POLISH AMERICANS

IN

DETROIT POLITICS

by

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The history of the Polish experience in Detroit has never been adequately chronicled. We have available neither the close, continous analysis of the voting patterns of Polish precincts over a long period of time nor good in-depth studies of the careers of Polish American political figures and their milieu that have been done for other cities. Our interpretation of the Detroit situation must therefore be based on analysis of more occasional data and a greater weight must be placed on impressionistic information. Nevertheless, the available evidence clearly shows that the political, social and economic development of Detroit during the last one hundred years made the Polish immigrant political experience in the city distinctly different in important respects from those undergone in other centers of Polish settlement.

The Poles began to appear in significant numbers in Detroit shortly after the Civil War. The first to come were a few skilled artisans, but they were soon followed by unskilled country people. The newcomers found work as laborers in foundaries, stove works, railroad shops, construction and excavation, and as field hands on the farms of the Ferry Seed Company. In addition to work as stoop labor for Ferry Seed, Polish women were employed mainly as domestics and cigar makers. Detroit at the time was just beginning the industrial expansion and remarkable growth that was to make it by the third decade of the twentieth century one of the largest and most important industrial cities in America. It mushroomed from over 45,500 in 1860 to 116,340 in 1880. By 1900, it had grown to 286,000 and reached about one half million on the eve of the great European War.[1]

The Polish population of Detroit in the period between the end of the Civil War and the War of 1914. The problem of determining the exact

number of Poles in Detroit, as elsewhere, is complicated by the absence of a Polish state and the practice of census and immigration officials of depending heavily on country of citizenship as a test of origin. Sister M. Remigia, the historian of early Polonia in Detroit, drawing on a variety of sources gives the following estimates of the Polish population: 1885-22,000, 1892-35,000, 1900-48,000.[2] In another estimate, the Detroit Free Press gave a figure of 40,000 Poles for 1890. That same year Henry Tillman, a major Republican strategist, on the basis of his count of Polish voters by wards and precincts put the Polish voting strength at more than 25% of all those eligible. Detroit's population in 1890 was almost 206,000.[3] By 1914, Polish immigrants and their children numbered 110,000 to 120,000 and with almost a quarter of the population, were on their way to displacing the Germans as Detroit's largest minority group.[4]

The earliest Polish settlers in Detroit were from Prussia: Kashubs from the Baltic region and Poznanians. They settled next to the Germans, the group they knew best in Europe and initially used the ethnic institutions the Germans had established, especially the church. It was probably through contact with Catholic Germans and to a lesser extent the Irish, that the Poles in Detroit were originally introduced to the Democratic Party. The Michigan Republican party had little attraction for the new immigrants. Its base was primarily the Protestant and rural population of the state which had strong nativist and prohibitionist proclivities. In Detroit, the GOP was the party of native Protestants and especially of the economic and industrial elite.[5]

The later Polish Immigrants form Galicia and Russian Poland who settled next to Prussians on the East Side and founded a smaller settlement

on the West Side of the City in the 1880's also followed them into the Democratic party.[6] The first settlers with their better education, artisan trades, their familiarity with the Germans and their longer residence in the city were in the best position to act as leaders of the new community. Thus, a disproportionate number of Polish office holders in the period before World War I were Kashubs and Poznanians.[7]

By the last decade of the nineteenth century with the Polish population increasing rapidly, the Poles began to grow restive and resentful under the control of Irish and German political bosses who took their votes for granted. That restiveness translated itself into massive Polish defections from the Democratic Party when the Republicans fielded an attractive candidate for mayor in the 1889 election. The GOP candidate, Hazen Pingree conducted a very successful personal campaign in Polish areas of the city and put a Pole on his slate. He came out in favor of the eight hour day and made it clear by opening his campaign at "Baltimore Red's" Saloon that he did not oppose the whiskey trade. Pingree won the election and carried the Polish districts by a greater plurality than he gained in the city at large.[8]

The Poles continued to support the Republican Pingree in the nineties while engaging in relatively sophisticated ticket splitting to vote for Democrats at national and state levels and for municipal offices other than mayor.[9] In 1896, when Pingree ran successfully for Governor of Michigan, he polled a majority in the Polish wards at the same time as they were also going strongly for William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate for President. During Pingree's tenure as mayor he won the affection of the Poles by his attacks on the high charges and monopolistic

practices of the utilities, and the exorbitant rate hikes of the Detroit Railway Company. He fought for a working man's trolley fare and provided work, relief and small garden plots for the unemployed during the severe depression of nineties.[10] No other important Republican figure was ever able to win from the Poles the kind of support they gave Hazen Pingree. Although his influence was, on occasion, strong enough to increase the number of votes other Rebublicans won in Polish Districts,[11] the Pingree interlude does not really represent a serious inroad by the Michigan GOP into the Polish vote at the end of the nineteenth century. During the entire period Poles continued to vote overwhelmingly for Democrats at all other levels. Their votes for his candidacies stood in recognition of the fact that he was a maverick in his own party whose policies served their interests better than the candidates of their own party.

After Pingree's retirement in 1900, the Poles reverted to that pattern of straight ticket support for the Democratic Party which they had acquired only shortly before the first Pingree candidacy in 1889. Ironically, the very years in which they were supporting Pingree were the years in which they were forging the last links of interest and identity which were to bind them to the Democratic Party. It was in the thirty years between 1880 and 1910 that the Polish Community created and accepted that particular blend of identities as Poles, Catholics, workers, Democrats, Americans and Detroiters which characterized their ethnicity in Detroit. Over the years, this basic core continued to be shaped and modified by international, national and local events, by their sometimes competitive and abrasive relationships with other ethnic groups and by struggles within the Polish community, local and national.[12] In some cases, the importance of certain identities,

such as region or partition area of origin waned, while others such as union membership at a later date supplemented and enriched the evolution of their ethnic identity.[13]

The plural identities of Polish American ethnicity and the complex interests to which they were tied, complicated politics for Detroit's Polonia from the very beginning. The issue was first posed most directly when the immigrants were forced to choose between voting as Democrats or voting as Poles. Detroit's most influential Polish newspaper, the Dziennik Polski (Polish Daily News) from its founding in 1904, urged Poles to vote for Polish candidates regardless of party and to split their ballots when attractive non-Polish candidates ran on the GOP ticket to serve notice on Irish and German bosses who "regularly forget about us after election" that the days of "beer barrel politics" and automatic support for the Democrats were over.[14] These efforts by the newspapers and some Community leaders were often in vain. Polish Republicans running against non-Polish Democrats were decisively defeated with regularity in the Polish wards.[15] The staunch adherence of the Poles to the Democratic party was clearly manifest during the Republican landslide of 1904. Detroit and Wayne County went for the GOP at all levels except the Polish 5th, 7th, and 9th East side wards which held for the Democrats.[16]

