was the principal source of prestige and the principal social division was between those who worked their own land and the landless.

Compulsory military service for all became one of the most effective instruments for social change to enter the life of the young peasant. It quite literally reconstructed him physically, intellectually

and to some extent, economically; but its principal contribution was the installation of a sense of Polish nationhood and Polish nationalism.

The role of Polish nationalism was a very distant concept for this particular segment of the social strata. This reaction was voiced by an interviewee who spent the first twelve years of his life in pre-war Poland, originating from peasant stock. "Pre-war Poland was an era when the Polish peasant was somewhat hostile to the idea of Polish nationalism. The partitioning powers had taken their toll in this respect."

Thirty thousand primary schools were created which enormously reduced the number of illiterate peasants. Legally and socially all barriers to upward social mobility began to become a thing of the past. "The peasant continued to climb the social ladder ... a large number of lawyers, physicians and university professors were sons of peasants whose parents lived in the village" (Ledniski, 1944, p. 156).

The most powerful and numerous political party during this period was the peasant party, although it concerned itself largely with agricultural reforms which would immediately benefit the peasants. For answers to other political issues, members of this party allied themselves with other groups at all points of the political spectrum.

The Proletariat. The industrial proletariat or the workers were a relatively new class in Polish society between the wars. This group comprised about twenty percent of the population and gained most of its membership from the surplus rural population.

They were, on the whole, a patriotic group with a political bent, considerably left of center. The majority supported the Polish Socialist Party but concentrated political action by the workers was a rare occur-

rence.

Workers employed on government and municipal enterprises enjoyed the highest prestige. They received higher salaries, enjoyed numerous fringe benefits and had a measure of job security.

The more skilled and well-organized laborers in private enterprises also earned wages much above the national average .... These and the government workers were often able to save enough money to buy their own homes - a mark of prestige (Barnett, 1958, p. 366).

There was considerable social distance between the skilled and the unskilled laborers. The unskilled were largely peasants who supplemented their farm income during the winter in the towns and cities while their wives and children remained in the village.

Ethnic Minorities. "Thirty percent of the population, about 10 million people, consisted of ethnic minorities." (Barnett, 1958, p. 45). "Thirteen point nine percent were Ukrainians, 8.6 percent Jewish, 3.1 percent Byelorussians, 2.3 percent German and 3.2 percent belonged to a variety of other groups." (Szczepanski, 1970, p. 26).

To complicate and increase Polish problems, the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians were striving for their own independence. "Ukrainian nationalistic activities in the interwar period gave the Ukrainians a reputation as troublemakers ...." (Barnett, 1958, p. 49) and the Germans were impatient for unification of the western Polish provinces with Germany. During this inter-war period there were almost "3.5 million Jews in Poland" (Barnett, 1958, p. 49) and the liberation of Poland in 1918 raised new problems for this group. Included within the boundaries of Poland were large numbers of Jews from the Russian pale of settlement. These Jews were not assimilated to either Polish or Russian culture.

They

for the most part did not speak Polish, were under the sway of Zionism and had their own separate political parties and deputies in the Sejm ....<sup>9</sup> (Szczepanski, 1970, p. 27).

This situation was described by some as a Jewish state within a Polish state.

Many of the Jews coming out of Russia as oppressed minorities, had shown sympathy with leftist groups including the Communists. For the more chauvinistic Poles this furnished an excuse for characterizing all Jews as a politically dangerous minority which led to sporadic outbursts of anti-Semitism. Under Pilsudski anti-Jewish sentiments were lessened considerably but German propaganda at the end of the 1930s again re-kindled discriminatory feelings.

Complicating the ethnic problem was the religious differentiation. "There were 64.8 percent Roman Catholics, 10.4 percent Greek Catholics, 11.8 percent Orthodox, 2.6 percent Protestant, and Moslems which included the Jews at 9.8 percent." (Szczepanski, 1970, p. 27).

These social, ethnic, religious and political conflicts made national unification in one concise direction a problem of the greatest magnitude.

### The School System

Despite these problems there were many integrating factors at work. One of the most significant was the school system.

The schools were organized along German and French models with a seven year elementary school and a two-stage secondary school. Stage one encompassed a four year gimnazjum and stage two, a two year liceum where university preparatory courses were offered.

These schools steered away from early specialization in any one area, concentrating instead upon acquisition of knowledge and information in concert with the development of one's critical abilities. Combined with strict discipline and a heavy work load, academic levels were high. The system also provided a number of vocational schools geared to meet the demand for skilled labor and technicians.

During this inter-war period women enjoyed relatively free access to university education; particularly those from the upper classes whose secondary education had been sufficient to warrant university matriculation. In fact, women perhaps enjoyed freer access to the professions than their counterparts in the United States and Canada during the same time span.

Since minorities were permitted to obtain their own schools, the system did not help to foster ethnic integration. But, with respect to the effects of the partitioning, it proved to be an important integrative factor. Young people educated in the unified school system began to lose feelings of differentiation and separateness.

Education was compulsory for all children between the ages of seven and fourteen years of age, and extensive strides were made within both the areas of education and culture, but illiteracy was not entirely stamped out. The authorities could not completely enforce compulsory education in all sections of the country.

- Beginning in 1918, institutions of higher education were again allowed to give their instruction in the Polish language after a hiatus of over 100 years. This, coupled with closer relationships with academic institutions both scientific and classical in Western Europe,



caused an ever increasing interest in both science and the arts.

In terms of the sample for this study, the pre-war educational variable exhibited itself in the following fashion.

TABLE I

Years of Education Completed as of September 1st, 1939

Years Completed	Number of Cases
0 - 3	0
4 - 7	7
8 - 11	6
12 and up	7

#### The Army

The army played an extensive role as a reinforcer or school of citizenship. It cultivated a national consciousness, a feeling of patriotism which united the populations from the most isolated outposts, teaching them to respect the new Polish State and its authorities.

General education of the troops was conducted very thoroughly. The curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography and natural science, along with an emphasis on political science and economics. For many of the peasants, it was their first real contact with libraries and/or theatrical performances of any kind.

Military service was obligatory for all males, excepting clergy or those serving prison sentences, 21 years of age or older.

The required tour of duty lasted for two years, followed by transfer to a reserve unit until the age of 40 for enlisted men and 50 for

officers.<sup>10</sup>

Officers had to have completed high school followed by matriculation in one of two kinds of military schools - The Officers' Training College for career military personnel, and the School of Reserve Officers for reserve personnel. Studies at the Officers' Training Colleges lasted for two years, while reserve officer training lasted for one, often followed by matriculation in a university and six weeks service in a reserve unit each year.

Non-commissioned officers, N.C.O.'s, received training of from five to ten months in Schools for Regular N.C.O.'s. A very few of them eventually progressed through the ranks and became commissioned officers.

Social structures were strict among the Officers Corp and fraternization with N.C.O.'s or enlisted men was discouraged. One respondent noted the following social stricture:

Before an officer could marry, his wife had to be accepted by his commanding officer. It was considered highly advisable for an officer's wife to have at least a secondary school education, be versed in cultural refinement and if possible attractive.<sup>11</sup>

It was the task of the commanding officer to maintain stability and peace within the ranks of the officer's corp, and since officers and their wives lived together in close proximity all of the time, it was felt such social strictures better guaranteed the desired peace and tranquility.

An officer's physical appearance was also of paramount importance. The taller, straighter and more handsome his appearance the higher he was held in esteem by other members of the officer's corp and the society at large.

### Traditions and Values

The Family. The family was the central societal tie. A strong tie both ancient and authoritative. Family bonding was

not only biological and educational, but to an unusual degree, as compared with England or America, economic and political; economic obviously; political, because of its solidarity, extent, unity of interest, and the number of its connected and dependent retainers (Super, 1941, p. 112).

Helping one another in all ways be it military, legal, moral, financial or the right of residence if someone in the family was in need, was obligatory. Children were expected to provide for their aged parents and grandparents. This was accepted as valid role play by all involved in this social unit.

The father was the absolute head of the family. He was often a harsh and strict disciplinarian, especially among the lower classes, and children frequently viewed their father with fear while the mother was viewed as a protector. Her role was often that of mediator between father and child.

Despite this strong emphasis on family solidarity and family responsibility to each of its members, children were expected to learn self-reliance and independence. Here dual pressures were created and often the relationship between parents and children was strained. Open affection and attention between parent and child was often limited for fear of spoiling the child. "Child rearing techniques were designed to develop strong individualists, self-sufficient adults who could hold their own in a harsh and difficult world" (Barnett, 1958, p. 351). However, despite these tensions, the Polish family did provide its members with much support and security in terms of dealing with a harsh, hostile

outside environment.

When a son became economically independent he became master of his own household. However, for the peasant youth this often took some time. A young man in his thirties, working on his parents' land, would possess neither economic nor social independence. If the family owned land, each son after he married was expected to receive part of the property. A daughter was to receive a dowry and, depending on her social class, this could include money, clothing, livestock, and/or land.

During the inter-war period, the Polish tradition of hospitality continued unabated. Gosc w dom, Bog w dom, guests in the home, God in the home, was a sentiment strongly felt by rich and poor alike. Manners, courtesy and etiquette played a highly valued part in societal interactions and personal honor was to be preserved at all costs.

True friendships, a relationship of equals, were very highly valued, few in number and intense in spirit.

Loyalty to a friend, however, does not necessarily demand a complete frankness about one's entire life. A fundamental part of an individual's life is never exposed even to the closest intimates (Barnett, 1958, p. 401).

### The Church

One cannot discuss Poland without going into some detail concerning the influence of the Roman Catholic church. Since most of the population was Catholic this influence was felt in all areas of life. Catholicism was an essential part of Polish identity and was very closely linked with feelings of national patriotism. The Roman Catholic church was Poland's tie with western European culture as the Orthodox church was Russia's tie with Byzantine culture. In the Pole's mind this was

what bonded him with western thought and tradition.

When it came to the Catholic faith, all classes were united. All the important events of one's life for those who professed Roman Catholicism - birth, marriage and death - were connected by ceremonies within the church.

Within this study's sample; all 20 respondents were exposed to a greater or lesser extent to the Roman Catholic church. All were raised as children within the church, although the degree of religious orthodoxy practiced within the home varied within the sample. It was this author's feeling that in at least 16 of the 20 cases the reaction was instantaneous to the adage that within pre-war Poland, to be Polish was to be Catholic. If one did not feel bound to Catholicism from a faith perspective, one felt bound to it from the vantage point of tradition and nationalism. In some cases the tie was tenuous but the tie was there and was many faceted.

There may have been some differences in the way a member of the intelligentsia viewed the church as compared to the views expressed by the peasant. All but two respondents considered themselves Catholics and had great patriotic pride in the traditions of Catholicism.

To be sure, within pre-war Poland, all members were not always completely happy with the church. There were times when the church was viewed by some as being too closely tied to the wealthy, but by and large, the majority strongly supported it.

"Throughout Polish history, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church had played a prominent part in the educational, cultural, and political life of the nation." (Barnett, 1958, p. 69). The influence was extensive

and all Polish citizens felt its effect.

\* \* \* \* \*

From a strictly subjective viewpoint some of the respondents had very definite opinions about pre-war Poland. Those who emanated out of the intelligentsia spoke about pre-war Poland in glowing terms, or at the very least in terms of great fondness and pleasant memory.

Many thought the Polish pre-war culture was superior to the Canadian culture in which they now resided. "The Polish culture is a culture with deep roots." "Moral values were higher." Poland encompassed a culture rooted deeply in history with a proud continuing heritage and a thriving democratic future. One respondent stated, "The arts flourished and the fashion sense of Warsaw was the envy of Europe."<sup>12</sup>

For the veteran springing from the peasant societies, there was considerable nostalgia about the land they left behind, but no great longing to return to pre-war Poland. The advantages they had derived from modern western technology were far more enticing. They missed the deep sense of family and the mention of certain geographical locations brought with them a deep sense of nostalgia, particularly those locations in pre-war eastern Poland which became part of the Soviet Union in 1945. But this nostalgia was often perpetuated by a sense of loss for a land they could no longer freely visit, land that was no longer Polish, rather than a sense of loss about pre-war Poland.

Many from the intelligentsia seemed to miss the social perimeters so firmly established in a pre-war Poland, but not so readily defined in a multi-cultural North America. This was not a deep abiding loss to most of them, especially those who were able to establish satisfying

social perimeters in Canada. At this stage in their lives, and after a 25 to 35 year immersion into North American society, the need for title or name recognition in the European sense had largely subsided.

This age group is fully cognizant of the fact that to return to a pre-war Poland is to return to an innocence that no longer exists. Prior to September, 1939, they were in the flower of their youth and they looked upon their society and their world from the limitations of the young.

They now have a considerably expanded world view. Most of them have lived long arduous lives and are sensitive to the fact that life can not be lived in the past. Life exists now and into the future. There is an awareness that human error makes no society perfect, and one must not dwell in the euphoria of soft memories and nostalgic longing.

#### SUMMARY

Any analysis of Poland between the years 1918-1939 must be judged by the following facts:

1. Poland was a country partitioned and governed by three powerful powers, Germany, Austria and Russia for 150 years. In essence, there was no Poland between the years 1795 and 1918.

2. An independent Poland in 1918 meant not only a reawakening of cultural traditions but a new beginning for all governmental and social institutions. There was uneven industrial development due to the partitioning and the country had to change from a basically rural economy to an urban economy and social structure. The world-wide depression of the 1930s was certainly a negative influence in the facilitations of

such a drastic change.

3. The Polish population had to move from a pre-World War I attitude of democracy, combined with extreme patriotism to improvement of institutions and government along Polish independent lines. The many political factions and alignments caused a great deal of difficulty during this transition period.

4. Polish language had to be reinstated in the school system, and universities had to become Polish universities, both culturally and linguistically. By the end of the period of independence, teachers and professors were those who were educated in Poland not in occupied countries, nor in occupied institutions.

Historically speaking, 20 years was an infinitesimal length of time. Everything was just beginning, but by 1939 conditions were improving. Even though the economic picture was not a bright one, the country was now unified and some progress had been made. New industries were established and a railroad system had been built. The labor force was being trained and industry and agriculture modernized. National institutions were established in the educational, economic, political and cultural areas. Despite the many problems, there was a feeling that in the not too distant future, the prospect for prosperity would be brighter.

On August 23, 1939, the Ribbentrop Molotov Agreement was signed, in which the territories east of the Bug River were given to the Soviet Union. One week later, the war began.



#### FOOTNOTES

1 All statistics, place names, geographical areas, etc., are stated in  
pre-war 1919-1939 terms, unless otherwise indicated.

2 Source - Seltzer, Leon E. The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the  
World, Columbia University Press, 1952. \*

3 Voivodship - province.

4 Era of the partitions - refers to the 123 years (1795-1918) when  
Poland was partitioned between Austria, Prussia and Russia.

5 One veteran came from a home which became inadvertently involved in  
the fiscal changes during this period when his father became a  
manager, later deputy general of the Bank of Poland. The respondent  
stated, "My father obtained this position after the third uprising  
in 1921 when Silesia was incorporated into the Polish State." The  
uprisings the respondent refers to are three uprisings which  
occurred in the voivodship known as Silesia or Slask during the  
period encompassing August 1919 until May, 1921, over plebiscites  
instituted to determine German or Polish ownership of the territory.

6 A veteran from Terespol in east central Poland noted his family's  
involvement in this agricultural reform process. "My father had a  
very good position in pre-war Poland. He had a government position  
where he worked on universal taxation of farm properties, a position  
very much needed after partition. He was an engineer of agriculture,  
an administrator of a large range of farms."

7 Case No. 4.

8 Szlachta - a social class dating back to an earlier era when Poland was a republic of nobles. Only the szlachta enjoyed the privileges of citizenship in the republic. "From the szlachta were excluded the merchants and artisans of the cities and the peasants. But so numerous was this gentry class ... and the differences in degree of wealth were enormous ... that it was not just oratory to refer to Poland ... as a republic ... an association of free people, the szlachta." (Super, 1941, p. 30).

9 Sejm - the central legislative body for the government of Poland.

10 Within this study two respondents were members of the regular Polish army (enlisted men) before 1939. One respondent was a cadet officer in the Army. One respondent was a cadet in the Air Force.

11 Case No. 13.

12 Case No. 15.

## CHAPTER III

### THE WAR YEARS

1939-1945

The Polish soldier's life experiences during the decade of the 40s involved continuous wanderings over large geographical areas in concert with extensive physical suffering and/or mental anguish. Variables affecting this group included months of harsh incarceration, insertion into foreign armies, the acquisition of a new language, a basic understanding of varied cultural experiences, plus accelerated studies in modern warfare. Even minimal acculturation became increasingly burdensome due to constant migration. Highlights of the events directly affecting the Polish forces in Europe during the years 1939-1945 reads as shown in Table II.

Table III shows how the sample of 20 cases fits into the situation as shown in Table II.

#### Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East

Mass arrests, by the Soviets, of civilians and military personnel either living or stationed in Poland's eastern voivodships, began in late 1939 and continued in an increasingly accelerated fashion well into the following year. Separated from their families and stuffed into overcrowded boxcars, surrounded by dirt, human waste and the stench of

TABLE II

Circumstances Affecting the Composition and Location of the Polish Army in Europe

	Poland/Romania	U.S.S.R.	France/U.K.	Middle East	European Theater
1939	Russo-German attack on Poland Eastern border formed* The Polish Government and Units of the Polish army escape to Romania	Large contingent of Polish army and civilians deported to Soviet Union			
1940		Polish officers murdered in Soviet Katyn forest	General Sikorski sets up Government in Exile and becomes Commander-in-Chief of Polish forces France collapses Polish troops - U.K. Battle of Britain		Polish forces arrive Narvik campaign
1941		Germans attack Soviet alliance with U.K. and Polish Government in Exile General Anders forms Polish forces			
1942			Polish soldiers become part of 1st Polish Division - U.K.	Polish army and civilians - Iran and Iraq II Polish corps formed	

TABLE II (continued)

	Poland/Romania	U.S.S.R.	France/U.K.	Middle East	European Theater
1943	Armia Krajowa - A.K. - formed - Poland - subordinate to Polish Government in Exile		Polish troops - U.K. 1st Armored division Paratrooper Brigade Air force - R.A.F. Navy - R.N. General Sikorski killed	II Polish Corps	
1944	Warsaw uprising		Polish 1st Division invades France		II Polish Corp Italy Monte Cassion, Ancona, Balogna Polish descent join II Polish Corp
1945					Polish Army compensated by Polish prison- ers captured by Germans - 1939 A.K. soldiers - captured by Germans join II Polish Corp- Italy

\* Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement - Bug river and the Eastern territories of Poland are given to the Soviet Union

TABLE III

## Migration Pattern of Polish Veterans - 1939-1945

Category	Areas of Migration	No. of Respondents	Sex	
			M	F
1	Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East	9	8	1
2	Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East - Britain	2	1	1
3	Poland - Soviet Union - Britain	2	2	0
4	Poland - Germany - Middle East	3	3	0
5	Poland - Germany	4	4	0

## Category

1 = cases 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 20

2 = cases 12, 13

3 = cases 14, 19

4 = cases 4, 6, 11

5 = cases 1, 2, 5, 17

the ill and dying, their journey culminated deep within Soviet territory in such areas as northern Siberia, Samarkand and Murmansk.

One middle-aged female business woman originally from western Poland described her arrest and journey into the Soviet Union in the following fashion:

I was deported to a Russian<sup>1</sup> concentration camp after being found guilty of espionage and given a five year sentence. Poles from Western Poland could not speak Russian. The Russians made us sign confessions without interpretation. The journey took one month in a sealed passenger train.<sup>2</sup>

Another female respondent issued the following description:

Myself, my mother, my sister and grandfather were sent to a camp in the Ural Mountains of the Soviet Union. The journey took 13 days in a boxcar. We were given no food and very little water.<sup>3</sup>

Three other veterans, all males, described their entrance into Soviet incarceration:

Through various circumstances I found myself and nine other Air Force personnel, at the end of 1939, on the Polish-Hungarian border, trying to cross over into Hungary; nevertheless, we were captured by the Soviets and sent to Russia. Myself, I was imprisoned and accused of spying and after 16 sleepless nights and days of interrogations I was sentenced to eight years of hard labor in Siberia's labor camps, where one had to work in all weather, sometimes up to -60 degrees centigrade.<sup>4</sup>

I was on my way to join the Polish Army in Hungary and was incarcerated in a prison camp in southern Russia as a civilian escapee because I changed into civilian clothes when I tried to cross the Polish-Hungarian border. My crime was attempting to cross the border.<sup>5</sup>

I was in Lwow. The Russians imprisoned my father because of his government position and since I was the oldest son the Russians were looking for me also. When I attempted to cross the border into Hungary I was taken prisoner by the Russians as a political prisoner. I received a sentence of 12 years hard labor. The trip took seven days before we arrived in Odessa. While in the camps we

were given large doses of Marx, Engels, and Stalin to read.<sup>6</sup>

Living conditions, especially in the northern outposts, were complicated by the fact that upon arrival they encountered a shortage of housing facilities. In many cases no facilities existed at all. Nearing the starvation point, the prisoners were forced to erect their own crude barracks under the watchful eyes of prison guards and the Soviet Secret Police, the N.K.V.D.<sup>7</sup>

Made to work in the mines and forests with little clothing and little to eat, many had to supplement their diet with grass and bark from the surrounding forests. Three respondents from eastern and central Poland described their living conditions in the following manner:

I worked in the forest under extremely difficult conditions: climatic, accommodation, lack of clothes, hard work, propaganda, lack of hygiene and health care, under-nourishment, vermin, etc.<sup>8</sup>

When we arrived at the camp we lived in an old school while we built our own barracks. Upon our arrival we were given a physical. The healthier were sent to work in the mines and the others were kept on the surface to build the barracks.

I was kept on the surface where I carried bricks and cement for the laborers building the barracks .... I contracted dysentery and was taken to a Russian hospital. While I was in the hospital I communicated in German because I did not know Russian.<sup>9</sup> The hospital was staffed, on a subservient level, by other deported persons, so I received very sympathetic treatment. My food improved, etc.

As fall approached the school age children from the camps were sent to the local Russian village school. I was sent to this school. Since the Poles in the group were reluctant to learn Russian, the schooling was of little benefit.

While in the camps, we were allowed one food package a month from our family in Poland. Many times this extra supply of food kept us alive.

While in the camps we had to steal wood to make furniture for ourselves. I soon learned that what is stealing for one person is not stealing for another.

Religious observances were kept up as much as pos-



sible. For example, during the month of May, a month dedicated to Mary in Poland, we recited prayers publicly every day.

There were more Jews than Poles in this camp and on the surface at least, there seemed to be very little friction between the two groups.<sup>10</sup> The groups set themselves up class-wise first and then along religious lines.<sup>11</sup>

I was sentenced to five years hard labor and sent to a concentration camp in Arctic Russia - Peczora camp, north of Moscow. In 1940 the majority incarcerated within the camps were Russian. By 1941 many more Poles were sent there.

The prisoners had to build their own camp. So many died in the deplorable conditions that a commissioner was sent to investigate the situation from Moscow. We had to build quickly or not survive. The worst was the lack of food and the cold. If you didn't work hard enough they didn't give you enough to eat.<sup>12</sup>

Several thousand Polish officers were placed in separate prison camps, because they were considered to be part of the intelligentsia, a group feared by the Soviets for their insurrectionist capabilities. After one year of imprisonment over 4,000 of these officers were shot and buried in the Katyn forest of the Western Soviet Union. Two respondents in this study were survivors of this incarceration near Katyn. One Second Lieutenant described his experience in the following manner:

Approximately 15,000 Polish Military Officers were separated and transported as prisoners to three camps in Soviet Russia: Ostaszkw, Kozielsk and Starobielsk. In the beginning of February, 1940, groups of Polish officers started to be transported out of these camps.

One shipment of prisoners from each of the three camps found itself at Pawleszczew-Bor in Soviet Russia. By June 12, 1940 this group was delivered to a camp at Griazowiec, near Wologda. Comprised of officers of various ranks and a few civilians, the group numbered 384 persons.

None of us knew we were remnants of three big camps. General Anders came to visit us and saw the little group and asked where the rest were. It was not until much later that we discovered that the rest had been massacred at Katyn.<sup>13</sup>

During June of 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union and the Soviet government began to look for help and assistance. Polish Army General Wladyslaw Anders was taken from his cell in Moscow's Lubianka prison where he had been incarcerated since early 1940. In conversation with Laurenti Beria, Chief of the N.K.V.D. and Chief Merkulov, Chief of the N.K.G.B.,<sup>14</sup> General Anders was informed that the German invasion had broken a trust between Germany and the Soviet Union. Beria continued:

Now Poles and Russians must live in harmony and bury the hatchet, because their sole aim must be to defeat the Germans. He explained that this was the object of a treaty with Great Britain, just signed, and of the recent Polish-Soviet Agreement. Under this Agreement there would be an amnesty for all Poles, and a Polish Army would be formed (Anders, 1949, p. 44).

General Anders was appointed Commander of these newly formed forces. Soon General Anders and General Wladyslaw Sikorski, Polish Prime Minister - Polish Government in Exile and Commander in Chief of the Polish forces began negotiations with Joseph Stalin regarding the formation of this Army from the survivors of the Soviet detention camps and prisons.

General Anders, fearing mass starvation, insisted upon the evacuation of all Polish citizens, military and civilian. This last stipulation caused a delay in the negotiations. Stalin wanted only military personnel to be evacuated. The problem of urgency intervened. Stalin was in urgent need of assistance and these Polish survivors were more useful in combat than in prison camps. General Anders prevailed. During the summer of 1942, 115,000 Polish citizens entered Iran, Iraq and Palestine.

The various routes out of the Soviet Union were described by five participants: two females and three males.

War broke out in Russia so we were sent south to Samarkand in the fall of 1941. The whole train was filled with Poles who were now given priority on the trains since they were now Russian allies. The situation in Samarkand was deplorable. Hunger became such a problem that we ate bark off the trees.

Late in the fall of 1941 we were sent to a Kolkhoz<sup>15</sup> where food and conditions improved .... We spent the winter and early spring gathering mulberry leaves and feeding silk worms. Since I was in my early teens, I was sent to a Soviet primary school.

In the spring of 1942, we came under the protection of the II Polish Corps. We went back to Samarkand and rejoined other Polish troops.<sup>16</sup>

In August of 1941, we left with General Anders to go to a camp or kolkhoz in the southern part of the Soviet Union. I was placed in quarantine for one month. This camp was composed strictly of women, some of whom came from China and had been incarcerated there since the 1936 Chinese amnesty.

While I was incarcerated in quarantine I was given 15 rubles a day. When I was released I was told to take care of myself and I was given 190 rubles, one kilo of bread and one kilo of dry fish. It took enormous will power not to eat the whole thing all at one time. It had been so long since we were given so much food all at once. Some of my traveling companions did eat the whole thing all at once and became very ill.

After weeks of traveling in a rather erratic fashion, by train through the southern part of the Soviet Union, I ended up in Novosibirsk where I discovered the Polish Army was in formation. I was given a physical by the recruiters for the Polish Army. Those who were ill were not accepted and were often left in the Soviet Union. I was recruited.<sup>17</sup>

We heard that the Polish Army would be formed so we escaped with a family that had permission to leave and traveled south-west to Buzuluk, Russia. The Polish Army was recruiting females but they would not accept me because I was ill. Then General Anders got the categories for acceptance into the Army changed. I was accepted and moved out near Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup>

War broke out between Germany and Russia. Only those born in Polish territory were released. Conditions improved. We were given better food and were allowed to rest for one month.

One day we were released singly, five minutes apart and we walked for three days. We were given food and clothing. After our three day walk, we were put on large rafts and taken to the nearest railway station.

I was given 280 rubles for my 14 months work, and a document stating I was free, along with travel directions. I spent the winter on a kolkhoz in southern Russia.<sup>19</sup>

War broke out between Russia and Germany. We were evacuated to Northern Russia, very close to the Arctic Circle. We were working in the camps and attending political meetings. A member of the N.K.V.D. gave us speeches on how terrible Poland was. Suddenly he turned his speech around and started praising Poland.

We learned that we were free to join the Polish Army to fight the Germans. We never dreamed we would be free. We were allowed to sing the Polish National Anthem. We all stood up and sang, tears rolling down our faces. I'll never forget the emotion of that moment.<sup>20</sup>

After evacuation from the Soviet Union this military contingent was trained in Iran and on the beaches of North Africa. Later they were sent into combat in the deserts of North Africa and in the mountains of the Italian Peninsula. This period of training and the subsequent assigning yielded very different reactions from one female and one male respondent. -

In March or April of 1942, we arrived in Iran. We slept on the beach until we were able to put up a sufficient number of tents. Often we slept out in the open during sandstorms. My first assignment was with the delousing unit.

Later, in 1942, we were sent to Teheran. The Army did not know what to do with women, so they put them on guard duty, armed with only a stick to guard supplies. Young girls were sent to guard mental patients or to guard corpses from jackals.

Britain sent lieutenants of Polish descent to train the suffering and starving survivors. Most of these lieutenants spoke very little Polish and did not understand what our long months of incarceration and near starvation had done to us mentally and physically. At first they expected more from us than we could give. After our true condition was explained to them, they treated us with much more kindness.

I was sent for a six to eight week period of nurse's training. The professional nurses were from England. The doctors and orderlies were Indian. The

Polish women acted as interpreters.

In 1943 I was assigned to the 3rd division from Tobruk where they didn't want women because of morale. Fifty women were assigned to each division. There was a complete hospital underground. We were treated like princesses but were well guarded.

By this time I could speak a little English, so I was forced to dance with the British officers at dances held once a week in the officer's club. Often we were exhausted from working very long shifts but we were still forced to attend these dances.<sup>21</sup>

In late October, 1941, we were sent to Turkey, and then Iran where we were placed in quarantine.

In April of 1943, we were transported to Palestine where we became part of the British Army. We were then sent back to Iraq to train for European conditions since Rommel<sup>22</sup> was already beaten in North Africa.

In the spring of 1943, we were reorganized and transported to Italy. It took three weeks from Alexandria, Egypt to reach Italy. Usually the trip took 12 hours. We landed in Toranto, Italy, where we became members of the Polish II Corp, part of the British 8th Army.

For the generation educated in free Poland, morale was high even after Yalta.<sup>23</sup> General Anders asked, "Why are they fighting? Poland was already sold out". But we wanted to show the whole world that the Polish people would fight for freedom, regardless of the circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

Two of the respondents finished their secondary school education while located in the Middle East. One of the respondents, a male, then in his teens, was sent to Teheran where the Polish Government-in-Exile ran a school system. He continued on to Palestine where he attended and graduated from the Polish Young Soldier's School as a para-military cadet. The second respondent, a female then in her late teens, relates her experience within the separate facility provided for females.

In 1943 I was sent, by the Army, to Palestine to attend school. The school was run by the Polish Army. It was staffed by a female commandant and was moved four times during 1943-1944, ending up in Nazareth. In one year I matriculated from Liceum.<sup>25</sup>

Poland - Soviet Union - Middle East - Britain

Two of the respondents, one male and one female, were transferred to Scotland after a period of time in the Middle East. The male volunteered for the Royal Air Force - Polish Wing, in 1943. He was given the rank of Sergeant and placed into the Air Force ground Corp where he later became a navigator in Polish squadrons ranging from the 300-317.

The female arrived in Scotland in September, 1944, and was trained in the techniques necessary for the proper functioning of an operating theater. She was promoted to Captain and put in charge of just such a theater.

Poland - Soviet Union - Britain

Two respondents who were incarcerated within the Soviet Union later became pilots for the Royal Air Force in Britain. Each arrived at this destination in very different fashions.

On September 19, 1939, a few of us escaped from a camp in Latvia and crossed the Baltic to Sweden through Norway to England. When we arrived in Sweden, we were taken by the Swedish authorities and put into a billet. After two weeks we were taken to prison. We went on a hunger strike and were taken to the Polish Embassy where we were given a passport to England. We arrived in England on November 1, 1939, the first arrivals from the Polish Air Force.<sup>26</sup>

When the war started between Russia and Germany, we Polish nationals were released and sent down south to where Polish Forces were forming. Being in the Air Force in Poland, some 200 Air Force and Navy personnel and I went to Murmansk where we boarded a British cruiser and left for the British Isles to join respective units.<sup>27</sup>

Their induction into the Royal Air Force was immediate despite the language difficulties and preparation for battle began without delay. One pilot flew with the Royal Air Force from late 1939 until the close of the war. His chronicle of events bears repeating.

On January 1, 1940, I was attached to the British Air Force and started training in the Southern part of England. I became part of the 301 Polish Squadron - Bomber Squadron - R.A.F. There were 13 Polish squadrons formed in England. By this time I spoke a little English.

In May 1940, we started the bombing of French beach-heads, Dunkirk, etc., mostly military objects. We now converted to the Wellington with a larger fuel tank.

In June 1941, on my seventeenth flight, I was injured in the Battle of Britain as a bomber pilot. I was then hospitalized for six months.

In November or December 1942, I started back with the 301st bombing German targets. I flew 13 more missions - for a total of 30 missions flown. At the completion of this final group of missions, I became a test pilot.

In 1943 I married a British girl and my English improved!

In 1944, the R.A.F. converted from Wellingtons to Mitchels. I transferred to the 305th Squadron - a mosquito squadron that defended at night, where I became a flight instructor. I joined the tactical Air Force before D-Day, bombing German V-1 and V-2 sites - low level - during the day.

I flew 20 more missions, for a total of 50 missions, ending my flying career before D-Day. I then became an adjutant for the 305th Squadron.

I received the V.M., K.W.4 and the D.F.C.<sup>28</sup>

Although placed in hero status by the Polish veterans of Canada, this respondent was modest about his achievements and was very reluctant to reveal his acquired honors, stating simply: "Anything I accomplished was not done alone. There were always others involved who helped make it happen."

Another pilot referred to his training and active duty assignments in the following fashion:

I found myself in several Air Force schools where we were taught English and different facets of Air Force warfare, navigation methods, airmanship, and so on. All the training took some time and that was before anyone could start flying courses.

