INTERPLAY OF CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN POLISH-AMERICAN RADICALISM

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I.

CLASS AND ETHNICITY

Ethnicity and Class have usually been viewed as opposing principles of social organization. Hidden in that opposition is the basic dichotomy of the modernization drama. Ethnicity is cast as a remnant of an earlier preindustrial "traditional" identity while class is urban and modern - a product of an industrial and commercial culture. The "retention" of ethnicity, therefore, implies backwardness and particularity whereas the "assumption" of a class identity puts one in the mainstream of history moving in a universalistic and progressive direction. Further, for those for whom class has a teleological purpose, ethnicity is a destructive false consciousness. It is one of the major explanations for the failure of the American working class to develop a revolutionary sense of itself, to meet its own destiny. For example, Stanley Aronowitz in his powerful essay False Promises points to the "cultural diversity" of the working class as "a factor explaining the low level of class consciousness among immigrant groups." For him "the social division of labor, combined with its ethnic divisions, was the core of the development of racist, chauvinist and egotistical ideologies within the working class."1

The prejudice against ethnicity is clear in all notions of modernity. The bipolar imagery that governs our thinking about the birth of the modern world is buried deep in our worldview.2 The "traditional" world is rural and built around kinship and village relations. It is relatively closed and slow changing, even static. It exists largely outside the market economy. It legitimizes itself by reference to custom and past practice. These are precisely the elements that are central to most descriptions of ethnicity. They have the static sense that Clifford Geertz describes as "giveness." An ethnic society even in the city is a world of "urban villagers."3 Class, on the other hand, is a notion that resonates with modernity. It is the opposite of estate and order. It is rational, urban and industrial. It is born out of the capitalist system of productive relations. Because it was created out of the experience of Nineteenth Century Industrial Society, the notion of class is, in

fact, more than a heuristic device or an analytical category. As E. P. Thompson has noted, "the concept not only enables us to organize and analyze the evidence; it is also in a new sense, *present in the evidence*.4

Thus ethnicity has the sense of belonging to a preconscious, primordial, irrational order of collectivity while class is a rational collective identity one acquires only after being shorn of such earlier attachments by industrial capitalism and having experienced proletarianization and alienation. Members of the new working class have gone through the fires of anomie and destructive individualism to a higher consciousness that led finally to membership in a new, universal community.5 There is just enough truth in that dichotomy between Ethnicity and Class to obscure the modernity of ethnicity, the "traditional" elements of class identity and culture and the complex relationship between the two.

The village world from which the immigrants came after the American Civil War was in a state of flux. It had never really been a static society, but the events of the Nineteenth Century brought a level of rapid change that was unusually disruptive to the countryside. The European rural world, already mobile and connected to the city, saw the scale of politics and markets expanded everywhere, as never before, to national and international levels and the destruction of handicrafts and home manufacturing. The size of production units increased greatly; the range of geographic mobility was extended, and a population growth of unprecedented proportion took place.6 These changes resulted in the rapid proletarianization of the population, the end of many sources of supplementary income, such as handicraft manufacturing, increased pressure on shrinking land resources, rural exodus and greater dependence for subsistence solely on farming. The deindustrialization of the countryside and immigration had, in Charles Tilly's words, "the ironic consequence of creating an agrarian world which resembled the 'traditional' countryside postulated by the simple models of modernization."6

The peasant migrants who appeared in the American cities after the Civil War came from a still narrow and intensely local world but not one that was closed or immobile. Circumstances had

given many of them some experience as migrants before their ocean voyage (if indeed they settled down on their first trip to America). Some had followed the harvest as agricultural migrants across regions and borders while others had worked for some period in a European town or city before leaving for the United States. In the villages increasing numbers had participated in new forms of organization, such as buying, marketing or producing cooperatives or various mutual aid societies designed to ameliorate the disruptive effects of the market economy and to allow them to compete with large scale producers. Thus the "cultural baggage" they brought with them was a mixed bag of lore and experience that was both "traditional" and "modern." It was out of the interaction of that with the American Industrial Society that the immigrants shaped their new identities and communities.7

Ethnicity was not just something retained but something new. It was a modern identity. It was a notion of peoplehood that replaced older loyalties as the reference point around which the immigrants organized their sense of self, located the boundaries of their moral universe, and built a new community. It bridged the worlds of village and city, factory and farm, Europe and America, and it was a search for new ways to preserve the old and create lasting bonds between people who were unknown to each other until recently. Immigrants often built communities and institutions with those who would have been strangers and even foreigners to them in the old world.

Ethnicity in America for most groups of immigrants was a complex of identifications and loyalties that began with sentimental attachments to home village, region and more rarely to nation, and included use of a common language or the development of one out of regional dialects; it sometimes involved membership in a political party, a certain religious affiliation and/or notion of being part of a distinct religious culture. It also very quickly included loyalty to America and identification with the particular city, district, neighborhood or parish in which the immigrants settled, a sense of membership in a local ethnic community and its institutional expressions and the consciousness of belonging to a certain class and perhaps of working at some

distinct occupation. It also involved a strong sense of being different than others, often accompanied by the insult of exclusion and prejudice. Finally, it was marked by a recognition of having interests at variance with other groups which needed articulation and defense.

Ethnicity, as Donald Horowitz in his study of Asian and African experiences has pointed out, is highly contextual, and so it is also in the American experience.8 The relative saliency of each of the many elements of ethnic identity changed under the impact of events and with the passage of generations. The cultures, boundaries and symbols, sometimes adapted from the old world experience and sometimes created in the new, that defined each group also evolved in response to the American experience. It was the old world loyalties that usually began to fade first. As Sidney Mintz and Jacob Price, in their study of Afro-Americans in the Caribbean, note, the concreteness of and daily involvement in the new world rapidly gave it greater significance than the memories and attachments of the old. They write: "for most individuals a commitment to and an engagement in a new social world must have taken precedence rather quickly over what would become, before long, largely a nostalgia for their homelands."9

Perhaps not all members of an ethnic group shared all the same local or class experience, professed the same religious or political faith, or valued the group symbols in the same way, but most of them understood these as marking the boundaries of the group. Ethnicity defined the universe of discourse for a group even if people did not share all the same values and reference points. For the immigrants as they started to become "at home" in the new world and for their American born children, attendance at school, the need to learn English and the growth of ties of work place, politics, trade, religion, and civic loyalty that cut across ethnic boundaries sometimes diminished the centrality of ethnicity as the organizing principle of identity and community. Second and later generations also developed other reference points, which, depending on this situation, became part of class, ethnic or American national consciousness, to mark boundaries, to organize identity and to interpret the world.