During the first decades of the community's existence, Poles in Detroit had at times responded to injustice, inequity and unemployment by violence, riot and the destruction of property. By the turn of the century with their political strength growing, they turned to the ballot box to redress grievances and win jobs. Polish voters for example, usually supported bond issues for public works projects such as the Detroit Museum

of Art Building, and the Belle Isle Bridge in the full awareness that these would mean more employment in pick and shovel construction work in which many Poles were engaged prior to the full development of the automobile industry.[17] During the 1910 election campaign, the Dziennik Polski established as a criterion for its endorsement whether or not an incumbent hired Poles into any of the patronage positions available to him.[18] Most importantly, by 1910 the Polish Community had became well enough established and successful enough in electing some officials and placing others in public jobs that it could begin to engage in the politics of status and respect.[19] The Polish leadership for example, waged a very successful campaign in 1910 to deny votes to Thomas A. Farrell, the incumbent County Clerk because "he has nothing but disdain for Poles, treats them rudely and make things very difficult for them when they are in his office." His behavior was contrasted with that of Charles Nichols, the incumbent City Clerk who "respects Poles" and treats them "like first class citizens" and has even "gone out of his way to assist them if necessary."[20] Nichols did surprisingly well for a Republican in the Polish wards while Farrell received less votes than any other candidate on the ballot in the same wards. At the same time, Senator August Cyrowski in the middle of his first term in the statehouse, in a hitherto unprecedent move by a Polish-American office holder broke publicly with the "Irish dominated" leadership of the Democratic Party. "It did not take me long to discover why [the Irish] scorn and mock us" he said, "because they think we will vote for them no matter what because we know no better...". He predicted that the scales would soon fall from the eyes of the Poles and they would recognize the true nature of those Irish "Pharisees".[21]

Although nothing so biblically dramatic happened to Polish-American voters, there were changes in their community's self awareness which began to alter political interests and involvement. The first change, to which we have already alluded, was an increased interest in the status of the community and the regard with which it was held by others in Detroit. On the eve of World War I, even though it was still struggling to absorb a flood of newcomers, the Polish community in Detroit had been in existence for almost half a century. In that time many Poles had saved enough to purchase a small home; eleven parishes had been established and more than half of them had already built large, impressive churches and parish schools and a Polish seminary for priests had been established. A small professional class was beginning to emerge and over 2,500 businesses run by Poles were in operation. In addition, with the new auto industry beginning its enormous expansion, this was a period of relatively secure employment and comparative prosperity for the laborers who formed the overwhelming majority of Detroit's Polonia. Unlike the period of the hungry nineties, the immigrants could afford an interest in status and the politics of respect.

This tendency was given reinforcement and content by two related developments. The first was a growing sense of conscious Polishness that had grown along with the ties that bound the immigrants into parishes, societies and areal communities and separated them from others especially the nearby Germans. This consciousness was fostered by the efforts of newspapers, pastors of the Polish parishes and the teaching nuns in the parochial schools, all of whom had an interest and commitment to community solidarity. Struggles between elite factions in the Polish-American Community in Detroit and elsewhere over its nature, purpose and future also raised questions

which forced many to define a clear identity. The new consciousness and the desire for status and recognition is well exemplified by the celebrations which attended the visits to Detroit of Bishop Paul Rhode, the first Polish-American Bishop.[22]

The second development was an increasingly militant Polish nationalism, spreading to almost all elements of the Polish nation and to the communities in diaspora. In the twentieth century the amount of money and energy American Poles devoted to the struggle to maintain Polish culture and language in America and help their European brethren win respite from the oppression of the partitioning powers increased significantly. The rallies and celebrations to commemerate the 500th Anniversary of the Polish-Lithuanian victory over the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald in 1410, held in Partitioned Poland and in Polish immigrant communities are testimony to the burgeoning power of national feeling. By 1910, the Dziennik Polski and the organizational newspapers which Detroit Poles read, increased significantly the amount of space devoted to news and commentary on Polish matters. During World War I, such concerns began to dominate the newspaper columns and the almost miraculous reappearance of a Polish state, first as possibility in 1917 and then as reality between 1918 and 1922 seized the attention of Polish communities everywhere to the virtual exclusion af all other interests. The emerging Polish state became a new and for a time important point of reference for the immigrants and a symbol of their new status as a people with a state.[23] As a result, national and local political concerns received only passing notice by the Polish Press in the teens and early twenties.[24]

While the Poles were preoccupied with events in Europe, a package of "good government" reforms were passed which changed the nature of the pol-

itical arena in Detroit to their decided disadvantage. The large aldermanic council which included two representatives from each ward was replaced by a nine member city council elected at large in a non-partisan election. The patronage available to elected officials was cut dramatically to only a handful of positions. Students of the wave of "good government" reforms in American cities at the beginning of the Twentieth Century have pointed out that they shifted the balance of power back to upper classes. In at-large elections the strength of geographically concentrated ethnic and other minority groups was negated. The deceptively named "non-partisanship" created by the reform shifted the organization of the campaign, the nomination of candidates and the definition of the issues from the political parties in which the immigrants were acquiring considerable influence and power to civic groups, "search light" and special issue committees, newspapers, reform groups, chambers of commerce, Businessmen's Alliances, Booster Clubs, and other organizations which middle and upper class people found more compatible and virtuous as vehicles for political participation.[24]

It is perhaps not entirely coincidental that the "reform" of city government which culminated in the new charter of 1918 at a time when the Poles had become the largest minority group in Detroit. That the reform had as one of its purposes the exclusion of the immigrants from political power is given further credence by the fact that the same constellation of political forces responsible for the new charter were also involved in the passage of the 1894 Constitutional Amendment which limited voting in city and local elections to U.S. citizens. There is unfortunatly no study of the reaction of Polish voters to the reforms. The evidence available would indicate that the Polish community may have been more ambiv-

alent or indifferent than might be supposed in retrospect.

First, as already indicated, the War, the Polish national renaissance and the campaigns to collect food, clothing and money to alleviate the effects of war, starvation and disease on a homeland in which friends and kin still lived, temporarily eclipsed interest in city politics and withdrew energies from local interests. Secondly, many Poles were not sorry to see the arrogant and corrupt party bosses who took their votes for granted and gave them far less than their due, humbled and shorn of power. Senator Cyrowski's public attack in 1910 on the Democratic party leadership marked the beginning of a two decade long erosion of Democratic party strength among the Poles. In the midst of increasing war time prosperity and in a community now well established, the nexus of loyalities as immigrants, Catholics and workers which brought the Poles into the party began to weaken.[26] In the 1916 election for example, two of the four Poles elected to the Detroit Common Council were Republicans.[27] A contributing factor in the erosion of Polish support was the moribund nature of the party itself. Beginning in 1894, the Democratic party in Michigan began a sharp decline in voter support that was not arrested until the Great Depression. As its latest recruits, the Poles were really among the last to begin leaving it. It had become a party which had less to offer with each election while Republican power was growing apace.[28] By 1918, a significant minority of Poles had strayed over to the Republican Party whose leaders were in a vanguard of the urban reform movement in Detroit. Thus opposition to the reform movement which was tied up with the defense of the existing democratic ward machines was blunted by a swing toward the Republican party.[29]