It all had taken one and one-half years before one qualified as a flyer. Then a pilot was sent to an Operational Training Unit and after this to an Operational squadron. I flew with the 304th Polish Squadron

of the Coastal Command for the rest of the war.  
During the war I married a British girl.<sup>29</sup>

The references to marriage with British women are note-worthy. Exogamy was not uncommon among Polish troops stationed in Britain. Within this sample, four respondents (20%) married women of British origin. Arthur Marwick, in his book The Home Front, alluded to this phenomenon.

In Britain it could only be said of the Allied troops of various nationalities, either that they took the place of British men already removed from the scene, or that they proved more charming or more exotic than their native competition. The Poles, in particular, became a legend for their combination of dashing charm and old world courtesy. Many in fact married and settled down in the United Kingdom, especially in Scotland. One stock joke of the time was that a memorial should be erected to all Scottish women who had fallen for the Poles (Marwick, 1976, p. 94).

#### Poland - Germany - Middle East

Four of the respondents followed a route which led them from Poland into Germany and eventually into the Middle East. One elderly veteran from the Poznan area related the following situation in Polish, through an interpreter.

In 1939 I was drafted into the German Army as an enlisted man in the German Army Infantry. Poznan belonged to the Germans before World War I. When the Germans came in they took Poles into Germany and then drafted them into the German Army. If a man didn't enlist he was sent to a concentration camp.

I was sent to Czechoslovakia for training. They kept the Poles together - one half Polish and one-half German divisions. I then returned to Poland for six weeks leave. I was then sent to Germany for more training.

In 1942 I was sent to Le Mans, France. From March until August 1942, I was sent to Denmark to fill in for the 9th division of the German Army, which was at that time disbursed in Leningrad.

In February 1943, I was sent to Yugoslavia to fight Tito's partisans. The German Army was then marched to Monte Cassino, Italy. We walked for three weeks from Yugoslavia to Rome. In Rome we rested. I was part of the 3rd back up division.



On April 1, 1943, I was sent for a two week's vacation in Poland. After the vacation I returned to Rome.

In 1944, while the Poles were at Monte Cassino, the Germans sent the Poles in the German Army against the American Army 40 miles away. One night later I was taken by the American Army as a P.O.W.

After capture we were taken, by boat, to the Southern part of Italy and put before a commission where the Poles were separated out and sent to join General Ander's 2nd Corp. We then went into training to learn to use British arms. I became a Corporal in the 5th Division of the Polish 2nd Corp.

This new unit was then united with the Polish forces at Ancona. After the battle we were given two week's rest and sent on to the next front, etc., until 1945.<sup>30</sup>

A veteran from the Slask area of Poland wove a much more complicated tale in a tone filled with bitterness and agitation.

In February or March of 1940, when I was 15 years old, I was taken into a forced labor camp in Breslau, presently Wroclaw, Poland.

The forced labor took place in a cheese factory. We were not prisoners as in a concentration camp, although we could not leave the city. Because my labor was needed in the cheese factory, I was deferred from the German Army for one year at the request of the factory owners.

In March of 1941, I was drafted into the German Army and sent to France for six months basic training.

The troops within the German Army were divided into three categories: 1) nazis; 2) traitors (people who swing back and forth), and 3) rehabilitation list (not trusted by the Germans). I was placed into the third category and sent only to German occupied lands where I could be trusted - France, Belgium and Holland.

In 1942, I deserted the German Army and went to Belgium, Holland and back to France looking for a sabotage unit to destroy German railroad lines. I joined one in France.

These units consisted of as many as 600 people scattered in various regions of France and occupied lands, directed by short wave radio from the Polish Government in Exile in London.

In 1943, I was sent to the Bordeaux jail by another underground unit. While we were in jail General Ander's scouts sorted out the Poles from the Germans. Ander's scouts were searching out Poles for the Polish Army in Exile.

The Poles were then marched 40 miles to Toulon, in Nazi uniforms to avert suspicion of the local population. Our destination was Italy where we were to join the 2nd

Corp. Hundreds of us were piled onto landing craft meant only for a couple of hundred men and sent out to sea to meet allied troop ships headed for Italy.

When we reached open sea, the troop ships were not there so rather than return to shore where we would face certain capture by the Nazis, we continued on to Italy in those open-topped, completely overcrowded landing craft. It took us two weeks to make the journey with no food and very little water. Three out of 16 landing craft made it to Naples.

When we arrived on shore the Polish 7th Division was contacted. They screened us thoroughly: They were afraid that many of us were Nazi sympathizers because we were in the Nazi Army. I passed the screening process, was accepted into the Polish Army and was sent to a Polish Officer's training center in Italy.

Many of the poor devils who were not able to pass the screening process were in such a starved condition that it was very difficult for them to answer any questions in an effective manner. They were just sent out to fend for themselves in Nazi uniforms in Allied occupied territory and many of them died.<sup>31</sup>

#### Poland - Germany

Four of the respondents spent the war years first in Poland and then in Germany. Two were captured by the Germans at the very beginning of the war and immediately incarcerated in Germany for the remainder of the war. The other two were captured after the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and were imprisoned by the Germans until the war's end in 1945.

A university professor, in his middle fifties, described his experiences in war time Poland, through the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, culminating with his incarceration in Germany.

I attended high school within the underground movement in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation. This secondary school system was funded by the Polish Government in Exile.

I joined the Polish Boy Scouts during the siege of Warsaw in September, 1939. Polish Boy Scouts played a large role during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Works of sabotage, mail delivery, and message carrying fell into their hands. These sometimes daring and dangerous tasks were carried out with alacrity, partly due to the fact that this generation was raised in a state of

almost hysterical patriotism due to the free Polish State before the war.

During the early part of the war I received a certificate from high school. In 1942 I graduated from the underground Officer's School, and immediately was given command of a small unit of the Polish Underground Army.

In 1944 I took part in the Warsaw Uprising. I took the infamous journey from Stare Miasto, the old city, through the sewers of Warsaw to the center of town. During the siege I was wounded in the hand.

After the siege was completed, I was taken to Germany as an officer P.O.W. I was incarcerated solely with Polish officers. The incarceration area was located close to the Belsen concentration camp. Conditions were quite deplorable, but after two months we began receiving packages from the International Red Cross.

In January of 1945 I was sent to Grossborn, now Pilo, a camp within the present -1980- boundaries of Poland where Polish officers had been kept since 1939. We were then force-marched in the snow, with no food, to Szczecin.

I have survived forced marches and American bombings. At one time during this period, I was locked in a boxcar while the Americans bombed the area. I still experience nightmares from this adventure.

In April 1945, I was sent to Lubeck where I was liberated by the British Army.<sup>32</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The interview-conversation approach used in this study works best for gathering impressions, opinions and attitudes, rather than for determining fact. These narratives are recollections; their accuracy is not assured. They may not, in all cases, coincide with historical data. In the retelling of a life event a phenomenon called immigrant legend begins to appear - a gossamer weave between reality and perceived reality.

To counteract feelings of frustration, failure and society's indifference to individual needs, the immigrant exalts the European past. Imagination allows realities to become greatly exaggerated and glorified.

The legend is repeated over and over again until the teller begins to look on it as fact. Immigrant legend compensates for the pattern or descending spiral most immigrants experience when they enter Canadian society.

According to this pattern, the immigrant comes to Canada as to a land of promise, but the promise is not realized, or not in the way he had expected. Instead he suffers isolation, humiliation, poverty and neglect until he emerges from this ritual descent to a sober realization of the nature of Canadian life and his relation to it (Grove, 1974, p. XI).

This relationship is not always blessed with sufficient ego-reinforcements to counteract a barrage of negative circumstances and individual weaknesses.

In the interview-conversation approach, the only test of validity remains the statement and restatement of one or more facts or situations again and again by respondents who either do not know each other or are not aware of the life experiences related in each interview or encounter. In this manner there is an accumulation of general reality but individual or specific facts are left to chance or sporadic accuracy.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Note: The respondents use the terms Russia and Soviet Union interchangeably throughout their dialogues. Both terms refer to territory within the Soviet Union.
- 2 Case No. 10.
- 3 Case No. 12.
- 4 Case No. 19.
- 5 Case No. 13.
- 6 Case No. 18.
- 7 N.K.V.D. - People's Commissariat of the Interior
- 8 Case No. 20.
- 9 This female respondent's knowledge of German rather than Russian was fairly typical, even though she lived closer to the Soviet border. Although there was no great affection from any of the respondents in this study toward either the Germans or the Soviets, the German culture was overwhelmingly considered superior to the Russian.
- 10 Note the indication that Jews from Poland were separate entities from other Poles. To the majority of the Poles, and even among most Jews themselves, Jews were considered Jews first and Poles second.
- 11 Case No. 12.
- 12 Case No. 13.
- 13 Case No. 16.
- 14 N.K.G.B. - People's Commissariat of State Security

- 15 Kolkhoz - the term for a collective farm within the Soviet Union.
- 16 Case No. 3.
- 17 Case No. 10.
- 18 Case No. 12.
- 19 Case No. 13.
- 20 Case No. 18.
- 21 Case No. 12.
- 22 Rommel - German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.
- 23 Yalta. The Crimea Conference of February 4 to February 11, 1945, between the United States President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph V. Stalin, in which the decision was reached for the restitution of Poland under Soviet influence.
- 24 Case No. 18.
- 25 Case No. 12.
- 26 Case No. 14.
- 27 Case No. 19.
- 28 Case No. 14.
- 29 Case No. 19.
- 30 Case No. 11.
- 31 Case No. 6.
- 32 Case No. 1.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRANSITION PERIOD, DEMOBILIZATION TO CANADIAN ENTRY

#### Migration Pattern

Once the hostilities had ceased, the Polish Veterans faced a true dilemma - whether to return to Poland or remain in the Western World. The Soviet occupation of Poland brought a new political dimension into the situation, forcing many of them to re-evaluate the possibilities of their eventual return to Poland.

Those who did return to Poland did so for three reasons: (1) their relatives and loved ones were in Poland, (2) they exhibited nationalistic tendencies, and/or (3) their political bent inclined them toward the Soviet regime.

Czeslaw Milosz stated these feelings very succinctly when he analyzed his own emotions directly after the close of the war.

The state of things in Poland inclined me toward left-wing ideas. My point of view can be defined negatively rather than positively: I disliked the right-wing groups, whose platform consisted chiefly of anti-Semitism .... My experiences during the Nazi occupation led me to the conclusion that, after the defeat of Hitler, only men true to a socialist program would be capable of abolishing the injustice of the past, and rebuilding the economy of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. My feelings for Russia were none too friendly. Poles and Russians have never loved one another, so I was no exception to the general rule. The exceptions were those and some of my friends were among them who before or during the war had become disciples of Stalin (Milosz, 1953, p. viii).

For those who did not choose to return to Poland, the future lay in the West, and the search for a final place of settlement found them traversing over national boundaries as exhibited by the migration pattern of the 20 respondents from this study as shown in Table IV.

#### MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

The trauma of these migration patterns varied from respondent to respondent within this study. Some found this transitory period in their lives difficult while others used this time span for personal growth in the areas of education, English language development, and job advancement; for some the process toward personal status re-definition were caused by status incongruence. They issued the following memories:

##### Britain - Canada

After the war I stayed in the Air Force as part of The Committee for the Resettlement of Poles in Great Britain. I enrolled in an agricultural school and my tuition was supplied by the British government. On the whole, I look quite favorably on my British experience.

In 1948 I decided to emigrate to Canada. I wanted to immigrate to an English speaking country. I considered Canada a land of opportunity but I applied for a United States immigration visa first.<sup>1</sup>

In 1946 I attended the Polish University College part of the University of London. I received a degree in engineering and worked as an engineer for two years. In 1949 I married another Polish veteran. In 1952 our oldest son was born.

During my stay in England I learned to speak English fairly well. In 1952 I decided to immigrate to Canada. The majority of my friends went to Canada and I did not see good prospects for my family in England. The English treated Poles like second class citizens.

People who did not have a nationality were given a travel document from the British government to travel to Commonwealth countries and look for a job.<sup>2</sup>



TABLE IV

## The Migration Pattern from Demobilization to Canadian Entry

<u>Migration Pattern</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>
Britain - Canada	3
Britain - Brazil - Britain - Canada	1
Britain - Germany - Canada	1
Germany - Canada	1
Germany - France - Canada	1
Germany - France - Italy - Britain - Canada	1
Germany - Italy - Britain - Canada	1
Italy - Britain - Canada	6
Italy - Britain - Argentina - Canada	1
Italy - Canada	3
Middle East - Britain - Canada	1

N = 20

After the war I was sent, as a nurse, to a hospital in Wales. In 1947 I was sent to business school in London. I was not accepted in the Polish University in London because the openings were given to males.

In 1948 I met my future husband, another Polish veteran; and three months later we were married - New Year's Day 1949. I got married and was demobilized on the same day.

During my stay in England I took courses in English. At one time I wanted to teach English.

I had two children while living in England, a daughter who died at birth and a son born in 1952.

In 1949 we wanted to come to the United States but we had to wait five years. We didn't want to stay in England because we felt second class citizenship.

In 1952 my husband was able to come to Canada because of his engineering degree. Our son and I joined him on January 1, 1953.<sup>3</sup>

#### Britain - Brazil - Britain - Canada

From January, 1942 to July, 1946 I lived in England. From July, 1946 to January, 1947 my wife and daughter and I lived in Brazil. From January, 1947 to March, 1951 we moved back and lived in England. In 1951 I was offered a job by Ontario Hydro in Niagara Falls so we decided to move to Canada.<sup>4</sup>

#### Britain - Germany - Canada

From 1945 through 1946, I prepared camps for displaced persons and received a position as a doctor in a London hospital. I was sent to work for the Canadian immigration mission in London. In this job I was able to stamp documents that allowed Displaced Persons to come to Canada.

In 1947 I became the Chief Medical Officer overseas stationed in Germany. I worked with Displaced Persons from all nations. Without the doctor's stamp the visa officer could not issue a visa. First came the visa, second the doctor's stamp, third Department of Labor stamp and fourth security. I handled over 40,000 people in five years. But I missed my family and I wanted to join them in England so I received a transfer back to Britain.

I learned to speak English on the job while living in England.

I wanted a place to live permanently with my family and Canada was open to me anywhere I wanted to go. In

1952 we decided to move to Canada. I heard about Canada ... from other Poles I had sent to Canada.<sup>5</sup>

#### Germany - Canada

From 1945 to 1963 I lived in Germany. I met and married my wife there. She is German and we had two daughters. We lived fairly well in Germany but my memories of the camps were so bad there and we did not want to return to Poland because of the government. We wanted to start a new life for our children.

In 1963 we were notified by the Committee for the Concern for Hong Kong Refugees, a committee who took care of handicapped persons, that we could immigrate to Canada with their help.<sup>6</sup> So we decided to go.<sup>7</sup>

#### Germany - France - Canada

In 1945 I was placed in a Displaced Person's camp in Germany. While I was in the D.P. camp I married my wife who was also born in Poland.

In 1949 some officials in the camp tried to persuade us to return to Poland. Then representatives from the government of Great Britain tried to persuade us to return to Poland or go to France. We went to France and the French government got us into Canada under the farm labor agreement.<sup>8</sup>

This farm labor agreement affected seven of the respondents in this study. "An Order-in-Council (P.C. 3112) passed in July, 1946 provided for the admission from the United Kingdom and Italy of ex-servicemen from the Polish Armed Services" (Richmond, 1967, p. 7).

In November, 1946, 2,000 Polish ex-soldiers from the Second Army Corps arrived in Halifax from Italy. Eight months later, another 2,500 veterans arrived from England. There were the first large group to arrive after the Second World War and were contracted by the Labor Ministry of the federal government of Canada to work on the farms for two years. Only physically fit single servicemen were admitted. After the two year period they could achieve permanent or landed immigrant status.

During this two year interval deportation could take place at any time. According to Case No. 5, exceptions to this scenario were taking place by 1949. Married persons from countries other than Great Britain and Italy were being accepted on the terms of the agreement under a Displaced Person's Clause.

Germany - France - Italy - Britain - Canada

After the war I became an ex-prisoner of war. After liberation my knowledge of English was sufficient enough for me to become an interpreter for American troops in Germany. I was now a member of the Blue Army - a unit that wore American uniforms dyed blue.

I traveled to France and Italy and in 1946 moved to Great Britain. While in Britain I attended the University of London where I received a B.A. degree and married an English girl.

In 1951 we decided to move to Canada where we thought there might be more tolerance for people of diverse backgrounds.

Whenever I return to London there is an exclusive Polish Club where I go simply because the food is well served, not because it is Polish. This club is peopled largely by individuals who had great difficulty with the acculturation process in Britain. They were professional people - people with a certain amount of prestige in Poland. In Britain they were never able to achieve this same status. Many are dishwashers, elevator operators, laborers of all kinds. As a result, they pathetically cling to this club and to their pre-war status through this club. They call themselves and each other by various obsolete titles bestowed by spurious government in times past.<sup>9</sup>

Germany - Italy - Britain - Canada

In 1945 I became an ex-prisoner of war and was placed in a unit, under British command, a unit developed to prepare soldiers for garrison duty. I was then sent to Italy where I was placed in a Polish Officer's camp in Southern Italy under the command of the Polish Second Corps.