The adoption of "American" or "class" cultural elements, behaviors or consciousness is usually interpreted simply as "assimilation" or becoming "modern." These changes and accommodations, however, were not just a simple exchange of cultural elements, an acceptance of certain features of American culture and the rejection of their own. They were usually new creations that drew on both cultures as well as their local experiences. This was the process out of which an American working class and popular culture was created. The polka, the interpretation of jazz for White America, pop music, the movies, the C. I. O. - to name only a few things - were the products of the second generation's collision, sometimes violent, with American culture and society. In fact, the development of new forms of popular culture and new institutions was a creative alternative to assimilation into the dominant Anglo-American culture. They reshaped the American milieu to allow themselves to be "at home" and often changed the meaning and content of "American culture" for natives in the process.10

In Europe class identity and a class culture emerged out of rural and preindustrial roots interacting with the culture, society and system of productive relations - an interaction that produced ethnicity in America. E. P. Thompson in the Making of the English Working Class described this process in great detail. He summarized it in his preface:

> Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interest as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed) to their own... Class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms.11

If that is the way class "happened" to European workers, it is not very different from the way ethnicity "happened" to their cousins in America.

Thompson returned to the theme in an article on the beginnings of class culture in Eighteenth Century England that parallels our earlier definition of ethnicity as the chief

organizing principle of culture and consciousness. He writes that "the discrete and fragmented elements of older patterns of thought become integrated by *class*." He goes on to say that "it is in class itself, in some sense a new set of categories...that we find the shaping cognitive organization of plebeian culture." When class thus becomes "possible within cognition," it then finds institutional expression.

For many European workers, class identity performed the same function that ethnicity did for Americans. It provided a basis for community and a major reference point for organizing the new industrial reality. Socialist parties, Socialist and church unions, Sunday Schools, workers picnics, the labor press, insurance and mutual benefits groups, sports clubs, etc., helped to ease the transition of workers into the industrial order and create the framework for a working class culture. Ethnic institutions, of course, performed the same socializing function in American cities.

Because they did not have the power of the nation state to compel, organize and educate, ethnic groups and classes accepted the claims of the nation for support and loyalty. Despite the attempts of some ethnic leaders at nation building and socialist leaders' claims to universal class loyalty, the workers accepted membership in the nation and created the local institutions which served as the context for that loyalty. As American nationalism became a part of immigrant ethnicity, various European nationalisms became a significant feature of working class culture in Europe by the end of the century.14 When World War I came only a relatively small number of immigrant workers in America answered the call of the old homeland for soldiers and even fewer workers in Europe responded to the appeal of socialist internationalism. Finally, it is worth noting in comparing the workers' experience in Europe and America that both ethnic institutions and socialist parties and trade unions provided for some an important alternative career ladder for social and occupational mobility. In summary, Ethnicity and Class are both lived cultural responses to the urban industrial world in general as well as to a particular milieu, and neither should be seen as normative or aberrational.15

What ultimately gave both classes and ethnicity power to command loyalty and to mobilize workers was that each was based in local community.16 In part it is precisely this difference in basis of local community that distinguished the European experience from the American one for the new working classes. Josef Barton caught the importance of the local community in the creation of culture and consciousness among peasants turned workers when he wrote:

> People ordinarily long not for an abstract heritage but for immediately experienced personal relationships evolved in specific cultural and social settings that any deracination, such as migration, may destroy. Hence culture, in this sense, becomes closely linked to the social contexts in which ties of kinship and friendship are experienced.17

Perhaps only bourgeois intellectuals can imagine allegiance to a universal working class, to a nation or to an ethnic group that is not mediated through local community, a parish, a lodge, a union, or some other local institution. Historians have produced a whole spate of recent studies in European and American labor history, which have confirmed the importance of community for the creation of class consciousness. They have located the basis of worker militancy in the dense network of kinship, neighborhood, union, local and occupational community. The British scholar J. H. Westergaard noted recently that despite its

> parochialism, the strength of (local solidarity) must have been historically important in the formation of working class organization, working class action, working class consciousness.18

John Merriman's description of the creation of a radical working class in Limoges before 1914 out of rural and urban residents of the area could easily be applicable as an account of an immigrant group in America:

> Work experience and residential geography was instrumental in the development of their consciousness as workers, but so too were their common geographic origins and participation in a Limousin culture, which retained some of its "archaic" features.19

The importance of local communal ties of kinship and neighborhood for the creation and maintenance of ethnicity is known well enough to require little further comment. The immigrants, like the workers in Europe, carried over their sense of being a people of place to their new homes. The identity with parish and neighborhood was extended to their cities. A civic patriotism became an important part of their ethnicity. The workers of Detroit and Buffalo like the workers of Marseilles or Limoges became strong partisans of their cities. Polish immigrants, soon after their arrival, were singing songs, writing poems and telling jokes about Chicago and Milwaukee. Detroit Immigrant Newspapers were, by beginning of the Twentieth Century, on the demand of their readers, carrying long accounts of the games of the Detroit Tigers.20 The immigrants' first involvement in politics was at the local level. The city defined the world and arena of status for them.21 In 1917, shortly after the United States entered the war and more than a year before the new Polish state came into being, Polish immigrants petitioned city councils and county governments to fly a Polish flag alongside the other allied flags, so that their neighbors would recognize them as equal partners in the struggle for justice and democracy.22 A survey taken by Arthur Kornhauser among Detroit workers in 1952 showed that immigrants expressed the strongest loyalty to the city and showed the most satisfaction with life in it. Clearly, they recognized it as their city.23

It did not take long after the mass immigration from the Polish lands began for the newly arrived to incorporate a sense of themselves as workers into the identities they had begun to develop in the United States. The frequent so-called "Polish Strikes" that marked their early history in industrial work in the new world added density and shared experience of action and risk to that identity.24 It was also fostered by the small Polish American middle class in the process of trying to enlist the immigrants into the national cause.

The national ideology was rooted in the brooding tragedy of the Partitions and built around the redemptive value of innocent suffering in the national cause. The conditions of life in the New World reinforced the sense of themselves as the suffering and

oppressed people of the nationalist ideology. Their experience in America was often interpreted for them by their community leaders in precisely those terms. A Chicago editor of a Polish newspaper hailed the Polish striker in 1922 as one who stood steadfast and honorable like a "soldier at his post" while he was betrayed by others.25 The Editor of Glos Polek, the organ of the Polish Women's Alliance lamented more than a decade earlier, "O how many of our brothers are lost in those gloomy pits, condemned to death by the frightful greed of the exploiters and the indifference of the government."26

The middle class leadership was even willing to use the language of class to describe their constituents. One editorial announced:

> The Poles in the United States constitute a working class. We have few capitalists among us... It is no wonder that the sympathies of the entire Polish Society are on the side of the workers.27

In 1917, Magdalena Milewska, a National Director of the Polish National Alliance, the largest Polish American Fraternal, told striking Polish women government workers in Milwaukee:

> The average woman does not realize that every time she puts on a silk dress to go to a ball, she is putting on the shroud of a sister woman who is unable to eke out a mere existence at this work. Your battle is just. It is the protest of women against abuse. It should meet with the support of all Polish organizations and the Polish press...28

In those localities where the possibility existed of organizing unions or being welcomed into existing ones, Polish immigrants responded enthusiastically. The history of coal mining and meat packing demonstrates how quickly the union became a significant institution in the local ethnic community and how strongly it reinforced the saliency of class in the identity of the immigrants in those places. Those unions also gave Polish immigrants a new language to speak about their situation that added to the ones they had learned during their American experience and new vehicles for action in defense of their interests as workers and Poles.29