A factor which was to have a profound affect on Polish American politics in Detroit and to stamp them with a distinctive impress which distinguished them from Polish American politics elsewhere was the settling of the village of Hamtramck by Polish immigrants. Hamtramck was a rural township north of the Detroit city limits on the east side, inhabited by German and Dutch farmers and a few roadhouse and saloon owners who supplied prostitution, gambling and other entertainments to Detroiters. The area began to change dramatically after 1910 for two reasons: it was just over the border from Polish neighborhoods in the 9th ward which were expanding rapidly northward as a result of natural increase and continued influx of immigrants and it was chosen by the Dodge Brothers as the site of their new auto factory. The latter factor accelerated the movement of Poles from the neighborhoods south of Hamtramck and drew in their kin and compatriots from as far away as the Pennsylvania anthracite fields and the northern Michigan copper mines. The Poles were accompanied by much smaller groups of Blacks, Italians and other Slavs especially Ukrainians into Hamtramck. Following the example of the Dodges, other auto companies built factories in Hamtramck as the industry expanded and this in turn pulled in other immigrants. By the early twenties, the Poles composed the overwhelming majority of the people of Hamtramck. When the area was incorporated in 1922, as a city the first mayor and a major part of the first administration elected were Polish. In the meantime, the city of Detroit had grown rapidly around and beyond Hamtramck, so that it, like the area of Highland Park to the northwest of it (dominated by Henry Ford's great plant) became an enclave located in the heart of Detroit's east side.[30]

The influx of newcomers and the establishment of the auto industry in Hamtramck did nothing to disrupt its first major industry--vice. In fact, the advent of new money and new customers only helped to foster it. When Hamtramck was still a semi-rural village the five village trustees had been the five saloon keepers and graft and fraudulent elections had long been established as honored political traditions. When the Poles took over the political machinery in the twenties, they too were drawn into the patterns of official corruption and protection of brothels, gambling houses and illegal saloons. Vice in Hamtramck provided a remarkable example of inter-ethnic cooperation. During the Prohibition era a motley, polyglot collection of Irish saloon keepers, Jewish racketeers and brothel keepers, Black and Polish gamblers, dishonest old stock American and German police officials and corrupt Polish politicians turned the city into Detroit's favorite playground. Unfortunately, it also served to convince many in Detroit that the Poles were incapable of honest self-government, to the dismay and confusion of the largely law abiding Polish population who were clustered around the remarkable churches they were building in the residential clearings between the giant factories.[31]

The Hamtramck experience played a crucial role in the political history of the Poles in Detroit. First, as indicated above, Hamtramck's bawdy and tumultuous early history gave Poles a reputation, largely undeserved, as an ungovernable people and confirmed in many, the old stereotypes and prejudices long current in Detroit that Poles were troublesome and benighted group barely capable of civilized life. That the vice, liquor and gambling in this "Polish City" were mostly in the hands of others and that the attacks against Hamtramck by Detroit newspapers and various police agencies smacked heavily of stereotyping went unremarked and largely unnoticed.

Second, in spite of the unsavory reputation of the city, most Poles whether they lived in Hamtramck or not, took considerable pride in the idea of a "Polish City." The election of the pharmacist Peter Jezewski as the first mayor of the new city of 48,000 people in April, 1922 led to prolonged celebrations in the Polish community. No Pole had ever attained so high a municipal position. The end of village status, which the Poles supported as a weapon against the entrenched village establishment, and the victory by Jezewski came in the wake of Detroit municipal reform which curtailed the growth of political power and representation for Poles in Detroit. Hamtramck was compensation for losses in Detroit. Its discrete boundaries, political offices and patronage provided far more visibility and rewards than control of four or five Detroit wards could ever have given, even in the prereform period. It gave Detroit's Polonia a manifest physical location and uncontested control over a piece of the urban landscape. Poles here met with high state and federal officials and corporation chiefs; they taxed, built schools, named streets and zoned property. Whereas, elsewhere important decisions were made for them by others, in Hamtramck, Poles controlled their own destiny. Hamtramck officials became important figures in the Polish community and among its most important spokesmen outside of it. As a result, the city attracted to itself a large share of the community's intelligensia and professionals and many ambitious and able would-be-leaders who saw a greater possibility of using their talents and winning rewards and recognition than in Detroit. In the thirties, Hamtramck became the arena for Polish-American radicalism which would have been diffuse, almost purposeless and certainly lost from sight in the wider Detroit scene. The existence of Hamtramck, a city composed of Polish American workers, was

also crucial to UAW organizing in the east side factories.

Third, because the city broke the unity within one political boundary of the massive Polish east side settlement and attracted away potential leaders and voters, the existence of Hamtramck also had a negative effect on the political development of Detroit's Polonia. The number of registered voters in Hamtramck between the mid-thirties and the mid-fifties remained constant at about 24,000. Such a number of voters would not be decisive in a mayorial race in which 150,000 to 250,000 votes were likely to be cast, except in a very tight contest. However, 15 to 20 thousand votes were of considerable importance in Common Council races in which primary nomination and election to one of the nine seats were often decided by a handful of votes.[32] The attraction that Hamtramck had for capable young leaders reduced the number of potential good Polish American candidates for Detroit city offices.

During the nineteen twenties the Poles who made up about 20 percent of the population managed to place only one of their members in an important municipal office. This was John Kronk who had emerged as a Republican candidate from the Sixteenth ward prior to the elimination of party labels in city elections. Kronk held one of the nine council seats during the period. The most interesting development in the twenties was the rapid withdrawl of the Poles from the Democrat party. In the 1924 election the only Pole elected to the State Legislature was the Republican Josef Bahorski. In the 1926 election four Poles, two State Representatives and two State Senators, all Republicans, were elected. The Hamtramck vote (Third House District) of 1,632 for the Republican Josef Dziengielewski to 308 for his Democratic opponent shows the magnitude of the shift. In the 1928 elections, the number

of Poles in the State Legislature declined to three, two Republic State Senators, George Kolowich and Cass Jankowski and one State Representative, the Democrat, Albert Bielewski from Hamtramck. Bielewski was the only member of his party sent to the Legislature from Wayne County. His Republican opponent who lost by 300 votes out of the 7,011 cast was Thaddeus Machrowicz who later represented the First Congressional District as a liberal Democrat. In the national election, the Poles, voting as Catholics, wets and immigrants, gave the Democrat Al Smith a three to one margin over Herbert Hoover in Hamtramck and equally impressive is slightly smaller margins elsewhere.[33]

The Smith candidacy in 1928 marked the beginning of the end of the two-decade erosion of support for the Democratic party among Detroit Poles. The phenomenon was strongest in Hamtramck, but it seems to have occurred in all Polish areas. In the 1926 election, the Republican House candidate carried Hamtramck by a more than five to one margin, two years later the Republicans lost the seat. In the second State Senatorial district, which included much of the Polish area south of Hamtramck, the Republican Jankowski won by a three to one margin in 1926. He was barely reelected in 1928 by a 252 vote margin out of more than 35,000 cast. In the third State Senatorial district which included Hamtramck and the surrounding area to the north the Republican margin was almost six to one in 1926. It was reduced to little more than two to one in 1928 and the Republicans failed to carry the Hamtramck part of the district.[34]

The nineteen twenties also saw the election of the first Pole from Detroit to the United States Congress. By fortuitous chance a young Polish politician, John Sosnowski got himself nominated the Republicn candidate in the First Congressional District which included the Polish settlement area on the east

side. Riding the Republican tidal wave of 1924, he swamped his Democratic opponent Robert Clancy by over 40,000 votes to become the third Pole to serve in the United States Congress. His tenure was limited, however, to one term. The idea of being represented by a Pole, even if he was a Republican, was too much for many Detroiters to swallow. In the 1926 election campaign, Sosnowski was defeated in the Republican primary by the same Robert Clancy he beat in 1924. His former Democratic opponent switched parties and won the right to run in the general election as the Republican candidate, which was tantamount to election.