In October of 1946 I went to England with the Polish Army and became a member of the British Resettlement Corp. resulting in discharge from the British Army .... I became a member of the Committee for the Resettlement of Poles in Great Britain.

While in England I passed the exams needed for university entrance English and enrolled in the Polish University College in London - part of the University of London.

In 1950 I married a girl I met during the Warsaw uprising of 1944.

In 1951, I received a degree in Economics from the University of London. During this period of time I became politically active in Polish politics in England and began editing Polish journals.

I received a position in an insurance company in England through the Polish-Jewish community.

When British citizenship was offered to me I refused it because I intended, at that time; to return to Poland.

In 1955 I decided to go elsewhere. I felt uncomfortable as a Pole in England although I do not feel I felt the sting of prejudice just because I was of Polish descent. European countries are, by and large, much more ethnocentric than North Americans are used to.<sup>10</sup>

#### Italy - Britain - Canada

In 1945 I became a member of the occupying force in Italy. In 1946 I went to Britain where my stay was of very short duration. While there I decided to immigrate to Canada, for bread and because I didn't like the government in Poland. I was recruited for the two year farm labor program by the Canadian labor department.<sup>11</sup>

In 1946 my husband and I left Italy for England. In 1947 I left the Army and in 1948 our first child was born .... I took an extensive course in the English language .... I decided I did not want to go back to Poland for political reasons.

I felt some discrimination against Poles in England. I knew, or felt, we could go only so far there before the way would be blocked. In 1951 we decided to immigrate to Canada. Money was allotted every soldier, by the Army, to return home. Poles had no home to return to so we were given a one-way ticket to any country that would accept us. We met the deadline for this government financing and went to Canada.<sup>12</sup>

From 1945 to 1946 I was a member of the occupying force in Italy connected with the British 8th Army.

In 1946 I went to England. I don't have much to say about that experience except that I found it unfavorable. The Socialists sent me out of England. I had to spend everything I made.

In 1951 I decided to immigrate to Canada. My arrangements for leaving for Canada were made in conjunction with the resettlement pension from the British Army. They gave us a one-way passage to any part of the world.

I took an English course in England so I spoke English rather poorly when I departed for Canada.<sup>13</sup>

#### Italy - Britain - Argentina - Canada

In 1945, I stayed in Italy as part of the occupation troops. In 1946, I went to Great Britain. While in England I married a Pole born in Poland and finished a one year radio and television repair course. My wife and I lived with families who were members of the Polish Ex-Combatant's Association.

In 1948, we moved to Argentina. While we were in Argentina I worked as an electrician in Buenos Aires. I learned to speak Spanish and we became an active part of quite a large Polish community there. One of our daughters was born in South America.

By 1953, my brother and mother were in Ottawa so for family reasons plus the fact there was more opportunity than in England or South America, we decided to move to Canada.<sup>14</sup>

#### Italy - Canada

I spent only a few months in Italy after the war before I signed the Farm Labor Agreement with the Canadian Labor Department. I decided to move to Canada because I didn't want to return to Communism and I had enough of the Gestapo.<sup>15</sup>

After serving in the occupation forces in Italy, I decided to move to Canada. It appeared to be the land of opportunity and freedom. I signed a two year contract with the Federal Department of Labor as a farm laborer.<sup>16</sup>

#### Middle East - Britain - Canada

After the war I went to Scotland .... In 1948 I received Polish Matriculation from Polish University College - the equivalent of first year University. In 1954 I received a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of London. I found the British quite discriminatory .... In 1954 I decided to immigrate to Canada. I wanted to do research and wanted to switch from chemistry to physics. I wrote to several universities in England, Canada and the U.S. and the first positive reply was Canadian.<sup>17</sup>

Education Variable

During this time period the education variable amended itself as shown in Table V.

TABLE V

Amended Education Variable - 1945 to Arrival in Canada

<u>Course Completed</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>
University	6
Business School	1
English Language Course	5
Agricultural School	1
T.V. and Radio Repair	1
No Change from 1939	6

N - 20

Seventy percent of the respondents elevated their skills, level of education and/or their English linguistic abilities prior to their departure for Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this study post-war resettlement was an issue for all of the respondents and social dislocation was often strongly felt because they could not return home. They experienced feelings of rootlessness and isolation yet the decision about their future residence was something they could not control. They were often forced to immigrate to any country that would accept them. The allies were encouraged by the post-war Polish government to persuade the refugees to return to Poland and as Case No. 5 stated, they often tried to comply with this request.

Vernant states the situation of the Poles under British command in the following manner:

When the war ended there were 223,000 Poles under British command. 47,000 fended for themselves, some 30,000 being repatriated voluntarily, and about 2,000 going to Canada. Of the remaining 174,000, 57,500 died, emigrated or were repatriated while still in the Polish Army ... most of them probably returned to Poland. There was a group of 2,300 who could not make up their minds what to do, classified administratively as 'undecided', are still in the United Kingdom.

The remaining 114,200 passed through the Polish Resettlement Corps, an administrative stage from military to civilian life. Of these, 9,000 were repatriated, 12,000 emigrated and 1,000 died, and, on 31 October, 1949, 91,400 were considered as settled. To these must be added 30,000 dependants who ... joined their menfolk and, later, about 3,000 more who came in under the Distressed Relatives schemes. This gives a grand total of approximately 124,000. (Vernant, 1953, p. 354).

At this stage, some respondents in Great Britain thought they would return to Poland at a later date if there were changes in the Polish post-war political situation. They were hopeful their stay, anywhere outside of Poland was only temporary. Seeing themselves as the embodiment of the culture of pre-war Poland, they desired to keep their understanding of the Polish culture alive.

They recognized the Polish Government in Exile situated in London as the only legitimate political voice for Poland and longed for the day when they could return to a free and democratic Poland as defined by them. The degree of cultural retention, at this point, was extremely elevated.

Most of the respondents from this study departed for Canada from either Great Britain or Italy. Those who were demobilized in Italy remained there too briefly to make comments about their social situation in the post-war Italian setting.



Great Britain was quite another matter. Some looked favorably on their British experience while others noticed or felt discrimination. This discrimination may have stemmed from European ethnocentricity, not anti-Polish sentiments per se. These feelings surfaced particularly when job security was threatened.

Insular prejudice dies hard, and distrust of all foreign workers is still strong in certain sections of the population .... The employers are ... well satisfied with the work of the refugees; better satisfied often, than are the British workers, who tend to reproach the foreigner ... with excessive zeal.... Trade union resistance ... is being gradually overcome. Cases are known of Poles ... being elected to local union committees, though they are not likely to rise much higher. The British in general ... have come to accept the refugees as part of the social landscape ... but they still regard them as foreigners (Vernant, 1953, p. 368).

Some respondents looked at Canada as a land of toleration for people of diverse backgrounds; a land where the possibility of upward social mobility might become a reality.

Ties with the Polish-Jewish community surfaced again in the British situation with one respondent searching out this contact for initial job placement.

A number of respondents showed scorn for those who did not adapt to their situation once they had decided to remain in Britain, especially if the stay was of long duration. Scorn was especially felt for those who did not attempt to increase their proficiency with the English language. There were some elitist feelings exhibited by those who took courses at British institutions instead of the Polish University in London where Polish was the language of instruction.

Fourteen of the 20 respondents did elevate their skills, level of education, and /or English linguistic abilities prior to their departure

for Canada. (See Table V).

FOOTNOTES

1 Case No. 14.

2 Case No. 13.

3 Case No. 12.

4 Case No. 19.

5 Case No. 15.

6 This respondent lost his right arm during his incarceration in German Prisoner of War and Concentration camps.

7 Case No. 17.

8 Case No. 5.

9 Case No. 2.

10 Case No. 1.

11 Case No. 8.

12 Case No. 10.

13 Case No. 16.

14 Case No. 18.

15 Case No. 11.

16 Case No. 20.

17 Case No. 3.

## CHAPTER V

### ARRIVAL IN CANADA - PERMANENT ADJUSTMENT

#### Arrival

The method of entrance into Canadian society affected the newcomer's socio-economic status not only upon arrival, but it also influenced the rate and possibility of future social mobility.

Many of the veterans in this study arrived with some knowledge of the English language and customs. English proficiency, along with the ability or inability to make profitable initial contact with a source where an effective evaluation of one's abilities could be implemented and profitably acted upon, determined, in many cases, the future life-style or social mobility of the individual.

Some within the post-war immigrant wave found themselves entering their new home with high education or technical standing but low employment potential. For those so affected, the initial job placement in the Canadian setting, often menial within one of the service areas or among the lower ranks of the industrial and agricultural sectors, brought forth painful recollections of their pre-war mind set.

The Polish nation has never subscribed to the ethos that no work is demeaning and that all occupations are respectable. Pre-war Poland was characterized by strong and sharp class distinctions and a hierarchy of occupations. The post-war immigrants were products of this society. For those affected by severe and permanent status dislocation, problems of adjustment were great, requiring modi-

fication not only of lifestyle and attitudes toward others, but also of self-identity (Radecki, 1976, p. 55).

Some in this survey may have been plagued by these circumstances in the initial stages, but in most cases the status dislocation was remedied. In the final analysis they were quite satisfied with their socio-economic state in life.

It must be remembered that the respondents were able to analyze the situation from a 34 year perspective. The first arrived in Canada during 1946 and the last in 1963.

For those who were able to speak English and managed to achieve a level of higher education, Canada's post-war era of industrial development provided multitudinous openings in skilled labor, industrial management, the professions, and academia. Particularly within the academic circles, Canada was woefully short of native-born professors, needed to supply the needs of universities soon to be affected by the post-war baby boom. In addition there were the academic needs of a society undergoing rapid industrialization. A large influx of foreign talent was needed to fill the void in many areas of endeavor.

The agricultural sector of the Canadian economy was drastically short of farm-hands. The post-war boom in the manufacturing industry had attracted many rural workers to the cities and towns, thus depriving the farms of much needed labor.

#### Farm Labor Agreement

The first arrivals in this study were contracted by the Labor Ministry of the federal government of Canada to work in agriculture for a period of two years for minimum wages, plus room and board. Although

some respondents carved out a satisfactory situation for themselves, this arrangement was not without its problems.

The farmers as a rule paid the Polish veterans only \$45.00 monthly in wages. The average wage paid for a farmhand in Ontario at that time was \$65.00 .... Since there was no rule as to working hours, some farmers took advantage of a newcomer, asking him to work fourteen to sixteen hours daily, including Sundays. The welfare of these ex-servicemen was in the hands of the officials of the local employment office who, in case of a dispute between the Polish veteran and the farmer, took the farmer's side, often simply because they had known each other for years. In addition to these difficulties, there was a lack of communication between the worker and the employer, as most Polish war veterans did not speak English (Makowski, 1967, p. 203).

Seven respondents in this study were affected by this farm labor agreement. Below are the words of six respondents indicating their individual entrance jobs and adjustments until they reached the stage of permanent job placement within Canadian society.

In 1946 I came to Canada on the two year farm labor agreement. When I came here I knew no English. To fulfill the farm labor agreement I spent one year on a farm in Tweed, Ontario and one year on a farm in Sterling, Ontario. The experience was not so bad but out of 30 that I knew only one stayed on the farm permanently.<sup>1</sup>

After I finished on the farm I spent the next three years logging for a paper company in Timmins, Ontario. I then moved to Oshawa where I worked in a tannery for the next 25 years. I am now retired.<sup>2</sup>

In 1946 I arrived in Halifax. For two years I worked on a farm near Stratford, Ontario. This was followed by one year of work in Toronto as a wine waiter, hospital attendant, etc.

In 1949 I moved to Montreal and worked there part time at the \_\_\_\_\_ Dairy while attending the University of Montreal. I graduated with an M.A. in history plus specialization in geography at McGill University.

From 1955 to 1959 I worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in T.V. design.

In 1959 I began my teaching career. I'm the Head of the Geography Department at \_\_\_\_\_ High School and I've been there for 19 years.<sup>3</sup>

In 1946 I decided to move to Canada because the opportunity presented itself with the farm-labor agreement. The ability for farm work was my only trade and I thought I might buy a farm in Canada.

The two year farm labor agreement was worse than any concentration camp. I worked 12 hour work days and was given little food. We were lucky to get porridge for breakfast and maybe a little meat for dinner. I had to drink stolen raw eggs and milk 40 cows before that miserable breakfast.

Housing was very bad. I was put in the attic where even a dog wouldn't sleep. There was no respect for anyone who was put in farm labor.

After my farm labor was over I washed dishes for my meals, worked in a lumber camp - a job offered me by a Polish Jew - and I worked on the railroad labor crew for the C.P.R. (Canadian Pacific Railroad). The latter job took me from Winnipeg to Eastern Quebec and Nova Scotia .... I went to Oshawa where I slept on the floor in a Polish home for a week until I found a job.

When I arrived in Canada I could speak no English at all but I pick up languages quickly. Seven months after I arrived in Canada I could speak English but I could not read English. As a result in Oshawa I worked in a leather company where I pulled 200 hides a day out of a tank that took off hair for \$1.80 a day. Smelly dirty work. I hated it.

Finally I asked the local employment office for their job recommendation. They placed me on a job at General Motors in Oshawa where I worked for 21 years.

I had a severe heart attack and now receive a disability pension.<sup>4</sup>

I came to Canada in 1947 under the two year farm labor agreement. The work was very difficult. After 10 months on the farm I obtained a job in a factory. The government did not bother me about not working on a farm and two years after I arrived in Canada I received landed immigrant status.

In 1949 I obtained a job in a nickel plant in Port Colborne, Ontario. For 28 years I was employed by Thompson products in St. Catherines, Ontario. I obtained an early retirement and now receive a job pension. I am now waiting for my Canada Pension.<sup>5</sup>

In 1947 I arrived in Canada and fulfilled a two year farm labor contract. When I came to Canada I knew very little English. My experience in the farm labor program was on the whole, a pleasant experience.

After fulfilling the farm labor agreement I spent the next nine years working in a factory in St. Catherines, Ontario. For the last 21 years I have been a bartender

at the Royal Canadian Legion - Polish Branch in \_\_\_\_\_,  
Ontario.<sup>6</sup>

In 1949 my wife and I came to Canada under the farm labor agreement. We were able to substitute domestic work for farm labor under the one year farm labor agreement. At the completion of this one year we were given landed immigrant status.

We were sent to Manitoba to complete the domestic/farm labor agreement where we were placed in a factory. I was paid .35¢ an hour and my wife .34¢ an hour. One year later I was paid .50¢ an hour.

After the farm labor agreement was completed we went to Oakville, Ontario where an uncle from the United States found us a job in a basket factory in Oakville. We worked there for a few weeks and then I got a job in a tannery. I didn't like that job at all.

In 1952 I obtained a job at General Motors in St. Catharines as a machine operator. This February (1981) I retired.<sup>7</sup>

One link in the acculturation process and one element necessary toward the accumulation of a positive self-image is a satisfactory work environment or job placement commensurate with one's training and qualifications. With that in mind I asked these respondents the following question:

"Do you feel that the work you are now doing corresponds with your training and qualifications?"

Below are five responses:

Only slightly so, because my family owned a farm in Poland. I would rather work on a farm. I would have chosen farming but I could not afford farm equipment.<sup>8</sup>

Now I would choose another job, not because I don't like my present job, but rather because I have been a teacher too long.<sup>9</sup>

It corresponded well because I never expected much out of life but I did at least expect a little respect. I stuck with the job because I had no choice.<sup>10</sup>

I always got the kind of jobs I wanted.<sup>11</sup>



I was very pleased with my last job.<sup>12</sup>

All but one of the respondents within this farm labor group were moderately satisfied with their financial situation. The one dissenting respondent voiced his feelings in the following way.

I could get enough food to eat and I sleep on a good mattress. I had lots of clothes to wear but we have been just existing not living.<sup>13</sup>

#### Additional Entry Situations

The 13 respondents who did not enter Canada under the farm labor agreement arrived through a variety of circumstances. Most of them had elevated their educational and/or job skill standing between the cessation of hostilities and their time of immigration, allowing them to enter Canada in a manner assuring them fairly immediate landed immigrant status as well as satisfactory job placement. A number of these respondents spent some time in Great Britain between 1945 and their time of immigration. Their knowledge of English was heightened by this experience and thus aided them in their rather swift adjustment.

The use of a Polish network comes into play in all instances, assuring a fairly smooth initial immersion into the North American cultural setting. Their various experiences are documented as follows:

In 1955 I came to Montreal. The Insurance Company I worked for in England had a branch in Montreal and I had relatives and friends already living there .... Four days after our arrival both my wife and I had insurance jobs.

In 1957 I received my M.A. degree in one year from the University of Montreal. I kept my job at the insurance company and with my professors' co-operation I attended McGill and taught at the University of Montreal.

In 1959 I received three job offers at various universities but knew D \_\_\_\_\_ from the Warsaw uprising and started teaching at \_\_\_\_\_ University.