The Detroit experience is different from the Pennsylvania or Chicago experience in that Poles did not have the opportunity to join unions in large numbers and the developing Polish Community did not incorporate unions and other working class institutions within its structure. Adam Walaszek points out in his recent study of Polish Workers in Detroit to 1922 that after 1900 Polish workers did become aware of workers of other immigrant and native groups and did make common cause with them during the strike wave of 1916-1922. However, no permanent institutional or communal networks developed out of that movement.30 The sheer size and institutional completeness of Detroit's Polonia, in the absence of any such development, made it difficult and unlikely that Polish workers except the most marginal would maintain significant ties with others across ethnic lines.31 Conversely, as will be seen, the huge size of Detroit's Polonia and its overwhelming proletarian status made possible large scale and concerted action when union locals and other agencies of radical class action had been incorporated into the ethnic structure. This development not only enhanced the ability to act, but also gave a far-reaching sanction to those actions.32

The Polish experience in Detroit, as will be seen, suggests a very interesting possibility of the nature of the development of class ties and class culture in the case when one ethnic group has such a numerical predominance over others. Polish was becoming by the third decade of the century the lingua franca of the immigrant working class, and immigrant workers of other groups were using some Polish institutions. This includes not only workers of other Slavic groups, but as considerable anecdotal evidence suggests, even Italian and African American. My study of the National Slavonic Society, a Slovak fraternal founded among Slovak miners, points to similar conclusions in areas where Slovaks were the dominant group. Over one quarter of the members were from other ethnic groups with Poles being the largest contingent.33

II.

CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN POLISH-AMERICAN RADICALISM IN THE THIRTIES

The remainder of the paper will concern itself with a look at the role played by the Polish American community in Detroit in the creation of one of the major CIO unions, the United Auto Workers. In the process I will try to illuminate some of the complexity of the relationship between class and ethnicity that evolved out of that process and examine some of the elements that crystallized into the particular configuration that Polish American identity took in the 1930's in Detroit.

Polish Americans came to the Detroit area in significant numbers after the Civil War. The first immigrants were skilled artisans but they were soon followed by a wave of rural immigrants who came to work in the foundries, stove works, and railroad shops that dominated the industrial sector of the city's economy. Many of the women as well as the men were also employed as field hands in the seed farm of the Ferry Seed Company on the edge of the city. By 1900, when the Detroit population reached 286,000, the Polish community numbered about 50,000 people.

A second wave of Polish American immigrants began to arrive in large numbers shortly after the turn of the century to work in the rapidly growing auto industry. By 1914 the Polish American population had more than doubled to 120,000. They quickly became the dominant group in the suburb (later inner city enclave) of Hamtramck, which grew up around the new Dodge Brothers' factory. This migration, of course, brought many immigrants fresh from the villages of Eastern Europe, but the bulk of the newcomers were coming from Polish settlements elsewhere in the United States. Detroit became a major area of second migration for Polish Americans. The largest group came, along with other Slavs, from the coal fields of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. Smaller streams were drawn in from the copper country of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and rural Polish colonies in Wisconsin, New York and Michigan. By 1930 the Polish American population of the Detroit Area was estimated at over 200,000. The post 1900 influx of

immigrants had changed dramatically the demographic profile of the community. A new Polonia emerged in Detroit. In 1900 about 60% of those employed worked as laborers; by 1920 it was 80%. The middle class sector shrunk correspondingly. The majority of the laborers prior to 1900 had been employees of wide variety of small and medium sized shops; now they were employees of giant corporations who worked in huge factories that employed thousands. Detroit's Polonia became one of the most proletarian in any of the major cities in the United States.34

The earlier post World War I depression had had a severe effect on the Poles in Detroit. In the Polish American city of Hamtramck, for example, the relief funds had run out completely and cases of severe malnutrition and even starvation had been reported in 1921-1922.35 Despite the recovery of the mid-twenties, a substantial segment of the Polish American population remained in difficult straits. The Wayne County welfare reports showed that throughout the decade of the twenties 15% to 16% of the Welfare recipients were members of families headed by parents or guardians born in Poland. In 1929, the last year before the Great Depression, the number of Polish Americans served by the Welfare Agency exceeded all others (including Blacks) with the sole exception of those in families headed by "native born whites," a category which also contained a significant number of Polish Americans.36

When the Great Depression came, it hit the Polish community very hard. If a significant minority in Detroit's Polonia were in difficulty during the relatively prosperous late twenties, the thirties saw a majority of the community driven to extremity. By 1932 as many as 4,500 families a month in the Detroit area were being evicted. In Hamtramck, candidates for constable hoped to win the homeowners' and renters' votes with promises to conduct eviction and foreclosures in a dignified and humane manner. The struggle to hold on to the family home is often the central memory of the depression period. Those who lost homes or were forced to move sometimes took up residence with relatives. Three or even four families living in a single home was not a rare occurrence in Polish Detroit.

The collapse of auto production made the 1930's particularly

grim for Polish Americans in the Detroit area. Unemployment at the height of the depression in 1932 was close to 50 percent in the Polish community. In Hamtramck, more than half of the 11,000 families were on relief. All families with less than three children were removed from the welfare rolls in Hamtramck in an effort to conserve resources and get aid to the neediest. In Detroit, where Polish Americans were one of the largest groups on welfare, public assistance fell to fifteen cents per day before running out entirely.37

Those lucky enough to have employment suffered intolerable conditions, low pay, irregular work, incessant speedup and lived under the constant threat of being fired as the corporations took full advantage of the favorable labor market. It became regular practice to discharge older employees who might not be able to keep up with the ever increasing rate of production. A survey done by the Hamtramck Welfare Department in the late thirties showed that over 1000 families on relief were headed by laid off Ford workers. A study of 587 of these families indicated that in 45% of the cases the head of the family was between 41 and 50 years of age when permanently laid off by the Ford Motor Company. Many of the men had from fifteen to twenty-five years seniority at the plant.38

The Great Depression, like nothing before it, attacked two of the most important pillars of Polish American working class life: a secure job and a homestead. They provided the fabric of respectability, pride and dignity, which held the community together. A threat to jobs and homes also threatened all of the other institutions of the community, including the parish. The records of one large Polish American parish for 1933 showed that 75% of the parishioners gave less than $10.00 that year and 18% (71 families) gave less than a dollar. Only 2% or eight parishioners gave more than $30.00 per annum. Hungry children of the parish lined up daily at the door of the convent to get a warm meal before school. Many took from the parish more than they gave in those years.39

Other data from the period give additional indications of the problems and marginal conditions of the Polish American community of Detroit as it emerged out of the depression. The tuberculosis

death rate in the Polish neighborhoods south of Hamtramck was 40 to 79 per 100,000, a rate exceeded only in some of the poor Black and southern White areas of the city. The infant death rate in east side and west side Polish neighborhoods was one of the highest in the city, ranging from a low of 40 to over 60 per 1,000.40