Although it is clear that by 1926, the Republican party had succeeded in winning over a substantial number of Polish-American voters, the size of the Republican margins in Polish areas were inflated by the failure of a very large number of Poles, most of whom supported the moribund Democratic party, to vote. A strong and consistent pattern of voting by a very large percentage of the Polish population does not become a political characteristic of the Poles in Detroit until after 1932.[35] In the second State Senatorial district, for example, the number of votes cast in 1924 were about 9,000, they went down to 6,000 in 1926 and soared to 35,000 in 1928. In 1928, the vote split almost evenly between the Democratic and Republican state and local candidates. In Hamtramck, slightly less then 2,000 voted in 1926 while over 7,000 (out of 8,345 registered voters) cast ballots in 1928. That it was Democrats rather than Republicans who were likely to stay home is attested to by the 1930 election in which the Ripublicans won back the seat they had lost in 1928 by a vote of 2,421 to 1,637. In 1930 there were 14,000 registered voters in Hamtramck.[36]

In the absence of a viable Democratic party Polish voters in Detroit stayed away from the polls in significant numbers in years of national elections as well as those in which only local and state elections were held. The Smith candidacy, however, excited the interest of the Poles and brought them out to vote in unprecedent numbers. Nevertheless, after that flurry, as the Hamtramck vote indicates, apathy, perhaps intensified by the deepening depression returned and the advantage, went to the Republicans again in 1930. If Al Smith halted the Democratic slide among the Poles and reactivated many who still supported the party but had lost interest because it had become impotent and increasingly irrelevant to their concerns, then the Depression and the union organizing struggles of the 1930's brought almost all of the Poles of Detroit back into the party. By the mid-thirties, the Poles had become the single most important bloc of voters the Democratic party had in Detroit. The Polish areas in that period consistently produced the largest number of straight-ticket voters for the party--in some precincts as high as 94 percent.[37] Having entered the New Deal Democratic party forged by Roosevelt, the Poles of Detroit became its most loyal supporters at the national level. Roosevelt was given majorities of 90% to 94% in the Polish areas of Detroit. His Democratic successors while never attaining the same percentages that Roosevelt did, were able to garner large majorities in Polish districts right into the 1970's. Truman, Johnson and Humphrey, whom the Poles admired were given 80% or more of the vote in Polish neighborhoods, Stevenson got almost 80%, while McGovern and Carter, whom the Poles found less congenial, each received about 60% of the vote in areas such as Hamtramck. While there has been no specific study of the extent of the maintenance of ties to the Democratic party by

Detroit Poles who have moved out of the City and into adjacent suburban areas, it is probably safe to assume that the majority remain Democrats. The areas in which they have concentrated invariably return Democratic majorities in partisan elections.

As a result of the return of the Poles to the revitalized Democrat Party a large number of Poles appeared on the party ticket in 1932. In that year, after decades of estrangement from the seats of political power, three Polish Americans were elected to Congress from the Detroit area: George Sadowski from the east side 1st Congressional District, and John Dingell, and John Lesinski from the 15th and 16th Districts on the west side. Three out of the six Detroit seats were occupied by Poles until 1964 when the Congressional Districts were redrawn. Two of the three were re-elected (in the new first and sixteenth districts) and continue to hold those seats to the present day.[38]

Their control of half of the congressional seats in Detroit from 1932 to 1964 and of two of six from 1964 onward represents the most powerful political position the Poles attained in Detroit. Their control of the seats and their geographical concentration also gave the Poles a great deal of power over the local Democratic Party machinery which in Wayne County is organized by law on a congressional district basis. This legislation gave Detroit's Poles considerable influence over the formal party machinery. It gave them corresponding influence over the local branches of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education (COPE) which is also organized on the same basis and which plays a pre-eminint role in the partisan political arena in Detroit. The hold of Polish American politicians and activists over party machinery was the strongest on the east side in the First Congressional District.[39]

There were several powerful factors which in addition to the successes of Polich Americans on the party ticket, tied them to the Democratic party. The first was the impact of the Depression on the Poles. When the great crash came the Poles were only in the first stages of that painful climb toward a minimum standard of security and home ownership. As one of the poorest and least skilled ethnic groups in the city, they were dropped back to poverty and joblessness in large numbers by the events 1929-1930. At the height of the Depression almost half of the 11,000 families in the City of Hamtramck were on relief. City resources were stretched so thin that by 1933 families with fewer than three children were taken off the relief rolls. Not since the severe depression of the 1890's did Detroit's Polish population suffer so much privation.[40] The New Deal relief programs were seen as salvation by the sorely beset Polish Community in Detroit and solidified their grateful adherence to the Democratic Coalation. Roosevelt became in their eyes the man who rescued them from the slow death of unemployment, the horror of bread lines and soup kitchens and the humiliation of relief. The 700 jobs the WPA provided in Hamtramck provided the Democratic party with more than a generation of loyal supporters among the city's Polish workers.

As a direct result of the Depression, there was a massive shift of the leadership of the Polish Community to the Democratic Party. They led or followed their constituents into the New Deal. Former Republican party activists and even candidates and office holders withdrew from the Party and surfaced shortly afterwards as Democrats, sometimes bitter and disillusioned that their former party was so unconcerned about the plight of Polish workers.[41]

A second important factor which solidified Polish adherence to the Democratic party was the massive involvement of the Poles in the struggle to organize workers in Detroit and especially the auto Workers. The battle rallied almost all elements of the Polish community and united them in defense of the interests of the workers. At no time since the pre-World War I period had any Polish community so identified its interests with that of the workers as did the Polish community in Detroit in the period between 1936-1941. The majority of Polish American Politicians appeared regularly at workers meetings and rallies. Merchants donated food to sit down strikers and food and other necessities to the families of workers. Labor organizers spo e regularly on Polish Radio. A Polish Conference of Assistance and Solidarity was created by a variety of patriotic, social, political and benefit societies. During the bitter Ford Strike in 1941, the Conference issued a manifesto which framed the issue of the strike as a struggle of all of American society "but in particular, Polish-American (Society)" for democracy. Henry Ford was characterized as an associate and supporter of Adolf Hitler and the underwriter of all fascist organizations in America. The victory over Ford, the manifesto concluded, was necessary to safeguard the gains workers at all other factories had made. This remarkable manifesto was signed by two Congressmen, a state senator and a state representative, a Hamtramck City Councilman, a Judge, Presidents of the Polish Citizen Central Committee, Polish Women's Alliance of Michigan, several Polish National Alliance Branches, Osad 8 of Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish University Club, the Polish Lawyers Association, a Citizens Club of a Polish Parish and several other organizations as well as by Radio personalities, newspaper editors, individual lawyers and Polish UAW

organizers and officers of locals. It represented the complete spectrum of opinion from right to left in the Detroit Polish Community.[42]