I received my Ph.D. in 1961 from McGill University and spent one year in Guiana but returned to \_\_\_\_\_ University where I felt promotional opportunities might come along.<sup>14</sup>

This respondent was a key public connection in the Polish community, a figure often perceived by those outside of the community as a person most aware of the community's functioning and thought. The key private connection for much of the intelligensia within this sample stated his entrance situation in the following manner:

During 1951 I came to Canada on an assisted passage - a passage paid by a loan from the Canadian government which I have repaid. Immediately I became a landed immigrant.

The first year I worked in Toronto as a chemist for the Ontario Research Foundation. From 1952 until 1955 I attended graduate school and received my M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. I became a member of the faculty at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and in 1958 came to \_\_\_\_\_ University.<sup>15</sup>

Two respondents arrived with displaced person's passports and stated their experiences as follows:

In 1948 I bought a farm in Canada after I arrived from England with a displaced person's passport. I owned the farm until 1951. During that time I went to school for T.V. repair. In 1951 I obtained a job as a skilled machinist in a Hamilton steel company and in 1978 I retired.<sup>16</sup>

In 1954 I arrived in Canada as a D.P., traveling with a British travel document and I received immigrant and then landed immigrant status. I arrived in Canada with \$5.00 in my pocket.

When I first arrived I found the break up of my family very traumatic. My mother, brother and sister stayed in England. In Poland the family unit was very strong. Family ties were very important so separation psychologically or geographically was felt very keenly.

From 1954 to 1958 I attended McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, where I received both a Masters and Ph.D. While I was there I worked as a disc jockey on the local campus radio station .... In 1961 I came to \_\_\_\_\_ University.<sup>17</sup>

A physically handicapped veteran stated his situation in the fol-

lowing manner:

In 1963 we were sent to \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario and the Committee for the Concern of Hong Kong Refugees and the Canadian immigration gave us a weekly income until I could find a job and follow up help as well. I knew Fr. \_\_\_\_\_, the local Polish Roman Catholic pastor from my years in the German camps. He came to see me and used the form ty when speaking to me.<sup>18</sup> He remembered me and helped me in the beginning as well.

I received training as a mold finisher and now work as an engraver for \_\_\_\_\_ Tool and Die in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario.<sup>19</sup>

Three respondents found degrees in engineering to be of benefit to them in terms of Canadian immigration. Two were themselves graduate engineers and one was the wife of an engineer. Their statements follow:

In 1952 I decided to immigrate to Canada because they gave me a visa first and I felt there was more opportunity here for an engineer. There were no conditions placed on my arrangements to come to Canada. I went through a three day immigration process in England and came into Canada as a professional engineer.

My first job in Canada was for the \_\_\_\_\_ Bridge Company in Montreal. After one year I received a license to practice from the A.P.E.O., an American Professional Engineering Organization. After a number of consulting positions I finally settled in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario where I received my M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from \_\_\_\_\_ University in the field of Engineering. I am now a professor in the Engineering Department at \_\_\_\_\_ University.<sup>20</sup>

When I arrived in Canada in 1952 I obtained a job through the Association of Polish Engineers in England and Canada. In Montreal I began working for the \_\_\_\_\_ Paint Company.

I worked for \_\_\_\_\_ Chemicals as an engineer in Oakville, Ontario and have worked up until the present time as an engineer for \_\_\_\_\_ Company .... This May I retired.<sup>21</sup>

In 1953 I arrived in Canada through personal arrangements made possible because of my husband's engineering degree. My husband had to find a job before I could come.

From 1953 to 1961 I was a homemaker. In 1961 I returned to school receiving my B.A. from the University of Toronto. We then moved to \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario and I received my M.A. and Ph.D. .... I am now an associate professor of Psychology at \_\_\_\_\_ College.<sup>22</sup>

A respondent possessing full medical credentials upon arrival on Canadian soil, issued the following memory:

In Canada I was given free reign as a doctor. When I first arrived I worked in an \_\_\_\_\_ County TB Sanatorium. Canada accepted my medical education but I had to pass a medical exam from the Federal Government in English or French and go through an internship.

After I passed my exams I opened up a practice in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario. At 79 years of age I am still practicing medicine on a part-time basis.<sup>23</sup>

Two respondents came to Canada under a resettlement pension from the British Army. Their statements are below:

In 1951, when my husband and I arrived in Canada, we were given immediate landed immigrant status without any obligations.

For 28 years I was employed by a hospital in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario - six years as a nurse's aide, 17 years as a ward clerk, and five years as a medical record's clerk. In 1968 I bought a pet shop in a local shopping plaza.<sup>24</sup>

In 1951 I had no family here so the immigration department sent me to London, Ontario, since I came from London, England. Polish friends from \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario found me a job at \_\_\_\_\_ Company.... I sold mobile homes and became a union organizer for the workers in the mobile home company, so I lost my job. I now own my own home improvement business.<sup>25</sup>

Eight of these 13 respondents were at least moderately satisfied with both their job placement in relation to their training and qualifications and their present financial situation. Three respondents, a tool and die worker, a hospital aide, and a small businessman, were satisfied with their financial situation, but felt their job history did not correspond with their training and qualifications. Their remarks follow:

My training was musical. If I had a choice I would still love to be a conductor.<sup>26</sup>

If I had a choice I would have picked a job that offered much more challenge. I worked in a hospital and in the

operating room. I took a lot of responsibilities but did not get paid for them and I was never given a job description. There were two possible reasons for this discrimination - I was a female and if I was Canadian, English or German, I might have advanced much faster.<sup>27</sup>

I would have liked to have worked elsewhere but there was no choice.<sup>28</sup>

Two respondents, a retired machinist and a college professor, were well satisfied with their job placement but were very dissatisfied with their financial situation.

### VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AS ENTRANCE AIDS

#### Formal Associations

The Polonia has always retained a deep sense of responsibility for the care of its members. For most Poles, economic insecurity in no way diminished their excessive repugnance for any type of government assistance. In their study of the Polish American community at the turn of the century, Thomas and Znaniecki state:

As to public charity, an appeal to a charitable institution is considered even in Poland a mark of downfall .... Every Pole who accepts the help of American institutions is thus considered not only disgraced personally ... but as disgracing the whole Polish colony (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958, p. 1519).

Paul Wrobel, in a study of the Polish American community which took place in the early 1970s, reiterates these feelings:

To apply for food stamps or Aid to Dependent Children is considered shameful .... It implies that an individual cannot handle his own problems, that he has been defeated. That point of view is based on the belief that problems are the result of personal failings, like not working hard enough, rather than societal forces (Wrobel, 1979, p. 43).

If the Pole felt a need for either material or emotional reassurance

he/she turned to Polish organizations for such assistance. A stabilization factor was noted most often as a positive element flowing out of the various Polish organizations cited. "They served as a stabilizing factor by retaining some reassuring familiar patterns of living, serving as means of influence to personal demoralization" (Polzin, 1973, p. 110).

The post-war immigrants in Canada found organizational structures created by their predecessors easing their initial period of transition. Although a number of respondents indicated that they received assistance upon arrival in Canada from the formal associations with the Canadian Polonia, the vast majority stressed the fact that they established themselves independently without any formal organizational assistance. Whenever aid was admitted, Polish veterans' groups were the most frequently mentioned, followed by The Association of Polish Engineers and the Polish Roman Catholic parish. The following statement infers the need for the initial assistance these associations rendered:

Some Polish associations indeed helped me to adjust. They suggested jobs and helped me adjust socially, etc. They were Polish Veterans, Polish Mutual Association, and Polish parish associations.<sup>29</sup>

More often the responses were "Nobody helped."<sup>30</sup> or "I didn't need any help."<sup>31</sup>

### Informal Associations

The informal Polish network was the most frequently utilized vehicle for entrance and adjustment into the Canadian mainstream. Every respondent went directly to a Polish community, neighborhood or home upon arrival. Their primary relationships during the first few years emanated from within this network. Occasionally members of the

family who had immigrated at an earlier time were the initial contact. The type of assistance varied from psychological support to economic and job placement assistance.

The most valuable network assistance often came from key private connections within the Polish community. One such individual was a respondent in this study. He was an unobtrusive member of the ethnic community. His surname was not obviously Polish nor was he a visible leader but he was very often mentioned, especially by members of the intelligentsia, as a resource whose knowledge of the community was extensive and who would disseminate information that could be relied upon for its accuracy. This respondent was the key connection for the faculty members of Polish descent employed at an Ontario university where he was a faculty member.

This connection remained distant from all formal Polish organizations, preferring to maintain ties with professional organizations instead. Professing Roman Catholicism, he did not belong to a Polish parish. His children did not speak Polish. Preferring them to be multi-lingual, he thought the choice of a second language should be theirs.

He considered himself very Polish and returned to Poland for a visit almost every year. Through letters and food parcels, he maintained close contact with relatives and friends in Poland. Henry Radecki and Benedykt Heydenkorn would define this respondent as "Canadian Polish." (See Appendix A).

#### EDUCATION VARIABLE

During the first few years after these respondents arrived in

Canada, the education variable amended itself as shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI

## Amended Education Variable - After Arrival in Canada

<u>Course Completed .</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>
University - Ph.D. Degree	5
University - M.A. Degree	1
English Language Course	2
T.V. Repair	1
Training - Mold Finisher	1
No Change	10

N - 20

Fifty per cent of the sample extended their formal education and job skill levels after their arrival in Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once social dislocation occurred, the immigrant discovered the extreme effort which had to be exerted in order to understand the social mores of the new place of residence. Acculturation proceeded the moment the newcomer touched Canadian soil. Often the dominant ethnic groups had a limited understanding of the initial hardships which needed to be overcome in such a situation. Personal problems, such as language, extreme homesickness, and the break with personal ties had to be dealt with simultaneous to the acculturation process.

Cultural adjustments, such as food, different definitions of polite social interaction and different standards of personal hygiene



had to be mastered by the new immigrant before he or she could interact on a basic level with the person born in North America.<sup>32</sup> All of this had to be accomplished while the newly arrived Canadian attempted to survive in the Canadian culture, an extremely difficult and misunderstood process. Henry Radecki, in his study of the Canadian Polish community, summarized this problem as follows:

After 1900, Canada's image for the vast majority of Polish immigrants was of a land of unlimited opportunities, with plentiful and well-paid work available for all .... The shock of reality, created ... by the many different Canadian cultural and social norms and values, was bewildering. The struggles and hardships on the land and the coldness, indifference, and discrimination in the cities and work places, contributed to feelings of loneliness and isolation. All that was familiar was far away. Deep crises and broken dreams were made unbearable by the expectations with which the immigrant arrived in Canada. But to fail was even harder than to succeed under difficult conditions, for back in the old community derision, scorn or jeering awaited those who were unsuccessful. For those coming after World War II, return was impossible (Radecki, 1976, p. 55).

Specific problems of adjustment in farm labor were notable as some respondents in this study initially felt exploitation as a cheap labor commodity. Their feelings fluctuated between "pleasant"<sup>33</sup> "ambivalent"<sup>34</sup> and "unbearable",<sup>35</sup> but the real problems of adaptation were overcome and the affected individuals adjusted rather rapidly to their new and more favorable conditions.

Those who arrived in Canada, either through personal or professional arrangements, indicated a degree of pride that they were not associated with the Farm Labor/Domestic Agreement, especially if landed immigrant status was granted immediately or rapidly upon arrival without incurring any obligations.

Thirty-five per cent of the respondents in this study obtained university degrees before their arrival in Canada. Most of them were able to enter into their professions rather rapidly at the lower levels. Some of the professional problems were solved by the acquisition of the English language and an updating of their professional degrees. (See Tables V and VI).

Richmond stated that "an experience of immigrants of downward occupational status mobility, followed by recovery or improvement of status leads to higher levels of satisfaction and adaptation to Canada" (Richmond, 1967, p. 175). Alexander Matyko indicated that "in general the lower-rank immigrants to Canada in the period 1945-1965 were more satisfied with life in Canada than those who had high rank in their native country" (Elliott, 1979, p. 238). In this study, those of the middle class initially suffered the loss of their traditional status, but by the late 1960s many of them managed to improve their positions in Canadian society; their status dislocation was modified. The working class respondents became well established in their occupations by the early 1960s.

One female respondent felt sexual discrimination might have played a greater role in her occupational dissatisfaction than ethnic considerations.<sup>36</sup>

Networking within the established Polish-Canadian community was of vital importance during the early stages of the acculturation process. Familiar social exchange and cultural reaction established a feeling of confidence in the soul of the dislocated newcomer. In this study, most of the initial networking was performed within the Polish-Gentile community, but the Polish-Jewish community was utilized for initial job

placement by both a professional<sup>37</sup> and a semi-skilled<sup>38</sup> respondent.

Interaction between the two communities continued in Canada on a business if not on a personal level. Even though Poles and Jews have a history of animosity between their communities the trust level for the respondents in this study was higher when dealing with a Polish-Jew than with a non-Pole.

Professional organizations for the intellectuals and Veteran's organizations for the semi-skilled were the points of referral most mentioned when one alluded to the necessity of assistance. Religious and government agencies were rarely mentioned. Only 10 per cent of the respondents indicated a possibility of going to the Polish-Roman Catholic parish for possible assistance.

Five per cent of the respondents indicated the possibility of government assistance in terms of Veteran's benefits.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Over 80 percent of the Polish veterans who signed the farm labor agreement moved away from the farm once their contract was completed" (Radecki, 1976, p. 54).
- 2 Case No. 11.
- 3 Case No. 20.
- 4 Case No. 6.
- 5 Case No. 9.
- 6 Case No. 7.
- 7 Case No. 5.
- 8 Case No. 11.
- 9 Case No. 20.
- 10 Case No. 6.
- 11 Case No. 9.
- 12 Case No. 5.
- 13 Case No. 6.
- 14 Case No. 1.
- 15 Case No. 2.
- 16 Case No. 14.
- 17 Case No. 5.
- 18 ty - a form used with close friends and/or family members.
- 19 Case No. 17.
- 20 Case No. 4.

21 Case No. 15.

22 Case No. 12.

23 Case No. 15.

24 Case No. 10.

25 Case No. 16.

26 Case No. 17.

27 Case No. 10.

28 Case No. 16.

29 Case No. 20.

30 Case No. 8.

31 Case No. 9.

32 Examples of some of these cultural adjustments include: In Eastern Europe a man kisses a lady's hand on meeting and one does not address another in too personal a fashion unless the person is a close personal friend or part of the family. In terms of personal hygiene - in some countries soap and water, laundry facilities and indoor plumbing are not as sophisticated or as available as they are in North America; necessitating the digesting of a whole new set of cultural expectations.

33 Case No. 7.

34 Case Nos. 11, 20, and 5.

35 Case Nos. 6 and 9.

36 Case No. 10.

37 Case No. 1.

38 Case No. 6.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERMANENT ADJUSTMENT TO CANADA

Thus far this study encompassed a brief survey of background information on a specific element within the Canadian Polonia: their Homeland, when and why they left it and how they settled in Canada. They had been transplanted into a situation which modified past socio-cultural mores giving birth to a unique Polish-Canadian milieu. Their adjustments within this disparate situation were as varied as the individual respondents in the study.

Individuals within this immigration group were as concerned as their predecessors with the problems of cultural maintenance among the younger Canadian-born generations. These emotions were strongly felt within this sample for many of them saw themselves as guardians of a culture that might face permanent extinction or revision, given the present political situation in Eastern Europe. These veterans of World War II were political exiles or refugees strongly conscious of their nationality, history and traditional background. They were exposed to formal education in Poland, and broadened further by circumstances of war, immigration and resettlement. Until the early 1960s, many were deluded into believing that world conflict was bound to ensue; Poland would be liberated from Soviet domination and they could return to their homeland.

They saw themselves as ambassadors of the enslaved Polish nation. These expectations and this perceived guardianship increased their incentive for language and cultural maintenance among the younger generations.

The traditionalist character of this guardianship was difficult for the liberally oriented section of the intelligentsia to accept. They were generally more cosmopolitan in their outlook and resented those within this group who had a limited knowledge of Polish reality under communism; "but at the same time pretended to be experts on communism, Poland, and anything concerning Eastern Europe" (Matejko, 1980, p. 21).

Therefore, it became evident that socio-cultural adjustments were necessary, not only within the Macro-Canadian society but within the Micro-Polish ethnic community as well. All within this sample identified with the ethnic community, but the degree of cultural retention varied from one respondent to another.

There were several ways in which these respondents were able and willing to express their ethnic commitments. Language, family, degree of ethnic community interaction, ethnic institutions and degree of interest in present day Poland were the most frequent common denominators. Their individual perceptions of all of these elements greatly affected their present view of Canadian culture and their role within that environment. First of all, this study dealt with the issue of language since language retention was a significant indicator of cultural retention in all other areas mentioned.

#### Language Maintenance

Discussion was directed toward five levels of language maintenance:

- (1) The language spoken in the home, (2) language maintenance among

their progeny, (3) if their children attended part-time Polish school, (4) if the family attended a Polish parish where the Polish language was the form of communication,<sup>1</sup> and (5) if the respondents read Polish magazines and newspapers and/or listened to Polish radio programs.

Thirty-five percent of the families used Polish as the principal language in the home; 20 percent mostly Polish; English and Polish 15 percent; only English 25 percent, and German 5 percent.