The militancy that this threat engendered was channeled in a number of directions including and especially into the effort to organize industrial unions when that movement began. Polish Americans were involved, however, in mass demonstrations and other reactions to poverty before the union drives began in the mid-thirties. By 1932 a few unemployed workers' councils were organized in Polish neighborhoods and met, it should be noted, at fraternal halls. Although a few of the organizers were Polish Americans who had joined radical groups, most of leadership for these councils came from outside the community. At the same time many Polish American men and women also joined demonstrations and attended meetings called by the Communist Party and other radical groups. Thousands of them, for example, took part in the great march of the unemployed to the west-side Ford plant in March, 1933, when the Dearborn Police opened fire on the marchers. One of the five dead was Joe York (Jozef Jurkiewicz), a young march organizer. Despite this involvement, no significant community based militancy developed before 1935. When it did, it came from the women of the community.41

During the last week of July, 1935, a group of Polish American women in Hamtramck led by a young housewife named Mary Zuk, organized an "Action Committee Against the High Cost of Living" (Komitet Akcji Przeciw Drozyznje) that began a meat boycott because of a dramatic rise in meat prices. The action started with picket lines in front of butcher shops and grocery stores in the Polish neighborhood in Hamtramck. It spread quickly to other east side Polish neighborhoods and then to the west side Polish areas. Soon women of other white ethnic groups and African Americans, those living near Polish areas, joined the protest.

By August, 16, 1935, the women were able to hold a rally in Perrin Park across the street from the east side Dom Polski that drew about 5,000 supporters. Also, by mid-August requests from

women in other cities, such as Chicago, were asking for assistance in organizing similar boycotts and a congressional hearing was held to investigate the possibility of an official inquiry into the rise in meat prices. The group sent a delegation to Washington, D.C. to testify at the hearing. The actions at packing houses and butcher stores sometimes resulted in altercations between strikers and customers and employees. The majority of the women arrested in these episodes were Polish women between 30 and 45 years of age. The handful of men arrested along with the women were all Poles. The strikes always had far more support in the Polish areas than elsewhere in the city.42

Maria Zuk emerged out of the protests as a significant community leader. She went on the following year to organize the Peoples' League of Hamtramck and used it as a spring board to election to the city council in 1936. The People's League was instrumental in organizing community support for sit-down strikes and CIO union organizing drives. Mrs. Zuk herself was directly involved in assisting the organization of workers especially women. On one occasion, she was forced to jump from the second floor of a cigar factory to escape a beating by armed company thugs.43

The program of the People's League was a mixture of communal and union demands. It represented a left wing articulation of the deeply felt and wide spread sentiment in the Polish community to rally in defense of jobs and community. The program called for increased relief; no police interference in labor disputes; an end to racial, religious and ethnic discrimination; prohibition on the use of labor spies, armed guards and black lists; an end to gambling and vice in the city; repeal of the sales taxes; construction of recreation centers, playgrounds, libraries, hospitals, clinics and public toilets; preference to local contractors for city work; union wages on public projects and a free city-run employment bureau.44

Thus as the organization of the UAW began in earnest, a strong streak of militancy was already running through the Polish community and some segments in it had developed considerable experience with organized protest. A Polish American labor leader wrote later of the women he met on the picket lines of the meat

boycott:

> Many of the women whom I saw for the first time on that picket line I met in subsequent years helping in the organization of the auto workers, many of them were on the picket lines during the strikes and carried food to the strikers. The battle against the high cost of living was for these women their first involvement in the class struggle and at the same time a valuable lesson.45

In addition, although Detroit had a notorious reputation as an "open shop" town and as a result many Polish American workers had little contact with unions, there were two groups in the community which did have industrial union experience that was to be important: former members of the miners union and immigrants who had worked in factories in Europe. Many of the latter had also become members of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). The study of the unionization of one smaller Detroit factory by the UAW indicates that about 10% of the Polish workers had some ties with the socialist movement in Europe.46

In June, 1936, Leo Krzycki, vice president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, came to Detroit under auspices of the CIO to assist in organizing workers in the auto factories, especially the foreign-born workers. He suggested at that visit to Homer Martin, the UAW president, that a special effort be made to appeal to Poles and other East European workers to supplement the general effort being made by the UAW. He nominated a young Pole named Stanley Nowak, who had been active in labor unions in Chicago and Milwaukee, to head the effort. Nowak began work as one of first paid organizers of the fledgling union in July, 1936.47

Nowak's plan of organization called for an appeal to the workers as members of the Polish community rather than as employees of a particular plant. he organized the Polish Trade Union Committee made up of such men as John Zaremba at Dodge Main, Vincent Klein of Chrysler, Adam Poplowski and John Rusak at the Packard plant, and Antoni Plezia of Dodge Truck. The committee began passing out literature on Sundays after masses at the Polish churches and organizing meetings at Polish halls. Initially, the meetings were small but by the autumn they began to grow.48

One of the major reasons for the growth of interest was the development of a new technique to appeal to the workers that was pioneered by Nowak: the use of ethnic radio. An acquaintance from Chicago, the popular Polish actor Waclaw Golanski, conducted an extremely popular Polish variety program under the name of Antek Cwaniak on station WJBK in Detroit at 6:00 p.m. daily. Nowak convinced Golanski to sell him fifteen minutes of the time twice a week to make a union appeal. Nowak's program allowed him to appeal to tens of thousands of Polish workers and to try to cultivate a pro-union sympathy among the community's middle class.49

By early autumn the number of people at the meetings was increasing geometrically. Nowak was also receiving invitations to speak to meetings of lodges of the Polish National Alliance (ZNP), the Polish Roman Catholic Association (PRKZ) and those of other fraternal and insurance societies. An additional unexpected result of the radio appeal was the appearance of growing numbers of Slovak, Ukrainian, Croatian, Czech, Belorussian, Slovenian, Rusin and Serb workers. Not having many radio programs of their own and speaking a Slavic tongue that, after a few years of working and living with Poles, permitted them to understand Polish, these workers also listened to Antek Cwaniak. Many Lithuanians who knew Polish were also listeners. Polish and other Slavic workers as far away as Flint, Michigan were regular listeners to the program, and during the Flint sit-down strike, Nowak was invited on several occasions by the Polish workers to address them.50

Initially, the appeal to the clergy and the business and professional class of Detroit's Polonia bore little fruit. Most were indifferent and a few were hostile. The greatest suspicion and hostility came from the clergy. With little knowledge of the conditions under which their parishioners worked and less of the union movement, they viewed the union movement as an attack on legitimate authority and equated it with communism. Most also feared that the union movement would supplant their influence in the community. However, no Polish American priest became an active and open opponent of the unions.51

The Dziennik Polski (The Polish Daily News), the major Polish

newspaper in Detroit, also maintained a hostile attitude toward the Union movement. The publisher Francis Januszewski refused to publish notices of meetings or to report on them. His editorial line generally favored the auto companies. However, during Januszewski's annual vacation to Florida, during the late autumn of 1936, Waclaw Soyda, a member of the editorial staff sympathetic to the union, began to insert notices of union meetings and to print union news releases. When Januszewski returned six weeks later, he dismissed Soyda. Soyda went to work at considerably reduced salary for the UAW, preparing materials for the Polish language broadcasts and leaflets and pamphlets for Polish workers. The Polish UAW organizers had the satisfaction of helping Januszewski's workers organize a sit-down that led to the unionization of the newspaper's work force in 1937.52 The other Polish newspaper in Detroit, Glos Ludowy (The People's Voice), was a left-wing weekly which supported the union movement. During the organizing drives, its circulation rose to the point that it became, for a few years, a daily.