This kind of support from the Polish community not only made organizing Polish workers easier than in any other community[43] but also helped to encourage and legitimize the very strong representation of Polish workers in the grass roots leadership of the spontaneous workers uprisings that accompanied the organization of the UAW and other unions such as the cigar workers in Detroit. There is no question that without the Poles, the largest minority group in most of the auto factories, the organization of the UAW and other unions would have been impossible.[44] In turn many Polish workers acquired organizational skills and a political orientation by participating in the union movement. When the UAW moved into the Michigan Democratic Party in the forties many Poles became party activists primarily as a result of their union ties and often as UAW COPE workers. For Detroit Polonia as a whole with its preponderance of union workers, the union local became an extension of the community and especially of its political and economic aspirations.[45] Union locals supplemented and even displaced to a certain degree the political club and the parish as an entreé to political patronage.[46]

The City of Hamtramck because of its location and large Polish population played an important role in the politics of unionization. On the one hand, the independent existence of the city as an enclave in Detroit was certainly due to the influence of the Dodge Brothers, as Highland Park was in equal degree a creation of Henry Ford. The company which was merged in the 1920's into the Chrysler Corporation, paid a large share of the city's taxes and exerted considerable power over the day to day operation of the municipality. Its watchdog was the Hamtramck Board of Commerce whose

secretary in the 1930's, Fred White, was the hand picked representitive of Chrysler President K.T. Keller. The corporation, for example, managed to get taxes it found too heavy rescinded in the late twenties and through the Board of Commerce which it created and controlled, the Corporation engineered in 1933, the dismissal of the Welfare Director, Mrs. Trojanowski, who was considered too liberal. The Chrysler Corporation used the constant threat that it would relocate and take tax money and jobs out of Hamtramck, as Henry Ford had done in Highland Park, in order to keep the municipal administration docile and compliant. When the organizing in Hamtramck began, the Corporation expected the loyalty and support of the City Administration.[47]

On the other hand, the fledgling Dodge Union also saw the importance of controlling the city administration and the largely proletarian character of the city's electorate made such control a real possibility. In 1936, with the assistance of the Union and a radical People's League, of which more will be said later, a pro-labor Administration was elected. After the election the new city attorney announced that "The Police will not protect strike breakers in Hamtramck. The City is neutral."[48] When the Dodge Strike came, the Police who had little sympathy for strike breaking in any case, because the workers were their brothers, cousins and neighbors, helped the sitdowners close and secure the Hamtramck doors of Dodge Main while Detroit Police escorted strike breakers through the back entrances in Detroit. They also handled with care and consideration the crowd of over 10,000 who gathered to prevent a rumored attack by militia or state Police. In a strike at a G.M. plant, they formed a cordon at the city line to prevent state forces being brought into the city for use against the strikers. The natural sympathies of the policemen were allowed

city council and boycott organizer, were often denounced as communist in Press and Pulpit and the radical movement lost impetus as full employment and preoccupation with the War in 1940's replaced and mitigated the concerns and grievances of the thirties, Polish politics did not completely lose it's radical element until the beginning of the Cold War. In the 1942 election the Communist George Kristalski managed to place eighth in the race for the five Hamtramck Council seats. In 1938, the popular radical journalist and labor organizer, Stanley Nowak was elected as State Senator and held the seat for ten years in spite of attempts to remove him because of his alleged membership in the Communist Party.[53]

Thus the events of the 1930's and 1940's caused a basic re-crystallization of that collection of characteristics that composed Polish self identity in Detroit. To be Polish was to be a worker, a union member and a labor Democrat. The intertwining of labor unions and the Democratic party with ethnic political aspirations strengthened and fostered this identity configuration. The association of the merger of those elements with the recovery from the searing poverty and unemployment of the thirties caused most Polish-American to view its maintenance as essntial to their security and well being into the sixties and many continue to see it in that light to the present.[54]

Having tied themselves to the Labor-Democratic party coalition the Poles in Detroit shared in its success in Partisan politics. They also shared its failures in non-partisan city elections and indeed were in part responsible for some of those defeats.[55] An important reason for the failure of the Detroit unions to generate much power and get candidates elected was the non-partisan election system which allowed the diverse and some-

times antagonistic ethnic and occupational groups held together in the union-Democratic party coalition to spinter and vote other interests free from party discipline. The system eliminated the sanction of loss of patronage and power and defeat of desired economic and social goals. On the local levels the Poles, as home owners voted as fiscal and social conservatives[56] while in state and national elections they cast their ballots for liberal and socially progressive candidates.[57]

With their strong position in the Labor-Democratic Party coalition and their geographical concentration the Poles did well in county, state, and national elections but they were unable to elect many of their own to Detroit city offices. Only three Poles have held offices on the Detroit City Council in the half a century since the Reform: John Kronk who was elected in the twenties and served again briefly after World War II; Leo J. Nowicki, former Michigan Lieutenant Governor, who resigned during his first term to take over the troubled Detroit Street Railway system, and public servant and accountant Anthony Wierzbicki who served eight years until his defeat in the November 1977 election. For only one short period after the 1948 election did Detroit Polonia have two representatives on the nine member common council.[58]

The Poles who served on Detroit's Council had certain common characteristics that distinguished them from most of the other Poles elected in Wayne County: They had little or no connection to the Labor-Democratic Party machine; they tended to be fiscal and social conservatives; and they usually had the backing or endorsement of business and commercial groups, home owners or taxpayers associations, the Civic Searchlight or other good government

organizations and/or the powerful Detroit News.

Only one Pole, Roman Gribbs, has ever been elected Mayor of Detroit. Gribbs held the office for one term from 1970 to 1974. A lawyer with a reputation as a fair, honest, and efficient administrator, he was installed as Wayne County Sheriff to clean up a corrupt and scandal ridden sheriff's department. His success led to his nomination for mayor. In the mayorial race, he won a narrow victory over Richard Austin, the first Black candidate for Mayor of Detroit. Gribbs, who had a good civil rights record, ran an exemplary campaign scrupulously avoiding any racial appeals in a city frightened and polarized by the memory of recent riots. Gribbs, however, had a limited interest in partisan politics. After one term of an administration that got high marks for solid and efficient, if somewhat low-keyed, achievement he chose not to run again. The first Pole to hold that office therefore, was succeeded as a mayor of Detroit, a city over 50 percent Black by 1974, by Coleman Young, the first Black mayor. Gribbs was subsequently appointed to a position on the Bench.[59]

Any evaluation of the political experience of the Poles in Detroit must take into consideration two important factors which have profoundly affected it: the intense and bitter competition between the Polish and Black communities and the deep, persistent prejudice which has been directed against the Poles by better established groups in Detroit. The two factors have served to reinforce each other. The geographical and social mobility and political success of Blacks increased the threat to gains made by Poles, who felt held down by established groups, and embittered the competition. The struggle between the groups especially in recent times, has been interpreted largely on the basis of an American experience that assumed the economic and

social competition can only be explained as a part of the continuous 350 year pattern of racial oppression of blacks by a dominant and racist white society. Thus the casting of Poles as oppressive "racists" absolved the Detroit establishment of the need to take their claims seriously and simultaneously legitimized and excused the existing prejudice against them.[60]