Negative feelings toward a Polish accent were exhibited by a number of the respondents. Some participants felt that a "foreign" accent was a detriment in terms of social mobility. One member of the intelligentsia responded as follows:

I would like to lose my accent. It's not the proper accent. It's a Polish accent.<sup>2</sup>

Eighty percent of the progeny in this study spoke Polish. Proficiency varied and in some instances the cosmopolitan nature of the family's existence exhibited itself. The extremes are stated below:

They speak Polish poorly. They speak better French.<sup>3</sup>

My children spoke all English in the home because this is their life here.<sup>4</sup>

My daughter speaks only Polish in our home except when her English husband is around.<sup>5</sup> She speaks many languages because her home environment was so broken up during the war. She speaks English very well because she went to good boarding schools in England. She is now a teacher here in Canada teaching English.<sup>6</sup>

One respondent was having his children tutored in French by the Polish nuns from the local Polish parish.

"In 1965 there were about 5,000 children attending 57 Polish part-time schools in Canada" (Radecki, 1976, p. 100), where educational efforts stressed the language, history, geography and traditions of Poland. After World War II these institutions stressed strong politi-



cal as well as nationalistic views. Fifty-five percent of this study's children attended these facilities, most for reasons of cultural maintenance. This focus was indicated as follows:

We sent our child so he would understand Polish like his Mother and Dad.<sup>7</sup>

Our daughter was born in Poland. My wife and I adopted her. We sent her to Polish school so she could continue the language.<sup>8</sup>

... to keep up the heritage.<sup>9</sup>

... to make them culturally richer.<sup>10</sup>

Not all of the respondents were as enthusiastic about this aspect of cultural maintenance. The following statement shows one lukewarm attitude.

I sent my children because my wife and sons wanted me to.<sup>11</sup>

Sixty-five percent of the respondents attended Polish parishes (see Ethnic Community Ties for further discussion), 75 percent read Polish magazines, newspapers and/or listened to Polish radio programming. Some stressed their subscriptions to Kultura, a Polish language intellectual journal published in France, and/or the fact that their reading was exclusively professional. Many indicated their displeasure with Polish newspapers because they thought them politically biased or "they arrived too late for the news to be useful."<sup>12</sup>

#### Family Attitudes

The family has always been a strong vehicle for cultural maintenance within the Polish community. Family bonding was tight and divorce or separation was the exception to the rule.

Within this sample, 80 percent of the respondents were married, 10

percent widowed, 5 percent divorced, and 5 percent single. Eighty-five percent of the respondents had children for a sample total of 28.

Families ranged from one child to three children. Family size within this sample ran contrary to the perceived stereotype of first generation immigrants professing Roman Catholicism. Four factors might have accounted for this finding. 1) These respondents were married later than the average, 2) permanent job and income security occurred at a later stage, 3) the sample was heavily weighted with intellectuals, who as a socio-group, were motivated toward smaller family size, and 4) there was a decline in religiosity among the Canadian population as a whole. "The churches were experiencing difficulty in maintaining moral authority over their members .... In the period between 1961-1971 ... survey data showed that Catholics did not differ greatly from Protestants in the utilization of contraceptives" (Matejko, 1980, p. 12).

#### Home Ownership

Home ownership has frequently been a dominant characteristic among the North American Polonia. Wood's study of Hamtramck, Michigan, in 1950 showed a home ownership of close to 50 percent (Wood, 1955, p. 25). Polzin's study of Polish parishes in the United States, indicated that 60 percent of the pastors reported that most or all of the Polish Americans in their parishes owned their own homes (Polzin, 1973, p. 277). The present study supported this contention in a Polish-Canadian setting. Ninety-five percent of the respondents owned their own homes, and in at least 15 percent of the cases, owned two or more homes simultaneously.

Only five percent of the respondents lived in a "Polish" neighbor-

hood, while 95 percent lived in a "mixed" neighborhood. All of the respondents were at least moderately pleased with their neighborhoods and/or housing.

Residential proximity did not necessarily breed group cohesion. Poles and Polish-Canadians did not always feel comfortable with one another. One example of this ingroup cultural tension was expressed in the following manner:

I live in a mixed neighborhood but there is one Polish family on the block. Actually he is not Polish. He is Polish Canadian. He speaks Polish very badly.<sup>13</sup>

A respondent from the intelligentsia indicated his elite feelings on this issue below:

A second generation Polish-Canadian attempted to speak to me at a recent conference and his Polish was of the most crude peasant variety. Of course this was how he was taught. It's really no fault of his.<sup>14</sup>

One respondent issued a plea for cultural pluralism in a unified political setting:

We came to Canada to be Canadian with a Polish heritage. I would not like to live in a Polish ghetto. It is not good to have a nation within a nation.<sup>15</sup>

Three other respondents indicated their individual situation as follows:

This neighborhood is mixed.... We own this home and one home outside of \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario, one home in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario and a condominium apartment in \_\_\_\_\_. The apartment block is owned by Poles.<sup>16</sup>

We built our own home in 1964 .... There are some Poles here but mostly others.<sup>17</sup>

Our neighborhood is inhabited by just everybody. There is one Polish family. It is a good street stuck between two poor districts.<sup>18</sup>

This residential cultural diversity in the first generation agrees with Helling's findings dealing with Canadian newcomers:

Not all immigrants settled among their own. While this might have been possible in the rural ethnic checkerboard settlements of the Canadian West, it was unlikely to happen in the emerging urban centers.

World War II hastened ... industrial expansion .... Ethnic segregation in the cities soon lost its legitimacy when restrictive covenants were declared unenforceable and fair accommodation practices outlawed differential treatment on the basis of ascribed criteria (Helling, 1978, p. 6-7).

(Indications of residential discrimination due to ascribed status are detailed later in this chapter - see View of Canadian Culture).

### Cuisine

One of the stronger marks of ethnic identity was dietary preference. Ninety-five percent of the respondents indicated a desire to maintain some contact with traditional cuisine. Forty-five percent served mostly Polish cuisine in their homes, 50 percent mixed dietary choices and only 5 percent preferred non-Polish dishes. Two respondents indicated their multi-cultural approach to this matter in the following way:

Often I would fix Canadian food the Polish way.<sup>19</sup>

I prefer a variety of cuisine with a shot of bigos once in awhile.<sup>20</sup>

### Primary and Secondary Relationships

The family's primary relationship groupings were dealt with in conjunction with its relationship to Polonia and the Canadian social setting

as a whole. This sample contained individuals who were torn from the security of an extended family creating a situation necessitating extension of primary group bonding into Polonia and at times even into the surrounding macro-community.

A careful examination of life in Polonia reveals the significance of several sociological principles (Lopata, 1976, p. 118): the presence of ethclasses (Gordon, 1964), and other complexities of social structures (Huges, 1964; Wirth, 1928; Kramer, 1970), the ability of an ethnic community to maintain itself in spite of territorial subdivisions and even dispersal (Etzioni, 1959), and the overlap between the life of an ethnic community and that of the larger society (Lopata, 1964). The concept of "ethclass" was coined by Gordon (1964) after an examination of the American scene which concluded:

With regard to cultural behavior, differences of social class are more important and decisive than differences of ethnic group, (and) with regard to social participation in primary groups and primary relationships, people tend to confine these to their own social class segment within their own ethnic group - that is to the ethclass (Gordon, 1964, p. 52).

Gordon thus refers to "the subsociety created by the intersection of the vertical stratification of ethnicity with the horizontal stratifications of social class as the ethclass" (Gordon, 1964, p. 51).

Gordon further states that "there is a social world of a sub-society of the intellectuals in America in which true structural intermixture among persons of various ethnic backgrounds ... has markedly taken place" (Gordon, 1964, p. 281). The present study bares this out on a professional level. Seventy percent of the total sample indicated that their primary group relationships were "mostly Polish" but a corresponding percentage of intellectuals within the study indicated that their professional relationships were mixed or non-Polish. Perhaps due

to the urban nature of this sample and the cosmopolitan war time experiences of the respondents, similar groupings were also deciphered in the non-professional group. Eighty percent indicated that their social contacts were mixed or all Polish, while 80 percent indicated that their associations during working hours were non-Polish. Twenty-five percent of the respondents from the total study indicated that their primary group affiliations were mixed, and five percent stated that their primary social group was non-Polish. Social ambiguity and latent ethnic bonding surfaced among those who stressed their strong affiliation with the macro-community. One example follows:

Not too many Poles visit my home on a regular basis and I do not visit too many Polish homes in this area but in \_\_\_\_\_, Ontario I maintain contact with a lot of Polish friends.<sup>21</sup>

The respondents stated that their children presented quite a different picture. Seventy-one percent indicated that their childrens' primary social relationships were non-Polish, while only 28 percent stated that the relationships were mixed. None indicated exclusively Polish affiliations. A number of the interviewees stressed their desire for "some" Polish friendships among their progeny, but none of them exhibited displeasure at this rate of social assimilation. Typical reactions follow:

The choice is up to them.<sup>22</sup>

Our children's social contacts have been mostly non-Polish but we would prefer them to be half Polish and half non-Polish.<sup>23</sup>

#### Name Changing

Several sociologists have focused on legal changes of Polish sounding surnames as indices of a willingness to totally assimilate into

the general society. Name changes end the last visible proof of identification with the ethnic group, breaking past family and ethnicity label ties, though not necessarily interactional ties (Zagraniczny, 1963; Kotlarz, 1963; Borkowski, 1963). None of the respondents within this study had changed their surnames, although not all surnames were "Polish sounding". Reactions to the phenomenon of name changing were mixed. Sixty percent were negative, 25 percent didn't mind, and 15 percent issued no response. Those who had a negative reaction varied in their intensity as follows:

It disturbs me a great deal but if people feel more comfortable \_\_\_\_\_. It's like have a nose job done. It's not what it will do to others but what it does to the person.<sup>24</sup>

I can't understand it. Why would they need to?<sup>25</sup>

It would kill me. I would drown my son if he did that.<sup>26</sup>

Yes, it would bother me very much. My sons should keep their father's name. It's a good name.<sup>27</sup>

It seems like they are ashamed of their own name but if English people can't spell it, maybe ....<sup>28</sup>

It is denying your identity, like denying your mother and father.<sup>29</sup>

It is a cowardly thing to do.<sup>30</sup>

I would feel the person should not change his name. What you are, you are.<sup>31</sup>

My daughter was so proud of her Polish name, she hyphenated her last name when she married so she could keep her Polish name. I guess name-changing is up to the individual.<sup>32</sup>

One respondent, now a key private connection with the ethnic community, indicated his past desire to change his surname.

I was going to change my name but my wife, a non-Pole, convinced me not to.<sup>33</sup>

### Exogamy

Ethnic intermarriage is sometimes seen as the catalyst toward the disillusion of an ethnic community. Since ethnicity is strongly linked to kinship, a breakdown of ethnic exclusivity must indicate a weakening of the ethnic group (Kennedy, 1952; Herberg, 1955). Exogamy implies a degree of "structural assimilation" because it entails a very close kinship between two groups (Gordon, 1964).

Although intermarriage may reflect a reduction in ethnic cohesion, it does not necessarily undermine ethnic solidarity. Children of a mixed marriage may become members of the ethnic group of either or both parents. The present study showed that this variable affecting structural assimilation was of no consequence to the respondents. Twenty-five percent were themselves partners in dual-ethnic liaisons. One hundred percent felt exogamy "did not matter". Typical reactions follow:

It would not matter if my child married a non-Pole.  
I consider a person as a person not their nationality.<sup>34</sup>

It's their choice.<sup>35</sup>

Matejko felt there was a very real danger to the ethnic community in this apathy. "The intermarriage rate among Polish people is particularly high. The assimilationist trend undermines the existence of the Polish ethnic group" (Elliott, 1979, p. 242). Contrary to this development, exogamous relationships in this study resulted in a strengthening of two cultures. All of the respondents involved in mixed marriages were male and all indicated that their wives eased their acculturation



into the Canadian society and conversely served as re-enforcers of a Polish identity. The non-Polish wives attempted to learn to speak Polish, encouraged travel to Poland, and learned to cook Polish dishes. In 20 percent of the cases, social interaction within the Polish community was aided and encouraged by a non-Polish spouse with one wife insisting on the maintenance of a Polish surname.

#### Ethnic Community Ties

Ethnic cultural values and community ties were maintained overtime, largely through ethnic organizations and institutions. These affiliations alleviated the environmental shock by sustaining social cohesion. They cushioned the transitional period from one culture to another, preventing personal disorganization. In many instances they served as surrogate families providing legal, financial, and spiritual assistance, allowing for a small primary group environment where cultural identification was clarified or solidified. For many these organizations were the initial contact points from which the immigrants were able to discern their perceived identities as Poles or as Canadians of Polish descent. Through membership, the individual gained a greater knowledge of not only the local environment but eventually the broader society encompassing it.

"Organizational office or even membership served a special role for those suffering from a severe status dislocation in the socioeconomic spheres of the Canadian society" (Richmond, 1967, p. 118). For these individuals, a portion of their previous position, influence, and prestige was maintained through playing a significant role within the ethnic organizations, where their past symbols of social status were given a

degree of recognition by the other members. For some, membership or an office provided a release from the outside society's restricted upward social mobility. This was the only social distinction some of them achieved in their new social setting within their lifetimes. Many used this setting to confront their ethnic roots for a re-evaluation of their identity after a self-imposed exile.

Within the present study, membership was limited to the following Polish-Canadian organizations:

Veterans

1. Polish Combatants Association in Canada - (S.P.K.) - Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantow w Kanadzie
2. Royal Canadian Legion - Polish Branch
3. Canadian Air Force Association - \_\_\_\_\_ Polish Wing -  
Stowarzyszenie Lotnikow Polskich w Kanadzie, Skrzydlo \_\_\_\_\_

Others

1. Association of Polish Engineers in Canada - Stowarzyszenie Technikow Polskich w Kanadzie
2. Canadian Polish Congress
3. Polish Roman Catholic Church
4. Dom Polski - Polish Home
5. Polski Klub Towarzyski w \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Polish Social Club

The Association of Polish Engineers in Canada was established in 1941. This organization was formed to represent the professional and occupation interests of a particular segment within the ethnic community.

In 1944 the Canadian Polish Congress was established as an umbrella organization, aimed at the unification of all organizations, secular and religious, within a broad based central structure. It was a loose

alliance of organizations designed basically as a representative, coordinative, and planning body.

In 1946 the Polish Combatants Association in Canada was founded under the leadership of professional officers in the Polish Armed Forces. Highly political, all were strongly anti-Communist, recognizing the Polish government in England as the only legal political regime representing Poland. The initial organizational concerns included care and representation for those veterans exploited by unscrupulous employers, plus aid and advice to members seeking work or accommodation upon completion of their farm labor or domestic/farm labor contracts.

In addition to the aforementioned organizations, post-war immigrants formed Polish branches of the Canadian Legion, accepting the formal rules and affiliation with the Canadian body, but retaining a Polish character through exclusive membership, and through activities and concern for Polish traditions, customs, and history.

The veterans of the Polish Air Force formed Polish "Wings" of the Canadian Air Force Association. All Polish branches of the Canadian Legion and Polish Air Force "Wings" were affiliated with the Canadian Polish Congress.

The Polish Social Club and Dom Polski were non-sectarian organizations encompassing all segments of the community. Both stressed the preservation of the Polish language and heritage with the Polish Social Club being more exclusive and intellectual in nature. The key ingredient for both organizations was in-group socialization and comradeship.

The intelligentsia within the present study did not seek active membership within the various veteran's groups, mainly through a process of self-exclusion. They all preferred to obtain status recognition

through professional organizational sources, nearly all non-Polish. Neither of the female respondents were connected to any veteran's organizations. Since they were themselves veterans, they resented being relegated to auxiliary status within the groups. Both of these respondents were very active in other areas of Polonia, one holding an office in the Polish American Congress.

Organizational life outside the Polish community was very limited, with the exception of those who belonged to non-Polish professional organizations, a non-Polish parish, or local senior citizen's groups. None of the respondents belonged to non-Polish veteran's units.

Three respondents from the intelligentsia, the first being a key private connection within the Polish community, issued the following statements concerning their self-exclusion from much of the organizational life within the community.

I keep a distance from any and all Polish organizations and maintain ties with professional organizations instead.<sup>36</sup>

My associational ties are all in the professional vein - all non-Polish - all engineering societies in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>37</sup>

I belong to professional organizations and the \_\_\_\_\_ Polish Roman Catholic Church. I have no time for community organizations.<sup>38</sup>

Group exclusion surfaced in the following response.