The Polish workers who signed up for the union at the meetings in Polish halls were often the only union workers in their departments or even in their plants. They formed the core out of which the union locals in their plants were formed. In such plants as Plymouth, Packard, Dodge, Dodge Truck and Chevrolet, Poles and other Slavs formed the majority of the early union members.53 An early UAW local even called itself "Polish Workers Local #187."54

The community wide effort sometimes helped to organize a factory that had no members. In December, 1936, for example, the UAW received a call asking for a Polish speaking organizer at the American Aluminum plant on the Hamtramck-Detroit boundary because the workers on the day shift had taken over the plant and wanted a union. The leader was a twenty-two-year-old Polish American worker named Walter Pupka. He and his fellow workers had learned about the union struggle through Nowak's radio addresses and the newspapers.55 In another case, the women of Detroit's cigar factories, the overwhelming majority of whom were Polish, staged a sit-in until the UAW lent them Nowak, whom they had heard on the radio, to help them organize.56

The organization of the cigar women led to a wave of sitdown strikes in the Cigar factories that began in January, 1937. The largely Polish work force staged some of the longest sit-downs in American history before they forced the employers to recognize their union. In some cases the employers responded with unusual brutality against the women and their supporters mostly from the Polish community. The courage and determination of the women (including nursing mothers, who passed their infants in and out of the windows several times daily), the shocking violence directed against them and the mostly Polish composition of the work force began to win support from the Polish business class. Polish dairies began to deliver milk to the strikers; bakers, grocers, and butchers supplied food, and professional people raised funds. As in the case of the meat boycott, the action of Polish women sparked a wider protest. Polish women and others employed in stores, restaurants and business all over Detroit also sat down demanding better wages and working conditions, the end of sexual harassment and recognition of the right to bargain collectively. The strike movement by working women all over the city shocked employers and the native middle class in Detroit. 57 More than any other event the strike of the Cigar workers rallied the small Polish American middle class to the cause of the workers. The length of the strike, the hardships endured by the sit-downers, the vicious attacks on them by Police and company "sluggers" and probably the fact that they were women brought an outpouring of support from all elements in the community. Stanley Nowak wrote of the strike:

> They won the support of the whole neighborhood. Churches and priests supported it, small businessmen supported it, Polish newspapers supported it, everyone was in sympathy with the women.58

It is worth noting that at the time the women in the cigar factories sat down there had only been two small, brief sitdowns in the city: one at Kelsey Hayes and the other at Midland Steel. (The strike headquarters for the first was at the Slovak Hall and for the second at the west side Polish Home-Dom Polski.) The size of the cigar workers' sit down (over 2,500 workers), the publicity

it generated the violent reaction to it, the other strikes it generated in the area and the support it railed had a strong impact on the city and the Polish community in particular. In fact, the Polish working class neighborhoods were at a high state of excitement and mobilization when the men sat down a few weeks later in the auto factories in the great March 1937 Chrysler strike. They were following the example of their wives, sisters, mothers, girl friends and neighbors. Again, the first radical action came from the women of the community. 59

The March 1937 sitdown strike in nine Chrysler plants involved over seventeen thousand workers. In all of the plants Polish Americans were the largest single ethnic group by far and in at at least two of them -- Dodge Main and Plymouth Assembly -- they probably represented a majority of the workers. While the Chrysler strikes were clearly governed by the dynamics of the internal situation there is no question that they were also influenced by the militance that had seized the Polish neighborhoods and indeed the entire city as a result of the courageous actions of the cigar workers. The women's struggle which continued during the March sit down created an atmosphere of defiance and militance that pervaded the city.

The strongest middle class support during the 1937 strikes, as might be expected, came from those businessmen and women who served a working class clientele. They were responding not only to the fear of a boycott by their customers but also to the wide spread approval in the Polish neighborhoods for the actions of the strikers. A few months before the strike wave began, Polish Americans by the use of their electoral power had created in the city of Hamtramck a pro-union enclave which was situated in the heart of Detroit's east side industrial corridor. The victory at the polls, which broke the stranglehold of the Chrysler corporation over the municipal administration, had fed the confidence of the workers. Shortly after the 1936 election, the new city attorney announced that "the Police will not protect strike breakers in Hamtramck. The city is neutral." 60 During a subsequent wave of strikes Mayor Kanar declared that "under no circumstances will any worker be manhandled while I am the Mayor of Hamtramck." 61

Led by the irrepressible Mary Zuk, the Hamtramck city council voted time after time to support the cause of labor during the late thirties. The council, for example, voted unanimously to invite John L. Lewis to the city as an invited and honored guest on February 5, 1937.62 A month later it went on record in favor of the Dodge Sitdown strike going on a few blocks from city hall and coupled it with the demand that the Chrysler Corporation recognize the striking union as the sole and rightful bargaining agent for all of its plants. 63

During the Dodge strikes of 1937 and 1939, the Hamtramck police did more then stay neutral. In fact, they actually protected the sit down strikers and physically prevented the company from bringing in strike breakers. During the 1937 strike at the Chevrolet Plant in Hamtramck, the police formed a cordon at the city line to prevent state forces from being brought in to crush the strike. The entirely Polish city administration made it a practice, despite deficits and the constant threat of bankruptcy, to hire strikers for occasional labor even in excess of appropriations. The people of Hamtramck and the surrounding area responded similarly. When it was rumored during the 1939 sit down that outside forces would be brought in to evict the strikers over 10,000 people showed up to stand in front of the plant to protect friends, husbands, fathers and cousins. 64

Because of pressure from advertisers and station management, Golanski was forced to terminate the twice weekly Nowak talks during the General Motors strike. Golanski was confined to reading union news releases for the remainder of the struggle against the auto companies. By 1940, the union had begun its own Polish radio program on which Nowak spoke. Golanski and Soyda continued to play an important role by using their wide contacts among Polish American business and professional people to win sympathy for the workers. They often organized meetings of small groups with Stanley Nowak or other Polish UAW organizers or lobbied these people themselves. 65