The competition between Poles and Blacks in Detroit did not begin in earnest until the 1930's and even then it was not always as total and continuous as it has been remembered through the filter of recent events. The relations between the two groups who shared the bottom of Detroit's society with southern white migrants--the so-called "hillbillies"[61]--was at times marked by tolerance and cooperation. Poles and Blacks actively cooperated in politics in both Hamtramck and Detroit--the first Black to run for Detroit Common Council, Charles Diggs, ran on a joint ticket and campaigned with a Pole--and in the 1930's together formed the core of the New Deal Coalition in Detroit. They also worked side by side in the auto factories often in the least desirable jobs such as those in the foundries. The Poles, as they generally came over to the union first, were frequently the key to identifying the Black leaders in a given department and to organizing the Black workers.[62]

On the other hand, the situation in Detroit also pitted them against each other for jobs, homes, status and political power with disasterous consequences. From their first appearance in large numbers in the industrial plants the Blacks presented a clear threat to jobs and higher pay. They were widely used and cynically exploited as union busting scab labor especially during the organizing struggles in the thirties by Detroit Capitalists, most notably Henry Ford. On occasion, armed by the company

and at its instigation, they battled Poles and other ethnics on the picket lines during the organizing strikes. In attempting to move out of their overcrowded neighborhoods the Blacks encountered almost immediately the tightly knit parish communities created by the Poles. Unlike other groups the Poles did not readily give way and flee to distant all white neighborhoods. They had invested too much too recently in churches, schools, institutions, and community to move. Detroit was for the most part a new city. It had not experienced, as had many eastern cities, the procession of groups through houses and neighborhoods which tacitly legitimized and sanctioned the idea of temporary possession and succession. The Poles were living around churches they had recently built in neighborhoods that had been created out of raw pasture in living memory. They defended turf and community against outsiders who shared with them neither language and culture nor religion.[63] During World War II as Detroit expanded and available housing disappeared, the two communities battled with clubs, knives, and fists over control of a housing project until the Blacks, who needed the housing more desperately and for whom it was intended, were moved in behind National Guard bayonets.[64] The following year, during the 1943 Race Riot, the fighting between Poles and Blacks was renewed in a number of areas. The struggle for jobs and the contest over neighborhoods although it never returned to the violent proportions it had reached between the two groups in the 1940's has remained a central issue in Detroit to the present.[65]

The Black-Polish rivalry has had an important political dimension if only because the two groups make up such a large proportion of the population of Detroit. Their geographical proximity puts them in the same

political space which increases the competition. It is an unfortunate fact that to increase their political representation and their influence in the Democratic Party the Blacks have to reduce the power of the Poles. This situation has often led those who wished to break up the Democratic political coalition to make blantantly racist appeals, as was notably the case in the 1943 and 1945 municipal elections.[66] The rivalry has also been a major factor in shaping the political strategy of the Unions. They entered the Michigan Democratic Party, at least in part, to protect the union ethnic coalition and to keep the Detroit ethnic groups focused on economic and social issues. This involvment has influenced the emergence of generally progressive candidates from the Polish community. As was noted above, the nonpartisan nature of Detroit city politics has, on the other hand, reduced the union coalition strategy to near impotence.

The anti-Polish feeling in Detroit derives from both anti-working class feeling and ethnic prejudice. Detroit has been marked historically by a sharp division and antagonism between the working class and those above it and the Poles as one of the largest identifiable segments of Detroit's proletariat have been the target of this upper and middle class prejudice.[67] The Poles have also been the victims of a strong and specific anti-Polish prejudice on the part of Detroit's establishment from the beginnings of large scale migration to the city.[68] Part of this unfavorable image, came as a result of the fact that they were a large group of rural, Catholic, peasant migrants whose language and culture were strange, if not bizarre to most Detroiters. In addition, they early acquired a reputation as a violent, troublesome people. The church riots within the Polish community in the 1880's were followed by work riots in the 1890's.

On several occasions during the Depression of the nineties gangs of Polish workers attacked and drove off Italian workers at construction projects and took over the work themselves. In the most serious incident, the Connor's Creek massacre of 1894, Polish laborers dissatisfied with a reduction in wages attacked the supervisor and a sheriff's posse with shovels and then turned against all well-dressed people in the area. The posse emptied its pistols into the mob before it was overwhelmed. The riot cost three dead and at least fifteen wounded. The fear that the Poles inspired was illustrated by an editorial in the Michigan Catholic, the official newspaper of the Detroit Diocese, which called for severe punishment for the "savage mob" of "howling Poles" and it warned them that the American people would not stand for their violence.[69]

The better people of Detroit did not easily forget or forgive the behavior, the lack of education, inability to speak English and low status of the people who were threatening to take over their city. Officially, they ignored them. George Catlin's massive 764 page history of Detroit published by the Detroit News in 1923 failed to make a single reference to a group which numbered almost 25 percent of the population of the city.[70] When they could not ignore the Poles, they deliberately excluded them from positions of responsibility and visibility[71] and kept out of the better neighborhoods. It was finally in 1962, that the last vestiges of the so-called realtor's point system was eliminated by the Michigan Supreme Court. The system was designed to keep Blacks entirely out of Grosse Pointe Neighborhoods and to screen out all but the most desirable Jews, Italians, and Poles.[72]

As a result of this undisguised distaste and condescension many Detroiters have felt toward them, the Poles have responded by sullen withdrawl and a

suppressed rage that has strong elements of class hate and nationalist paranoia about it. After decades of Hamtramck jokes and anti-working class prejudice, Detroit Poles have in spite of considerable political success in state, county and national elections a sense of themselves as a suffering and persecuted people, a people without power or influence, which affects their political vision. This view was probably best expressed by the popular Polish language columnist, Mieczyslaw Lewandowski in the Hamtramck Citizen column in which he commented on the meaning of the Gribbs election. It has dawned on the city fathers, he writes, that their policies have prepared a disaster for the city and they must now find a way to escape the responsibility for "the coming crises."

> In such a situation wise and prudent men seek a "scapegoat" on whose innocent shoulders can be placed the responsibility for the atonement of the sins of others--for example, on a Negro or a Pole who will then have to answer before the electorate when the expected social disorder and the looming crises comes upon us.[73]

Part of this sense of powerlessness they feel may come from the failure of Polish Americans in spite of their numbers[74] to exercise any significant control over their local political environment--an important consideration for a people with a very local and personal view of power and community. Their failure in this regard is the result of the success of Detroit's Protestant elite in "reforming" the city so that it remained substantially under its control until the present. That control is now passing into Black hands.[75] A secondary cause is the failure to develop enough talented politicians who had both an ethnic constituency and the broad community appeal necessary for success in the non-partisan arena. The most talented Polish politicians were attracted to state and national level offices and partisan

politics and two of the ablest politicians who chose the Detroit arena--Nowicki and Gribbs--quickly left it for appointive positions which offered greater stability and security of tenure than elected office.