I joined the Polish Veteran's groups in \_\_\_\_\_ but found I was discriminated against because I was a member of the German Army before I was a member of the Polish Army.<sup>39</sup>

Sixty-five percent of the respondents belonged to a Polish Roman Catholic parish; 15 percent belonged to non-Polish Roman Catholic parishes, and 20 percent had no religious affiliation. Those who be-

longed to the Polish parishes considered themselves "active members" and one respondent who claimed no religious affiliation returned occasionally to the Polish parish for cultural reasons. In the interview setting, their parish association constituted a very small percentage of their conversational exchange, but for those who professed Polish parish connections, such associations seemed to constitute a major force in their lives. It was difficult to decipher if this emphasis was from a faith or cultural/traditional perspective. That issue alone could constitute another study. The comments that were issued tended to be negative, personal in scope, and subjective in nature. Three such examples follow:

I no longer have any religious affiliation. The priest refused to baptise our child because my wife is non-Catholic.<sup>40</sup>

I used to belong to the local Polish Roman Catholic parish but I don't like (the pastor) so I stopped going. He is too political and won't take a stand on the Katyn massacre. I think he is a user, a liar and a hypocrite.<sup>41</sup>

I would like to take a more active role in the parish but both the pastor and the parishioners maintain a rather negative view of women who are highly educated.<sup>42</sup>

One respondent indicated cultural incongruence by stating:

I am non-religious but I go to the Polish Church occasionally to strengthen the emotional ties, especially when homesickness sets in. I give a great deal of financial support to the Polish Roman Catholic parish in \_\_\_\_\_. I truly regret that I do not do more.<sup>43</sup>

When asked to discuss their present relationship with the Canadian Polonia; 80 percent saw themselves as members, while 20 percent felt divorced from the ethnic community. Their reactions follow:

Yes, definitely I am part of the Canadian Polonia.<sup>44</sup>

Yes, of course, I feel like a member of the Canadian Polonia. Culturally I have to belong to this group.

You can't be a canary if you are a crow.<sup>45</sup>

I feel very much apart of the Canadian Polonia but because of my German Army connections I've been disappointed and rejected several times so I gave up. But I will go back any time they accept me.<sup>46</sup>

I consider myself emotionally although not formally a part of the Canadian Polonia. I'm sort of a well-wisher and a helper. I might return once I retire. Perhaps I might even return in the near future.<sup>47</sup>

No, I don't know. I'm a loner. I prefer to share Kultura and discuss.<sup>48</sup>

I feel too Polish to be part of the Canadian Polonia.<sup>49</sup>

I do not feel I am a member of the Canadian Polonia because I am much more Canadian in my orientation. I will not return to Polonia after retirement because my profession and friendships have eliminated almost all ties with Polonia.<sup>50</sup>

A functional analysis of the ethnic community's social infrastructure could be an explanation for the incidence of many non-cohesive developments within this sample. Breton (1964) argued that what was important in the social infrastructure of an ethnic community was not any particular type of organization, but rather the diversity of organizations. He used the term "institutional completeness" to refer to the extent to which an ethnic community contained representative types of organizations (i.e., economic, religious, social, political) so that individuals might live out their lives within such communities. He analyzed group affiliations as a choice or decision confronting each new arrival.

When the immigrant was transplanted from one country to another he had to reconstruct his interpersonal "field". Such a reconstruction was accomplished through his activities to satisfy his immediate needs: making a living, learning a new language, participating in social life, going to church

(Breton, 1964, p. 193).

How this decision was made depended on the institutional alternatives available. Language or other practical difficulties made interactions in non-ethnic institutions relatively unrewarding.

Breton emphasized that the greater the range and diversity of needs the ethnic community met, both in terms of socio-cultural cohesion and social mobility, the more time the immigrant spent within the boundaries of this community.

It became apparent in the present study that some of the effects of institutional completeness on cohesion lasted only a few years, until some respondents overcame their linguistic and other socio-economic handicaps. Some arrived with few handicaps and acculturation was accomplished rapidly, while other effects persisted over a lifetime. The institutional completeness of the Polish community could not stop the progressive internal diversification.

#### View of Present Day Poland

A sizable number of these respondents envisioned a permanent return to their homeland when they first arrived in Canada, but economic acculturation, family ties, and Poland's unfavorable political situation brought about permanent Canadian settlement.

A continuing interest in keeping abreast of the Polish national situation, either family or culturally was very evident. Eighty-five percent had visited Poland at least once since the close of World War II, with some returning as frequently as every two years. Forty-seven percent of the respondents' children had visited Poland at least once.

In terms of a possible return on a permanent basis, the present

study's findings correlated with Matejko's results in the 1970s. "One-fifth of the respondents took into consideration the possibility of returning to Poland sometime in the future, mostly for retirement" (Matejko, 1980, p. 25; Rutkowski, 1982). Some positive feelings about a permanent return to the homeland are stated below:

I have not returned to Poland since the Second World War but I'm thinking about going back for good now.<sup>51</sup>

I would like to return for my retirement because I have a lot to talk to them about.<sup>52</sup>

If there were a change in the regime I would like to return for good.<sup>53</sup>

A possible return is too complex a question to answer. Probably yes in retirement.<sup>54</sup>

Age, economic, political and familial variables exhibited themselves in the negative reactions.

No, not at my age. I want for Poland a democracy. Our family has a long history of fighting for Poland's freedom. We've had enough Russians.<sup>55</sup>

I would not return to Poland for good even if the regime should change. My pension is here. It would be difficult to adjust again.<sup>56</sup>

No, because my children are here. I was thinking about it even with the present regime. We were planning to retire there. But now it is too close to trouble. I would like to be buried there.<sup>57</sup>

#### View of the Canadian Culture

These post-war immigrants entered Canada often with exaggerated expectations of their own potentialities for the future. Letters from relatives or friends warned of the difficulties in finding suitable work along with other possible problem areas, but those who were determined to come retained their own images of Canadian society. Years of abnormal existence, constant threats of death, and a sense of insecurity



about their future all contributed to a heightened state of anxiety. Many were "conditioned by fear, possessed by suspicion and often pre-disposed to think happiness dwells in the place where they are not" (Vernant, 1953, p. 358). In time, problems of adjustment diminished and for most disappeared. The years since 1946 witnessed a more tolerant attitude on the part of Canadians toward the Eastern European newcomer. But discrimination did exist in many spheres and adjustments had to be made. The negative or positive feedback obtained by immigrants, both upon entrance and during the ensuing years, coloured their perceptions of Canadian society and themselves as Canadians. An important factor in the immigrant's adjustment was

the manner in which the dominant society was prepared to welcome the ethnic individual as a total person, including his culture .... If his culture was ridiculed and downgraded then he felt rejected as a person ..., unless he had reached the point of assimilation at which he no longer identified with his ethnic group.

.... Ridicule and derision did not ... work toward speeding up the process of making an individual less ethnic and therefore a better Canadian. ... the minority group members feeling toward the new country seemed to be very strongly related to his feeling toward his own ethnic group.... A proud Pole made a proud Canadian (Dunin-Markiewicz, 1976, p. 51).

Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they had experienced attitudes of prejudice or discrimination coupled with negative attitudes toward immigrants by the "man in the streets" upon arrival in Canada. Although many indicated that these emotions were modified, and in many areas ceased to exist in the ensuing years. Jobs, housing and linguistic discrimination were the most frequently mentioned areas of concern. Varying reactions follow:

The Canadian man in the streets has a very unfavorable attitude toward immigrants. The fear of the D.P. is ingrained in them. This is their way of protecting their jobs. By the way, why did you pick this topic? Does anyone really care about the Polish Army?

At this point the respondent hesitated and then continued:

I feel uncomfortable because I still have an accent.

When I stated that we all have accents he stated:

You're right of course, I should not be ashamed of mine.<sup>58</sup>

I think their attitude is rotten. They always say 'speak English'. Free speech is a big farce but the Canadian authorities respect us because we built up this country. I've experienced prejudice in finding a house, at work, from my neighbors, in the stores, and from government officials both employment and immigration. We're still called D.P.'s. Even our grandchildren are called D.P.'s. I'm called that D.P. across the street.<sup>59</sup>

There is jealousy because we always do better than them. We manage better. I have experienced prejudice in getting a job. They feel we are only good for cleaning; at work from the boss and my fellow workers I got a secondary feeling; in the stores because of my accent and in the schools when in the 50s my sons found it with our name.<sup>60</sup>

In the beginning we were treated like second class citizens because of our D.P. classification. Now it is very much different. I experienced prejudice in the area of getting a job. They would not recognize our capabilities or recognize the difficulties we had to overcome to live the same as they do.<sup>61</sup>

A few years ago Canadians did not like people not to speak English. Fifteen years ago I experienced prejudice in getting a job but the situation has improved. I was treated very well by immigration officials.<sup>62</sup>

Fifteen years ago Canadians held a very unfavorable attitude toward immigrants. They did not want people to speak Polish and Polish people had to change their age in order to receive a job. In 1966 Prime Minister Pearson brought in the Canadian Pension Plan and discrimination stopped.<sup>63</sup>

The attitude is worse towards people from Asia, Africa and the West Indies. I have experienced discrimination in securing housing.<sup>64</sup>

I feel the general attitude is one of indifference. Before they were reluctant to accept us at first. Now there are so many immigrants they must accept us. I have experienced discrimination in getting a job and at work from my boss and fellow workers.<sup>65</sup>

When we first came the Canadians did not like the idea that the immigrants were coming and the the government was making jobs for them. In 1980 the feelings were considerably improved. I have experienced no discrimination. Certain people did in the farm labor situation but they went to the employment agency and the farm was changed.<sup>66</sup>

The attitude is constantly changing and is determined mostly by an economic situation at a given time. I have experienced discrimination in getting a job and as a teacher in the schools.<sup>67</sup>

The general attitude of the Canadian man on the street toward immigrants is quite favorable. The salad bowl effect is present here. In general the more educated immigrant and Canadian have a better attitude toward each other. However this can change if someone's job is in danger. Then prejudice can become severe. I have not personally experienced much prejudice in Canada. My education eliminated a lot of the usual problems.<sup>68</sup>

Canadians feel extremely favorable toward immigrants. I have experienced no sign of prejudice while I have been in Canada.<sup>69</sup>

These perceptions of discrimination seem quite specific in content. The present study was heavily weighted with well-educated respondents of middle and upper-middle class standing. Alexandra Dunin-Markiewicz, in her study dealing with prejudice among Polish-Canadian High School students, indicated a direct correlation between these two variables.

The perception of prejudice seems to be ... related to one's social class and education.... It was the most highly educated adults, those with most prominent position within society, and highest aspirations, which most often reported cases of actual discrimination against them (Dunin-Markiewicz, 1976, p. 44).

Therefore, the respondents had to comprehend the dynamics of discrimination before they perceived its reality.

The "Polish joke" or humour, based on negative ethnic stereotypes prevalent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, served to reinforce perceptions of prejudice. The humour of these strongly negative stories centered on the lower class background and peasant culture of early immigrant groups greatly exaggerated by the jokes. Lopata talks about the effects of this negative stereotyping in her study of the Polish-American community.

Polish jokes have had a profound influence on Polonia. ... First, ... they were a jolt to a community that had been comfortably involved in its own status competition, only vaguely aware of and responsive to prejudice from the outside. Second, success in acquiring American status symbols served to increase interest in status competition outside the community. Third, the jokes affect ... anyone who identifies himself or is identified by others as Polish-American. They have ... been told to people with Polish names as if they would be especially meaningful, even when the recipient considered him - or herself successfully acculturated and ... structurally assimilated. The jokes thus come as reminders of the imperfection of such assimilation (Lopata, 1979, p. 77).

By the time this study was initiated, Polish ethnic humour had crested and was on the wane, but a residue of resentment still remained. Eighty-five percent of the respondents had been confronted by this form of humour in the Canadian social setting. Sixty percent had a mixed or negative reaction to it. The origins were attributed to anti-Polish sentiment within the German and Jewish communities. The history of relations between Polonia, the Jewish, and to a lesser degree the German communities, was one of mutual dislike dating back to their collective European experiences. This residue of animosity was expressed in the two following examples of reverse stereotyping.

Polish jokes upset me very much. Only stupid people can like them. They were started by an enemy who is trying to discredit Poles and Poland. I think they were started by Jews and Germans.<sup>70</sup>

They were made by either Germans or Jews. The quality seems to be German - not very intelligent.<sup>71</sup>

A segment of this Polish-Jewish animosity has been attributed to the Jewish community because many of its members were writers and performers.

Polonia's members have been increasingly angry over what they define as a deliberate attempt by Jews in the mass communication media to prejudice the rest of society against them, and the relations between these two communities tend not to be very cordial (Lopata, 1979, p. 79).

In the United States the more judicious leaders within the Jewish community have been working with a small number of Polonian leaders to help in changing this situation, but they have met with only limited success in their respective communities. There is no indication that even this limited step toward future understanding between the two communities has taken place in the Canadian setting.

Despite some negative incidents during their total Canadian experience, 70 percent of these respondents maintained a positive opinion of individual Canadians. Only 10 percent held them in low esteem, and 20 percent issued no opinion. Social incongruence exhibited itself in their view of the Canadian culture. Forty-five percent thought the Polish culture superior, while none thought the Canadian superior. Fifty-five percent preferred a blend of the two cultures, indicating neither as superior. A composite picture of their view of individual Canadians and the overall Canadian culture follow.

### View of Canadians as Individuals

I have a great affection for them especially the Canadian intelligentsia.<sup>72</sup>

Sure I like them. It's my country.<sup>73</sup>

Canadians are very good people.<sup>74</sup>

Canadians are easy to get along with. I like them.<sup>75</sup>

Some are good. Some are bad. It depends on the person. Ethnicity plays no part.<sup>76</sup>

I like Canadians as a whole but I think they are a little shallow.<sup>77</sup>

They don't know much about anything outside of Canada.<sup>78</sup>

I am very disappointed by the lack of respect shown the Polish veteran in Canada. After all we were Canada's allies. Canadians are too limited to understand the crisis in the world and what we went through. You can't converse with them and expect them to take it seriously.<sup>78</sup>

Canadians are much more interested in money than Europeans. In Europe family status and education are far more important.<sup>80</sup>

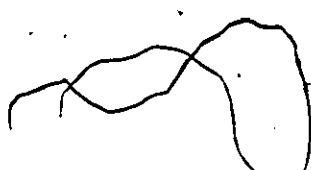
It's hard to define Canadians. Some are nice and some are not. I prefer Slovaks and Latin Americans.<sup>81</sup>

### View of the Canadian Culture

The Polish culture is older and more complete. The Canadian culture is still being formed. Polish culture is more humanistic in the European tradition.<sup>82</sup>

Moral values were higher in Poland pre-war. In Poland - post-war it is safer crime wise - yet there is a lack of private initiative. I prefer Polish culture but Canadian civilization. The technology is higher in Canada.<sup>83</sup>

The Polish culture is a culture with deep roots. There are no Canadian roots and there is no Canadian pride. They must learn more about themselves.<sup>84</sup>



We have a better life style in Canada than in present day Poland but before the war the Polish culture was superior.<sup>85</sup>

This country is so young and such a mix of nationalities.<sup>86</sup>

It's opening up more - despite my unpronounceable name!!<sup>87</sup>

Canada is the best country in the world. I never had any trouble. The Polish culture was superior before the war. Canada is a growing baby. It has not yet established itself.<sup>88</sup>

These immigrants experienced varying degrees of acculturation, with none of them reaching the stage of full assimilation. Acculturation for this study meant a voluntary adaptation of the norms and values of the host society. It involved a familiarity with and adoption of Canadian customs and traditions without a corresponding loss of Polish ethnic identity, values and traditions. Assimilation was the process of total absorption into another culture and group. It involved the abandonment of Polish norms and values with a corresponding adoption of Canadian patterns of thinking and reacting. Their original culture no longer served as a frame of reference for their beliefs and behavior.

The Canadian claim of an integration of cultural traits did not occur to any extent. There was no mutual exchange or "mutual adjustment of diverse or conflicting culture traits to form a harmonious cultural system" (Theodorson, 1969, p. 209). The processes of acculturation and assimilation were basically "Anglo-Conformity in the sense that the newcomers adopted or assimilated to the two dominant cultures without effecting any significant changes in the Canadian Society" (Radecki, 1976, p. 213).

A variety of emotions surfaced when the respondents were asked if

they felt "more Canadian" or "more Polish" showing a diversity in their perceived degree of assimilation and national self-placement. Thirty percent still considered themselves entirely Polish; 55 percent half Polish and Half Canadian, and 15 percent entirely Canadian. Selected statements follow:

I have a Polish soul and Canadian Citizenship.<sup>89</sup>

I feel one-half Canadian and one-half Polish. Democracy is more important than nationality.<sup>90</sup>

I feel entirely Canadian.<sup>91</sup>

When they were asked if they felt more comfortable with Poles or Canadians, it became apparent that the 55 percent who considered themselves half Polish and half Canadian had a pre-eminent orientation toward the ethnic community, combining their sentiments with the 30 percent who considered themselves Polish. Eighty-five percent stated they were still much more comfortable with Poles, while 10 percent were comfortable with Canadians or Poles, and 5 percent with Canadians. Selected statements are shown below.

I feel at ease with any person Canadian or Polish who can understand me.<sup>92</sup>

I am still more comfortable with Poles.<sup>93</sup>

I feel more at ease with Canadians.<sup>94</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Gradual acculturation and to a lesser extent assimilation into the dominant English Canadian culture group, was a persistent pattern within this study. Gordon made the point that cultural assimilation may occur without structural assimilation. People may become Canadianized without being fully accepted by Canadians.