An important break came during the 1937 visit to Detroit of Father Justin who conducted the very influential "Father Justin's Rosary Hour" radio program out of Buffalo, New York. Father Justin had been urging General Motors workers to return to work

and accept the company's terms in the course of his regular Sunday evening homilies. After his Detroit program, attended by thousands of the Convention Hall, a delegation of workers chosen for their membership in parish Rosary societies led by Mr.Nowak gained admittance to a private audience Father Justin was holding for some 300 community notables. The workers, many of them bandaged as a result of police beatings, pointed out to Father Justin and the assembly that their struggle was not communist inspired but rather had grown out a desire to earn a fair wage and get decent working conditions. Mr. Nowak followed with a short address that explained that the welfare of the Polish workers was also the welfare of the Polish community and its institutions. As a result of the meeting Father Justin ceased his attacks on the unions. In addition, Nowak and other Polish UAW organizers began to get invitations to rectories and meetings of clergy to explain the union side of the story. 66

The response of the Polish workers to thee weak or nonexisting support from their clergy is best illustrated by an incident Nowak relates in his memoirs. When told that his pastor was hostile to the union, one Polish worker shrugged: "In religious matters I follow the pastor, in union matters I follow Mr. Nowak." 67 In 1943, Nowak, who had ceased to be a practicing Catholic in his youth, was invited by a parish committee dominated by Ford workers whom he had helped to organize, to be the Godfather (Chrzesny Ojciec) to the Parish's new bell. Overriding his protest that he was no longer a Catholic, the workers prevailed on him to accept the honor. After the blessing with appropriate pomp at a solemn high mass, he and Bishop Woznicki, who had presided at the elaborate ceremony, were the featured speakers at the evening banquet in the parish hall. It is clear that the workers used the occasion to reconcile symbolically the two important areas of work and community life, in a synthisis of class and ethnicity. 68

During the bitter 1941 Ford Strike that culminated the union drive in Detroit, the support of the Polish middle class which had slowly but surely come over to the workers was firmly consolidated. A meeting held in the East Side Dom Polski attracted over 400 officers of fraternal and cultural groups,

politicians, professionals, businessmen, priests and other influentials in the Polish American Community. In addition to raising some funds and creating various action committees to assist the Ford Strikers, the group issued a remarkable manifesto.

The manifesto described the issue as a struggle of all of American society "but in particular Polish-American (society)" for democracy. Henry Ford was described as an associate of Adolph Hitler's and the major supporter of fascism in America. Victory over Ford was necessary, it continued, in order to protect the gains that Polish workers had won at such heavy cost at the other factories. The proclamation, publicized widely in the Polish community, was signed by two Congressmen, a state senator, a state representative, a Hamtramck city councilman and a municipal Judge, and the presidents of the Polish Citizens Central Committee, the Polish Women's Alliance of Michigan, several Polish National Alliance and Polish Roman Catholic Union lodges, the Polish University Club, the Polish Lawyers Association, a citizen's club of a Polish parish and other organizations, as well as radio and theater personalities, newspaper editors, individual lawyers, members of the Polish trade union committee and the officers of various locals. The list of signatories represented the complete spectrum of political opinion and institutions in Detroit's Polonia. 69

During the militant phase of organizing, the union locals themselves became a part of the ethnic community. The workers insisted on and won the right to have to have resolutions at meetings of locals with large Polish memberships presented in Polish as well as English. The newspaper of Dodge Local #3 printed a Polish page. Polish groups and organizations, including such groups as the Felician Sisters Auxillary, regularly called on heavily Polish locals for support of their activities. After September, 1939 these locals raised funds for Polish relief. Dodge Local #3 even conducted classes in the Polish language for second generation workers who read, wrote or spoke the language imperfectly. The union also gave funds to support Polish cultural activities such as dances, concerts and theatricals. The president of Dodge Local #3, John Zaremba was himself an active

member and officer of a Polish singing society. 70

The locals became tightly integrated into the ethnic community. The papers of John Zaremba indicate that the Dodge local originated the idea of admitting local auxiliaries into the union convention with the right to participate and vote. It seems clear that this represented an attempt to involve wives and families of the workers more directly in the union. Here the workers may also been following the pattern of ethnic fraternals which often began as all male groups and then formed women's divisions which were given equal participatory and voting rights.71

In Hamtramck, Peter Friedlander notes that "the broader involvement of the mass of Polish workers caused the union administration and the Democratic party machine ... to become intertwined in the formation of a hybrid political machine, complete with patronage."72 Job seekers and political candidates regularly came to the union executive committee for support. In turn, Polish American workers who worked their way up in the union hierarchy used their union connection as a stepping stone to political office in Hamtramck, or a position in a fraternal lodge or political club. The union experience was usually the first political and leadership experience these workers had had. The union sometimes gave them not only moral support, the use of union media resources and free advertising but financial assistance and volunteer workers. The union itself and the struggles in the workplace helped to create a whole new cadre of leaders for the ethnic community and its institutions.

Polish American fraternal and community organizations also participated in and supported union activities. Lodges of the Polish National Alliance, Polish Falcons and Polish American Veterans groups, for example, marched in the Hamtramck Labor day parades.73 Some even wore union caps, supplied by the Dodge Local, to demonstrate that their lodges had 100% union membership.74

In 1937, UAW President, Homer Martin wrote to Glos Ludowy to proclaim that "Polish workers in the battle with General Motors showed that they were the most militant and progressive in the country." 75

The thirties were an important chapter in the history of the Polish American Community of Detroit. Its sense of being a working class community was given new form by its involvement in the struggles of the period and embodiment in the new union locals that were folded into its institutional structure. To say that the Polish American workers rose up in defense of their community is to utter the obvious and to debate whether or not they did it as ethnics or workers is to ask a useless and ultimately sterile question. The categories of class or ethnicity are too procrustean to illuminate the dynamic of this period in the evolution of Detroit's Polonia.

The language and goals of the struggles of the thirties which were played out on a national stage marked a new level of integration into U.S.Society and into the working class. At the same time they created new local institution that reinforced their local community and a new set of local leaders who rose to prominence in politics, parish organizations, and fraternal lodges. The older leadership and the existing local ethnic organizations which supported the struggle widened their role and received new legitimation even as their involvement legitimized, in turn, the radical activities of the workers. The new political control over the city of Hamtramck and the union sponsorship of Polish American candidates outside of the city for municipal, state and national offices that resulted from the struggle gave the Polish American community more political clout than it had ever had before. The economic gains and the increased leisure the workers won also served the community. They translated into a greater level of activism and the building of new parochial high schools, lodges, the improvement and embellishment of churches, and aid for the homeland.

The ties between the fledgling unions and the ethnic community began to wane during the forties. The networks, halls, newspapers, radio programs and ethnic solidarities that had been so crucial for organizing the UAW and other CIO unions were no longer so important as the unions built their own infrastructure and cadres and devoted themselves to creating a national union movement. World War II, in turn, diverted the attention of Poles and other Eastern European workers to the new crisis in Europe. It

redirected their energies and loyalties to their ancestral homelands. The enthusiastic support for the Soviet alliance by the union leaders, including many of those from the Polish community, created an ever widening rift between them and the rank and file Polish American worker. As the shape of the postwar settlement in Eastern Europe began to emerge by war's end, the Polish community leaders became completely estraged from the union leaders who supported or at least did not openly oppose it. By 1950, most of the new Polish American union leadership that had emerged out of the struggle of the thirties was rendered marginal by cold war issues. The rank and file workers remained staunchly true to the unions, which they saw as their own creation, but the locals as a result of the dual impact of internal bureaucratization and the anti-communist crusade became progressively estranged from the communities out of which they had been born. Thus the symbiotic relationship between the ethnic community and the unions was no longer, even though a fierce working class loyalty remained a part of Polish American identity among the generation of workers who had been part of the heroic events of the thirties. The possibilty of permanent synthesis of class and ethnicity that the moment offered passed unrealized.