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FOOTNOTES:

1. For Population see Donald R. Deskins, Jr. Residential Mobility of Negroes in Detroit, 1837-1965 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), pp. 202, 256-259, Sidney Glazer, Detroit: A Study on Urban Development (New York: Bookman Assoc., 1965) pp. 36, 52, 107-108 and Sister M. Remigia, The Polish Immigrant in Detroit to 1914 (Chicago: PRCU, 1946) p. 29. For information on the occupations of Polish immigrants see Deskins p. 75-76 and Sister M. Remigia, pp. 33-39. Sister Remigia's study provides a great deal of basic information on the early history of Detroit Polonia. Eugene Ostafin, The Polish Peasant in Transition: A Study of Group Integration as a Function of Symbioses and Common Definition(unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: Dept. of Sociology, The University of Michigan, 1948) is an excellent study of the early history of the East side settlement with a sociological slant. The best available study of Hamtramck is Arthur Wood, Hamtramck (New York, Octagon Books, 1974). Wood emphasizes the more sensational aspects of Hamtramck politics and occasionally accepts his informants' information too uncritically. For a personal and highly interpretative overview see T. Radzialowski, "The View from a Polish Ghetto: Some Observations on the First 100 years in Detroit" Ethincity, I, No. 2 (Summer, 1974) 125-150.

2. Sister M. Remigia, p. 30.

3. Melvin G. Holli. Reform in Detroit (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.) pp. 11-12. The presence of more adult males in the Polish community than in the general population probably explains the discrepancy between the population estimates which set the Polish population at 12%-20% and the more than 25% of the eligible voters assumed by Tillman.

4. Sister M. Remigia, p. 30.

5. On the character of the Michigan Political parties see Holli, 12-13. On the early experience with the Germans see Ostafin, 25-50.

6. The West Side Colony around the church of St. Casimer was founded by Austrian Poles and remained largely Galician. The East side community was always the larger of the two Polish settlement areas. The East side was the usual first settlement area of all immigrant groups and until the last great southern Black migration, the "Catholic" side of Detroit.

7. Among the Poles who held elective or appointive offices before 1914 are people with names such as Schmidt, Neubauer, Lemke, Welzand, Maior and Konkel which might be taken as indicative of origin in Northwestern Polish areas under German control. The First Pole elected to Office was Felix Lemke, Justice of the Peace in 1876. In the 1880, Adolph Jasnowski was elected to the state Legislature. See Sister M. Remigia, pp. 59-61.

8. Holli, p. 18-21. Sister M. Remigia, p. 53.

9. That Polish immigrants were capable of such sophisticated behavior seemed to surprise the Detroit newspapers. The Detroit Free Press observed in 1895 that "the Poles seem to have found out how to split their tickets and voted for the Republican candidate for Mayor and the Democratic candidate for Alderman." The Detroit Tribune made the silly remark that "there seems to be an opinion that the Polish American is governed in the exercise of his franchise by a complicated set of rules which only he and a few experts understand and the motives which actuate other have little or no influence with him." Quoted in Sister M. Remigia, pp. 53-54.

10. Holli, pp. 70-72, 76-94, 102-106, 110-11, and passim. During the Depression of 1893, 24,000 of 28,000 people on the poor rolls were foreign born. Polish and German workers drew more than 50% of the pauper relief.

11. Holli, p. 193-196.

12. Victor Greene, For God and Country (Madison, Wis. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975) builds his argument around the importance of this last factor in the rise of group consciousness among Poles and Lithuanians. He concentrates primarily on an analysis of the battle between elite factions in the Polish community in Chicago and devotes little attention to the Detroit situation.

13. Greene has made an interesting and partially successfully first attempt to deal with the difficult problem of the coexistance of Polish and American identities in Polish-American consciousness. He deals with it as a question of dual identity in his article "Slavic American Nationalism, 1870-1919" in Anna Cienciala, ed., American Contributions to the Seventh International Congress of Slovists, Vol. III: History (The Hague: Mauton, 1973) pp. 197-215. I am here approaching the problem in a manner different than Greene did. I am suggesting that a sense of being Polish and a sense of being American were both a part of their ethnic identity and that this identity was also formed and reinforced by religious affiliation, class, and occupational factors, political allegiance, familial, neighborhood and parish ties, secular and religious society membership and town or city loyalty. In regard to the last point it is interesting to note that Polish Immigrants apparently began to identify with local sports teams by the beginning of this century. Detroit's Dziennik Polski which paid no attention to sports when it was founded in 1904, evolved a sports page which carried extensive accounts of Detroit Tiger games by 1908. In politics, of course,

the first loyalties and interests they developed were local and their first successes were at the ward level at which they invested most of their energies. A little more than 40 years later, Kornhauser reported that the foreign born held the most favorable and loyal attitudes toward the city of Detroit of any group of the population. Sixty-nine percent of foreign born were "definitely favorable" about the city. They indicated that it was a place of which they were proud and one that they would not want to leave. They also considered it the most satisfactory of places to live, work and raise a family. In 1951, the Poles were the group with largest number of foreign born in the city with the possible exception of the Canadians. Arthur Kornhauser Attitudes of Detroit People Toward Detroit (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1952). pp. 205.

14. See for example, Dziennik Polski (Detroit) October 8, 1904 for the 1904 election, and ibid October 31, 1908, November 2, 1908 and November 5, 1908. It must be pointed out the Dziennik Polski leaned editorially toward the Republicans on national issues. See "Za kim Glosowac?" (For whom to vote?) ibid. August 23, 1904.

15. In 1910 election M. Koscincki running as a Republican against the German, Hindle, the Democratic Candidate, lost the Polish 5th Precinct in the 7th Ward by a vote of 121 to 29. Dziennik Polski November 10, 1910. The Wards in which the greatest number of Poles were concentrated were the 5th, 7th, 9th Wards on the East Side and 16th Ward on the West Side. Smaller numbers of Poles lived in the 3rd, 11th, and 13th East Side Wards and 14th and 18th West Side Wards.

16. Dziennik Polski November 9, 1904. In the 9th Ward a single Republican, an alderman, was elected. The 5th and 7th produced solid majorities for all Democrats.

17. The Dziennik Polski, November 3, 1910, made this connection between public works bond issues and jobs quite clear to its readers in the event any of them were not yet aware of it. For the 1908 election, on the same issue see ibid, November 2, 1908.

18. Dziennik Polski Nov. 1, 1910 urged a vote for Chas. Nichols, City Clerk who hired a Pole and on Nov. 4, 1910 for Phillip T. Von Zile, Prosecutor who gave a young Polish-American attorney a position in his office.

19. By 1908, there were three Polish Alderman; S. Skrzycki in the 7th ward, M. Ostrowski in the 9th and X. Konkel in the 16th. In 1904, only Ostrowski held a seat. In addition, August Cyrowski became the first Pole to hold a State Senate Seat. He was elected from the third Senatorial District which covered the Polish Wards of the East Side. Other Poles were elected constables, Members of the Board of Estimates etc. For a complete listing of those elected or holding an appointive position before 1914, see S. M. Remigia, p. 60-61. Konkel lost his seat from the west side Polish ward in the 1910 election thus reducing the Polish total to two seats on the Council. Dziennik Polski, November 10, 1910.