Cultural assimilation, or acculturation, of the



minority group may take place even when none of the other types of assimilation occurs simultaneously or later, and this condition of 'acculturation only' may continue indefinitely (Gordon, 1964, p. 77).

Thomas and Znaniecki recognized this long ago when they observed that Polish-American society was being maintained even when Polish-Americans were becoming more American in their outlook.

The fundamental process which has been going on during the past fifty years is the formation of a new Polish-American society out of those fragments separated from Polish society and embedded in American society. This Polish-American society as a whole is, indeed, slowly evolving from Polonism to Americanism, as is shown by the fact that its members, particularly those of the second generation, are continually acquiring more American attitudes and being influenced by American civilization. But this 'assimilation' is not an individual but a group phenomenon, to be compared with such processes as the progressive Germanization of Czech society up to a hundred years ago or the adoption of French culture by the Polish ... aristocracy in the course of the eighteenth century (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1920, p. viii-ix).

The group is maintained while the culture changes and is Americanized. "The maintenance of ethnic group cohesion in no way implies the preservation or survival of traditional ethnic culture" (Reitz, 1980, p. 103).

One experience of an ethnic group that may change or affect the group's distinctive culture is its economic position in the host society. If group members experience upward mobility, their culture may change accordingly. Lopata says that this change is often mistaken for cultural assimilation. Studies of generational change and social mobility may show that ethnic identity is diminished only because of the use of cultural criteria linked to the folk or peasant origins.

When Polish American ethnicity is measured by peasant folk culture criteria, those persons who are no longer,

or never have been, peasants are apt to be defined as having lost their ethnicity (Lopata, 1976, p. 117).

Lopata projects a new ethnic identity, which will prove difficult to measure because its content is not yet known.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Since the establishment of the first Polish parish in Canada the religious institution served as an important agency of cultural preservation. The sermons or lectures given in the Polish language, the singing of traditional hymns and national songs, participation in the choir, and the celebration of the many specifically Polish anniversaries or holy days all provided some reinforcement to the language and culture maintenance efforts of parents and of part-time schools" (Radecki, 1976, p. 99).
- 2 Case No. 12.
- 3 Case No. 14
- 4 Case No. 17.
- 5 The term "English", when used by the respondents in this study, often indicated a non-Pole not necessarily someone of British extraction.
- 6 Case No. 15.
- 7 Case No. 8.
- 8 Case No. 9.
- 9 Case No. 10.
- 10 ~~Case No. 20.~~
- 11 Case No. 14.
- 12 Case No. 4.
- 13 This linguistic differentiation between Poles and native born Polish-Canadians was not unusual in this study. The problem of Polish language proficiency was one of the most frequently mentioned areas of social division between the two groups.

- 14 Case No. 2.
- 15 Case No. 10
- 16 Case No. 13.
- 17 Case No. 18.
- 18 Case No. 12.
- 19 Case No. 10.
- 20 Case No. 3.
- 21 Case No. 4.
- 22 Case No. 5.
- 23 Case No. 12.
- 24 Case No. 3.
- 25 Case No. 5.
- 26 Case No. 6.
- 27 Case No. 10.
- 28 Case No. 11.
- 29 Case No. 12.
- 30 Case No. 13.
- 31 Case No. 17.
- 32 Case No. 18.
- 33 Case No. 14.
- 34 Case No. 6.
- 35 Case No. 14.
- 36 Case No. 2.
- 37 Case No. 4.
- 38 Case No. 15.
- 39 Case No. 6.
- 40 Case No. 6.

- 41 Case No. 16.
- 42 Case No. 12.
- 43 Case No. 3.
- 44 Case No. 13.
- 45 Case No. 15.
- 46 Case No. 6.
- 47 Case No. 3.
- 48 Case No. 16.
- 49 Case No. 9.
- 50 Case No. 4.
- 51 Case No. 6.
- 52 Case No. 16.
- 53 Case No. 17.
- 54 Case No. 20.
- 55 Case No. 15.
- 56 Case No. 11.
- 57 Case No. 12.
- 58 Case No. 3.
- 59 Case No. 6.
- 60 Case No. 10.
- 61 Case No. 5.
- 62 Case No. 7.
- 63 Case No. 9.
- 64 Case No. 12.
- 65 Case No. 16.
- 66 Case No. 11.
- 67 Case No. 20.

- 68 Case No. 4.
- 69 Case No. 8.
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- 76 Case No. 11.
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- 81 Case No. 18.
- 82 Case No. 3.
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- 89 Case No. 15.
- 90 Case No. 16.
- 91 Case No. 14.
- 92 Case No. 10.
- 93 Case No. 3.
- 94 Case No. 4.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The present study dealt with a group unique in its life cycle. Immigration did not involve a single move from the country of origin to a new land. It involved multiple displacements. These were veterans of a world cataclysm who experienced forced incarceration in one land, followed by migration to another area of the world where they took part in battle and conflict. Some endured a prolonged stay in yet another nation before their eventual permanent placement in Canada. Frequent migrations and constant turmoil made them far more cosmopolitan in their world view than previous immigration groups. Their adjustment potential was fine tuned by frequent cultural alterations, and their survival instincts honed to a fine point by adversity, both physical and mental.

The Polish immigrants were constantly having to discover, interpret and adjust to new situations, carrying with them the lonely realization that others rarely shared the understanding of the nature of the world as they knew it.

Once they arrived on the Canadian scene, they were a non-visible minority as opposed to blacks and Asians, providing for a swifter rate of acculturation and/or assimilation. This potential for fairly rapid

structural acculturation, and in a few instances both structural and personal assimilation, brought with it consequences necessitating shifts in ethnic community social cohesion. Exogamy and ethclass exclusiveness were the major deterrents in terms of traditional socio-cultural stability within the ethnic group.

Those whose educational level exceeded the undergraduate university level maintained some Polish contacts but were non-Polish in many areas of their lives. This group felt quite Canadianized. Conversely, those whose educational level was lower experienced lower status recognition, established greater dependency on the ethnic community and acculturated at a slower pace. These respondents became more grudgingly Polish-Canadian with a few maintaining a significant Polish identity.

Within this sample participation organizationally was almost exclusively represented by the veterans' associations. Membership was maintained by those in the latter stage of their life cycle. The future of the Polish veterans' groups looks bleak as retirement and death will inevitably deplete their ranks with few new replacements from the second generation. This study's sample was not organizationally geared with most of the respondents preferring to maintain traditions and culture within the institutions of the family or the Polish parish.

Discrimination was felt by most of the respondents in the initial stages of the immigration process, but as the Canadian socio-economic condition evolved the dominant ethnic groups moved from a prejudicial stance to a more tolerant understanding of the many ethnic minority groups within the society. There was a recognition and appreciation of distinct cultural heritages. The respondents indicated that as job



skills increased and socio-economic levels rose, established stereotypes and negative images declined.

This was a group whose cultural patterns were set. Their job experiences were coming to a close or were completed, and their children were raised. For many this was a stage for reintegration within the ethnic community. For almost all of them the past was a dead issue. They desired recognition historically and socially for what they had experienced and what they had achieved, but they viewed themselves as late twentieth century residents of Canada. Their visits to Poland were less and less frequent as family ties were established in Canada. Very few considered returning to Poland permanently. Their children were Canadianized and they desired that this be so. They wanted their progeny to recognize their Polish heritage, visit the land of family origin and maintain cultural links mainly within literature and the arts. An emphasis on peasant folk culture, which was expressed by earlier immigrant groups, was largely absent from the sample within the present study. Language maintenance was encouraged, even at times forced with the second generation, but there was a recognition that the prospects of Polish language proficiency among third generation Poles was very slim. They accepted the fact that their children had internalized a Canadian value orientation and by and large endorsed this phenomenon.

The present study was not an examination of the complete Canadian Polonia. This was a unique skewed sample from within a group which entered Polonia during a particular time in history. The whole of the Polish ethnic community is much larger, much more transitory, encompassing ever changing immigration and social patterns.

This was a group that for the most part successfully established

themselves in the Canadian social milieu. Almost all of the respondents equaled their pre-war social status within the ethnic community if not within the Macro-community. Some surpassed their pre-war levels.

The females within the sample felt excluded in the areas of veteran's organizational benefits. They were exposed to ethclass dislocation within the Polish parish setting and job discrimination within the Macro-community. It might prove valuable in the future to research the area of female social mobility within Polonia. For if the ethnic community wishes to totally develop and maintain itself it must consider effective role placement for the highly educated female.

The organizations and institutions must alter their cultural emphasis from that of exclusive Polish traditions, particularly Polish peasant traditions, to that of the ever evolving Polish-Canadian traditions. They will become more Canadianized but mass communications, relatively inexpensive travel arrangements to Poland, and the present heightened pride in ethnic heritage might prolong cultural maintenance in an ever-changing updated condition. The question remains whether the ethnic community will be able to respond to these needed changes before the succeeding generations rapidly assimilate into the predominant Anglo-Saxon cultural group in Canada.

As a contribution to the literature, this study allowed for an examination of the social dislocation, status incongruence and degree of cultural retention implied within a particular group within a specific ethnic community where dislocation on an excessive scale was the norm. It permitted a clearer understanding, a more vivid picture of the survival stage of this special immigrant group's existence during the war and through subsequent migrations. This survival stage was the time

period between the shattering of one group of social norms and the accumulation and internalization of a new set of norms. Geographical and status dislocation in undetermined degrees made cultural and social values relative. During this intermediate stage, survival as a singular cultural-value stance replaced previous norms and preceded the assimilation of values within the culture of permanent residence. Previous studies have not dealt sociologically with this specific situation in such detail. Further documentation is certainly indicated. It should be instigated rather rapidly as this is a population sample nearing the termination of their life cycle, indicating severe time limitation in terms of first person documentation.

Even allowing for the aforementioned cultural dislocation, this was a group heavily invested in cultural values obtained within a Polish setting influenced by an earlier period of political partition. This was particularly evident in the respondents from Silesia, who were psychologically remnants of a previous Germanic value orientation.

For this study's entire sample pre-war social class placement was re-established and coincided with economic and educational advancement within the Polish group. Interaction on a personal level adjusted itself along ethclass lines.

Political opinions were strongly expressed and keenly felt. There was a range of opinions from the political right to the political left. The predominant orientation was skewed to the right, with all factions issuing anti-Soviet sentiments. There was no tolerance for the historian's exclusion of Soviet excesses during the war years and beyond. Much of this literary negligence was credited to the fact that the

Soviet Union was an ally of the West during the war years. Political bitterness was most keenly felt in reference to the Yalta agreement just previous to the cessation of hostilities. The influence these particular feelings had on the trust quotient with the resultant decline in the desire for acculturation might be of interest in future research.

The present study did not concentrate on the second generation. The material presented makes it difficult to assess the acculturation situation for succeeding generations except through the eyes of this first generation. There was an indication that family solidarity was severely strained by the breakup of the extended family due to immigration from Poland and by North American individualization. These results were reiterated in the previous Polish-American study of Thomas and Zaniecki (1918-1920), followed by Lopata (1976) and the Polish-Canadian study by Radecki (1976). The progeny within the present study were not viewed as economic units, an attitude prevalent in pre-war Poland, but as emotional and social units. The children were considered to be independent individuals. If compensation was to be rendered to the family by the second generation, it was in the area of social class advancement or stabilization, not economic re-inforcement.

APPENDIX A

IDENTITIES

## IDENTITIES

Poles in Canada

Poles in Canada are the immigrants whose main and persisting frame of reference remains Poland and Polish culture. They learn to conform to a number of requirements of the host society: Canadian norms and the English or French language are learned in order to function at work or in other unavoidable situations and in interaction with their hosts. But there is no internalization or even acceptance of the Canadian values and attitudes which are incongruent with those brought over from Poland, and there is no change in the old values and beliefs.

In time, a degree of more or less satisfactory adjustment is achieved but the length of domicile in Canada, socio-economic successes, even acceptance of Canadian citizenship, do not really affect attitudes of the Poles in Canada towards 'Polishness' or towards their self-definition as exiles or 'temporary' residents, unable to return to Poland for political or other reasons. They remain transplanted Poles, dreaming of returning 'home' some day, if only to die in the country of their birth. The events and developments related to Poland and Polish people elsewhere are followed avidly through the press, correspondence, or other sources.

Individuals from this category are likely to be members of organizations and associations which stress Polish values and traditions or which emphasize experiences in the Polish armed forces. It is likely that they are also concerned with or involved in emigre politics and are well able to articulate their values, attitudes and identity. People from within this category would be extremely concerned with transmitting to their children the values and culture of Poland, and the Polish language would

be used at home and in other situations wherever possible.

### Polish Canadians

This category is largely composed of the post-war mature immigrants, already fully socialized into Polish norms and values, for whom it would be difficult or impossible to shed their attitudes and beliefs in favour of another set no matter how attractive the alternative might be. Recognizing the permanency of their domicile in Canada, they strive to adjust to the new society, adopting many Canadian norms and values, becoming in time loyal Canadian citizens, seeing in Canada a refuge for themselves and a permanent home for their children. In defining their identity they would likely term themselves 'New Canadians,' implying that they expect to become full members of their adopted society. At the same time they are already members of another society where they were raised, educated, lived and worked and whose characteristics and values will remain important to them throughout their lives.

They retain special feelings for Poland, its culture and traditions, and for other Polish people in Canada, all of which provides them with the satisfaction of a familiar language, customs and values, easing their period of transition from one society to another. It is likely that individuals from this category are active in the organizational structure in Canada wherever it is possible, establish and maintain a network of relationships with other Polish Canadians, but are also ready to learn about Canada and meet other Canadians. Their children would be fully aware of the cultural background of their parents, would learn to speak Polish at home and might even participate in some Polish-Canadian youth organizations.

Polish Canadians may be termed a transitory category for with time the individual's orientations turn more towards Canadian society. Contacts with Poland become less frequent and involvement and maintenance of aspects of Polish culture and traditions and emphasis on relations with other Polish Canadians are replaced with concerns of a specifically Canadian nature (education of their children, the economic situation, municipal taxes and similar concerns). Their ethnicity and self-identity as Poles will be affected strongly by Canadian citizenship, residence in a Canadian community and involvement in some Canadian pastime - hockey, football or various winter sports. In time, most may enter the next category, but a segment will likely remain Polish Canadians.

#### Canadian Polish

People of this category have adjusted fully to their new environment, have successfully resolved their two frames of reference, accepting Canada as their permanent home and a nation worthy of their first allegiance. Many Canadian values are readily adopted and internalized. When travelling abroad (especially visits to Poland) those people would proudly emphasize their Canadian citizenship. They are concerned with all matters affecting Canada, many being involved in some official or private capacity in working on Canadian issues and concerns. They also retain a clear awareness of their ethnic or national background, maintain in practice aspects of Polish culture, especially the language, and are able to draw on and enjoy their cultural and traditional heritage. They benefit from and have the advantages of membership in two cultures, able to utilize the best from both. In sympathetic and understanding Canadian political and social environments they can maintain a



dual identity and two sets of allegiances, recognizing Canada as 'their' country and society, but retaining symbolic and emotional ties with Polish people, culture, and traditions.

Membership in the organizational structure of the Polish aggregate still provides emotional satisfaction, but people in this category are just as likely to have Canadian friends and belong to non-Polish organizations and associations. They would stress for their children the value of multilingualism (hoping that this would include the Polish language) and the richness of Polish culture, history and traditions in order that the children might become sufficiently interested to pursue and explore their ethnicity and cultural heritage.

#### Canadians of Polish Background

This category refers largely to those born in Canada or arriving here as very young children. Their self-identity and the main frame of reference is provided by Canadian institutions, norms, and values. Many of them would have learned to speak Polish as children, may even have attended part-time Polish schools, but the language and the information gained in their youth seldom survives at maturity.

Their notions of Poland, its history, culture, and traditions are vague, and their Polish ethnicity is derived largely from their parents and possibly a Polish parish. They are largely uninvolved in Polish organizations at maturity, few are able to read and communicate with ease in Polish, and their informal and secondary associations and relationships are seldom with people of Polish background.

Until marriage they remain in close contact with their parents and through them are involved in at least one Polish institution, the church.

After marriage, which may often be with a non-Polish person, they tend to move away from Polish concentrations; the contact with their parents becomes less close and affiliation or participation in the Polish organizational structure ceases. Their children will not learn the Polish language and will be largely unaware of the Polish cultural heritage and of the organizational structure and the activities of the Polish community in Canada.

#### Statistical Polish Category

The people of this category are classified in the Canadian census as being of Polish ethnic origin. It is likely that most of them would prefer to classify themselves as Canadians without further elaboration. The majority are people born of Canadian-born parents who themselves acquired and retained only vague notions of their ethnic background and little awareness of the culture and traditions of Poland.

The only frame of reference and source of identity of the 'statistical Poles' are Canadian realities, norms and values. They are aware of Poland and its culture only to the extent taught in the public schools in Canada. They are unaware or uninterested in the structure and activities of the Polish community. They are in fact fully assimilated, consider themselves Canadians, often resent the government which insists on attaching meaningless labels to them. They are likely to be the third and fourth generation Polish immigrants to Canada (Radecki & Heydenkorn, 1976, pp. 208-210.)

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