Footnotes

1. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness (New York McGraw Hill, 1973) 399-400. See also Irving Louis Horowitz "Race, Class and the New Ethnicity" Worldview January 1975. 46-53.

2. See for example Clark Kerr, etal, Industrialism and Industrial Man (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1960); David Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East (Glenoe, I11.: The Free Press, 1958). For perceptive commentaries on this dichotomy and its origins see Philip Abrams "The Sense of the Past and the Origin of Sociology" Past and Present 55 (1972) 18-32 and Daniel Rodgers "Tradition, Modernity and the American Industrial Worker. Reflections and Critique" Journal of Interdisciplinary History vii: 4 (Spring 1977) 655-681. R.Gusfeld, "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change" American Journal of Sociology LXII (1967) 351-362.

3. Herbert Ganz, The Urban Villagers (New York: The Free Press, 1962).

4. E. P. Thompson "Eighteenth-Century English Society: class struggle without class?" Social History III:2 (May 1978) 148-149.

In the same place Thompson quotes E. J. Hobsbawm: "Under Capitalism class is an immediate and in some sense a directly experienced historical reality, whereas in pre-capitalist epochs it may merely be an analytical construct which makes sense of a complex of facts otherwise inexplicable. "Ethnicity" itself was a word created and first used in social Science discourse in the 1950's. As E. P. Thompson pointed out about class the use of the word "Ethnicity" to describe a phenomenon of the Pre-World War I period is anachronistic although its use as a heuristic device is certainly defensible. On the origins of the word see Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan "Why Ethnicity" Commentary", October 1974, 33.

5. For a more extensive discussion of the assumptions underlying the concept of class see Craig Calhoun, The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism During the Industrial Revolution. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 3-34, 204-235.

6. Charles Tilly, "Did the Cake of Custom Break?" in John M. Merriman Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth Century Europe (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980) 37. See also J. Blum, The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) 418-441 and Calhoun, 115-120.

7. Josef Barton, "Eastern and Southern Europeans" in John Higham (ed.), Ethnic Leadership in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) 150-175. For an analysis of the ability of peasants to become urban and "modern" and remain peasants see: E. Villens, "Peasantry and City: Cultural Persistence and Change in Historical Perspective" American Anthropologist, June 1970 #3 528-545. Stanley H. Brandes, Migration, Kinship and Community: Tradition and Transaction in a Spanish Village (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

8. Donald Horowitz "Ethnic Identity" in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan, Ethnicity (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

9. S. Mintz and R. Price, An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective ISHI Occasional papers in Social Change No. 2 (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976) 24.

10. See my article "The second Generation: The Unknown Polonia" Polish American Studies, XLIII (Spring 1986) 1-8. Reprinted in G. Pozetta (ed..), Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity and Language Maintenance (New York: Garland, 1991). See also Lizabeth Cohen, Making the New Deal: Workers in Chicago 1919-1939, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

11. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Vintagee Books, 1966) 9-10.

12. Thompson, "Eighteenth Century English Society" 156-157.

13. Peter Stearns, Lives of Labor: Work in a Maturing Industrial Society (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1975) 269-299.

14. Barrington Moore Jr., Injustice: The Social Basis of Obedience and Revolt (White Plains, NY.: M. E. Sharpe, 1978) 221-226.

15. Joan Wallach Scott, The Glassworkers of Carmaux (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1974) recognizes this point clearly in her description of the birth of socialism in Carmaux: "Socialism was not the product of the inevitable evolution of worker consciousness; rather it emerged from particular needs at a particular moment in time." 110. See also W. Sewell Jr., Work and Revolution in France (Cambridge University Press, 1980) 278-284.

16. Scott, op cit 167-192; Moore, 236-237; P. Stearns and H. Mitchell, Workers and Protest (Itasca I11.: F.E. Peacock, 1971); W. Sewell, Jr., "Social Change and the Rise of Working Class Politics in Nineteenth-Century Marseilles" Past and Present 65 (November 1974) 75-109. C. Johnson "Patterns of Proletarianization" in Merriman, 78-79. European workers were themselves often divided by language, region and an entrenched

occupational and guild tradition far deeper than any in United States.

17. Josef Barton "Czech Farmers and Mexican Laborers in South Texas" in Frederick C. Luebke (ed.) Ethnicity and the Great Plains (Lincohn, Neb.: Published by the University of Nebraska Press for the Center for Great Plains Studies, 1980) 198.

18. J. H. Westergaard "Radical Class Consciousness: A Comment." in Martin Bulmer, Working-Class Images of Society (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1975) 255. In the same collection see also David Lockwood, "Sources of Involvement" in Working Class Images of Society, 16-31. For specific community histories see Sewell, "Social Change ...", Scott; Alan Dawley, Class and Community, The Industrial Revolution in Lynn (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

19. John M. Merriman, "Incident at the Statue of the Virgin Mary: The Conflict of Old and New in Nineteenth-Century Limoges" in John Merriman, Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe, 137.

20. See, for example, Dziennik Polski (Detroit) May 8, 1908.

21. See A. T. Pienkos (ed.), Ethnic Politics in Urban America: The Polish Experience in Four Cities, (Chicago: Polish American Historical Assn., 1978). This work takes a comparative look at Polish American involvement in local politics in Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee and Buffalo and shows the vastly different experience in each city.

22. Allan Treppa "Chronology 1913-1920" The Hamtramck Citizen October 20, 1977.

23. Arthur Kornhauser, Attitudes of Detroit People toward Detroit (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1952) 205-206.

24. The early history of Polish immigrants records spontaneous

numerous strikes in Steel Mills in Chicago, Illinois Quaries, Sugar and Oil Refineries in Brooklyn and New Jersey, Pennsylvania Coalmines, Textile Mills in New England. Except for a bloody confrontation over pay a public works project in 189 the history of the Poles in Detroit is marked by little spontaneous or organized class action before the thirties. See Dominic Pacyga Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side, 1880-1922. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991). Frank Renkiewicz, Polish American Workers, 1880-1980 in S. Blejwas and M. B. Biskupski (eds.), Pastor of the Poles (New Britain, CT: Polish Studies Program Monographs - Central CT State University, 1982) 116-136; William G. Falkowski, Accommodation and Conflict: Patterns of Polish Immigrant Adaptation to Industrial Capitalism and American Political Pluralism, 1873-1901. Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY Buffalo, 1990; Victor Greene, The Slavic Community on Strike (South Bend; Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1966).

25. Dziennik Zjednoczenia (Chicago) July 24, 1922

26. Glos Polek (Chicago) May 4, 1911

27. Dziennik Zjednoczenia (Chicago) July 24, 1922

28. Dziennik Zwiazkowy (Chicago) April 11, 1917

29. See Victor Greene, The Slavic Community on Strike; Dominic Pacyga, Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago.

30. Between 1936 and 1938 Polish Americans joined the New CIO Unions in unprecedented numbers - according to one estimate over 600,000. They were also the largest ethnic group in the five key industries the CIO Unions organized-steel, coal mining, meat packing, agricultural machinery and auto manufacturing. It it clear that their support was critical to the victories the unions won in those sectors of American industry. A 1941 estimate puts the percentage of Slavs in American Defense industries at over 50% with the Poles being the overwhelming majority of those. Boleslaw Gebert, "Polacy w Amerykowskich zwiazkach zawodnych. Notatki i Wspomnienia" (Poles in American Industrial Unions. Notes and

Reminiscences) Przeglad Polonijny, II, 1,(1976) 151-152.

31. One of the Young Polish women who led the Cigar Workers and who had worked in all of the major Cigar Factories noted in a recent interview that she could not remember women of any other nationality, but Polish in the Cigar factories. Interview Helen Piwkowski with Jamieson Smith 3/15/90, Detroit, Michigan. Tape in possession of the author.

32. On Detroit Polonia during the non-union are see: A. Walaszek, Polscy robotnicy, praca i zwiazki zawodowe w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki, 1880-1922 (Polish Workers, Labor and Trade Unions in the United States of America, 1880-1922) (Wroclaw: Ossolonium, 1988) Part II.

33. Thaddeus C. Radzilowski, "Patterns of Secondary Slavic Migrations as Reflected in Fraternal Records, 1895-1905." Delivered at Symposium, A Century of European Migration. November 6-9, 1986, Minneapolis, MN.

34. On the early history see Thaddeus C. Radzilowski with D. Binkowski, Polish Americans in Detroit Politics" in A. Pienkos, (ed..) Ethnic Politics in Urban America (Chicago, 1978) 40-53; Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development and Immigrants in Detroit 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); See also Ks. Piotr Taras, SAC, Polonia in Detroit (Warsaw: Pallottinum, 1989) and R. Napolska The Polish Immigrant in Detroit to 1914 (Chicago: P.R.CU. Press, 1946).

35. Helen Wendell, "Conditions in Hamtramck," Pipps Weekly, 2, No. 23, 10-11.

36. City of Detroit, Annual Reports of the Department of Public Welfare 1922, 1926, 1927, 1929.

37. Workers Education Local 189, Union Town, (Detroit, 1980) 4-5.

38. Quoted in Stanley Nowak, Untitled Speech, in S. Nowak Collection, Box 3-6, File 3, Walther Reuther Archive of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

39. Florianowo, St. Florian Parish, Hamtramck, MI. March 4, 1934.

40. City of Detroit, City Plan Commission, Master Plan Reports: The People of Detroit (Detroit, 1946) 33-34.

41. Stanislaw Nowak, "Udzial polakow w organizowaniu Zwiazku Zawodowego Robotnikow Automobilowych w USA" (The Role of Poles in the Organization of the United Auto Workers in the USA) Problemy Polonii Zagranicznej, 6-8 (1971) 165-167.

42. See Dziennik Polski (Detroit) July 31, 1935 to August 30, 1935. Detroit, MI. For a general account of the meat strike see the article by George Schrode "Mary Zuk and the Detroit Meat Strike of 1935" Polish American Studies; XLIII, No. 2 (1968, Autumn). The article originated in a Masters Essay at Wayne State University. While useful, the article must be used with caution. The author unable to read Polish, could not use many important sources. He also made a series of elementary errors and unfounded assumptions that weakened seriously his arguments. For a critique of the article see my comments in Polish American Studies XLIV, No. 1 (1987 Spring) 96-97.

43. Margaret C. Nowak, Two Who Were There (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989) 28-42.

44. Arthur Wood, Hamtramck: A Sociological Study of a Polish American Community (New York: Octagon Books, 1975) 68-69.

45. S. Nowak, "Dalsze Poszukanie Pracy (Looking for work again) Glos Ludowy, November 1, 1975.

46. Peter Frredlander, The Emergence of a UAW Local 1936-1939. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975) 29.

47. Margaret C. Nowak "An American in the Making" manuscript in the S. Nowak Collection, Box 8, 152 and Two Who Were There, 45-46.

48. Vincent Klein, Untitled Radio Address, Sept. 8, 1940, in S. Nowak Collection, Box 3-5, File 2.

49. Field notes, Nowak interview, October 18, 1984. See also M. Nowak, pp 153-154, and Stanislaw Nowak, "Udzial Polakow" 165-175.

50. Field notes, interview with Stanley Nowak, October 18, 1984, Detroit, MI.

51. ibid.

52. M. C. Nowak, "Making of an America," 155-156.

53. Field notes, Nowak interview, October 18, 1984.

54. Steve Babson, Working Detroit, (New York, 1984) 71.

55. M. C. Nowak, "Making of an America," 158-170.

56. M. C. Nowak, Two Who Were There, 28-40.

57. ibid.

58. Quote by Babson, 77.

59. For a more extended discussion of the role of Polish American Women in the radical activities of the thirties, see my paper "Class Ethnicity and Gender: Polish American Women in the Organization of CIO Unions in Detroit." Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, June 5, 1991, Yale University.

60. Newsweek, March 6, 1937, 9.

61. Dodge Main News, July 12, 1939, 4-A.

62. Strode, 44.

63. Dodge Main News, March 11, 1937.

64. Babson, 71.

65. Field notes, Nowak interview, October 18, 1984.

66. ibid. See also S. Nowak, "Udzial Polakow" 187-189.

67. Stanislaw Nowak, "Proba zlamania strajku w zakladach McCornicka" (The attempt to Break the Strike in the McCormick Plants) Glos Ludowy, (Detroit) November 17, 1977.

68. Field notes, Nowak interview, October 18, 1984.

69. Stanislaw Nowak, "Wklad Polonii Detroickiej w organizowaniu robotnikow Fordowskich" (The Contribution of Detroit's Polonia to the Organization of the Ford Workers) Glos Ludowy, October 8, 1977.

70. John Zaremba Papers, 1935-1961, the Walter Reuther Archive of Labor History and urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. See also Executive Committee Minutes, UAW Local #3, Box 1. The Walter Reuther Archive of Labor History and Urban Affairs, March 17, 1938, September 17, 1938, December 7, 1939, January 4, 19400, January 25, 1940, February 22, 1940; and Dodge Main News Vol. 1, No. 3 (1938).

71. Frank Renkiewicz "The Polish American Workers 1880-1980" in S. Blejwas, Pastor of the Poles: Essays Presented to Right Reverend Monsignor John Wodarski (New Britain, CO, 1982) 130.

72. Friedlander, 145.

73. Executive Committee Minutes, UAW Local #3, March 17, 1938, October 24, 1939, November 7, 1939, May 9, 1940.