20. Dziennik Polski, November 1, 1910, November 4, 1910. The paper also noted other incumbents who treated Poles with respect.

21. Dziennik Polski November 5, 1910.

22. Victor Greene, For God and Country.

23. Indicative of this new self consciousness was a resolution passed by the Detroit Common Council at the insistence of the Poles that given the fact that the city has paid tribute to those nations with whom the U.S. was allied in World War I by flying their flags from City Hall; and that at least thirty five percent of the Michigan soldiers in training at Camp Custer were of Polish parentage, the Commissioner of Public Works be authorized to purchase a Polish Flag and place it among the flags of other nations "in graceful tribute (sic)". This was more than 13 months before the War ended and at a time when the Polish State was still but an idea far from realization. The same resolution was urged on the county auditors in June, 1918. See Allan R. Treppa "Chronology, 1913-1920" The Citizen (Hamtramck, Mich.) October 20, 1977.

24. During the 1916 elections the Proclamation of a new Kingdom of Poland by the Central Powers on November 1, 1916, took most of the headline and front page space away from the national and local Elections. Dziennik Polski, November 1, 1916. In November, 1920 Polish Americans had their attention riveted on the struggle over Wilno and the Upper Silesian Plebiscite and only on Wednesday, Nov. 3, 1920 did the papers note, almost in passing, Harding's Victory. On the day before the announcement, election day, and the day after it, the front pages of the papers were full of news of the exciting events in Poland.

25. On the reform in Detroit, see William Lovett, Detroit Rules Itself (Boston; Gorham Press, 1930) passim. Samuel Hayes, notes that the reform of the Pittsburgh city government dramatically reduced the participation of persons of lower class origin and increased that of the well to do. Persons of lower or middle class origin in elective or appointive positions dropped in the wake of the reform from 76% to a small minority. Samuel P. Hayes, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era" Pacific Northwest Quarterly, 55 (1965), 157-169. The reform groups in Detroit were led by such luminaries as James Couzens, Henry Ford's righthand man, J.L. Hudson, Detroit's leading merchant and the patrician John C. Lodge. Their membership was concentrated in the Brotherhoods of the Downtown Protestant Churches, the exclusive clubs, and the Anti-Saloon League. As part of the package of reforms, Detroit and Michigan voted prohibition in 1916 to take effect in 1918. Although the city itself voted wet, it was overwhelmed by a strong outstate vote against liquor.

26. It is not known whether the powerful role the Germans played in the leadership of Detroit's Democratic party played any role in encouraging Polish defections after 1914. It is important to note that the Germans seemed to have begun defecting from the Party sooner and in

larger numbers than the Poles. See Dziennik Polski November 10, 1910, for comparison of votes for Republicans in the Polish and German precincts of the Fifth Ward in the 1910 election.

27. Dziennik Polski November 9, 1916.

28. Lovett, pp. 56-57.

29. Certain Detroit Democrats, especially those in Republican Wards favored some aspects of the Reform such as non-partisan elections. Lovett, pp. 57-58.

30. There is a persistent belief among long time residents of Hamtramck that one additional reason the area was so attractive to the Poles is that the Dodge Brothers promised to keep the area "open," especially for liquor after prohibition passed in 1916, and free of the puritanical restrictions that Ford imposed on Highland Park. There is also a conviction among many in Detroit's Polish community that just as the majority of west siders are Galicians so the bulk of those in Hamtramck are "Russians" i.e. Poles from the "Kingdom," the area officially under Russian control from 1815. There is no study which substantiates this belief. Beside the Poles among the newcomers, only the Blacks and Ukrainians were to play a role in Hamtramck politics. The Blacks constituted a small but sometimes important swing vote and Black ministers were always among the leaders of the regular campaigns against gambling and prostitution.

31. Wood, pp. 46-114.

32. In the 1957 primary election for example, twenty thousand votes separated the third place from the tenth place and two of the three Polish candidates would have finished in the top nine with an additional twenty thousand votes. The Detroit News, September 11, 1957. It should be pointed out here that as the west side settlement expanded further westward, Poles moved into the north end of Dearborn and then emerged back into Detroit, just as the east side expansion passed through Hamtramck and back into northeast Detroit. In Dearborn, however, the Poles never played a role of such significance as they did in Hamtramck nor were there as many of them.

33. On Machrowicz who rose to become a Congressman and later a federal judge see Marek Swiecicki and Roza Nowotarska, The Gentleman from Michigan, translated by Edward Cynarski. (London: Polish Cultural Foundation, 1974).

34. On the election results see Dziennik Polski November 1, 1924; November 3, 1926; November 7, 1928.

35. Donald S. Hecock, Detroit Voters and Recent Elections (Detroit: Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, 1938) p. 6. Hecock concludes on the basis of his study of four elections in the mid-1930's that "the sections of the city most consistently leading in the proportion of registered voters participating were the Polish precincts

just north of the Michigan Central Tracks in Wards 16, 18, and 20 and those bordering Hamtramck...." Edgar Eugene Robinson, They Voted for Roosevelt: The Presidential vote, 1932-1944 (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1947) marks the 1936 election as the election in which the Eastern and Southern European Ethnics began going to the polls in massive numbers. The turnout in cities with large immigrant populations in 1936 was double that of 1932. In those cities in which the workers were of Northern European origin, the increase in 1936 over 1932 was small.

36. Dziennik Polski, November 5, 1930.

37. Hecock, pp. 10-11. The only areas of Detroit which showed an almost equal proportion of straight ticket voters were the wealthiest residential areas on the West Side (Bretton Drive and Southfield Rd.) and those bordering the Grosse Pointes (Indian Village). The straight ticket votes were, of course, cast for the Republican Party. Black areas in the 1935 election cast the highest proportion of straight Republican tickets but in 1936 they began to shift over to the Democrats. The Blacks with their histoic ties to the Republican Party were among the last of Detroit's working class groups to come into the New Deal Coalition.

38. George Sadowski was elected in a special election in 1931 to the 1st District seat. His election was a harbinger of the coming Democratic sweep. Sadowski and Rudolf Tenerowicz held the 1st District seat in the 1930's and 1940's and were succeeded by Thaddeus Machrowicz who, in turn was followed after his appointment to the Federal Bench by Lucien Nedzi the present congressman. Dingell and Lesinski were both succeeded by their sons and namesakes in their respective districts. When the redistricting was done in 1964, the two were pitted against each other and Dingell, the more liberal of the two, with strong UAW support won the seat which he continues to hold. On the UAW effort for Dingell and against Lesinski see J. David Greenstone, Labor in American Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969) pp. 125-126, 196, 291-292.

39. Ibid. 115-116, 259.

40. Wood, 56. Caroline Bird, The Invisible Scar (New York: David Mckay, 1966) 33. The situation was so severe that candidates for the office of Constable in Hamtramck hoped to win the homeowner vote by promising to conduct evictions in a humane manner. In Detroit, allowances fell to 15 cents a day per person before they ran out completely.

41. Interview by Don Binkowski of Adam B. Kronk. April 2, 1974.

42. Stanislaw Nowak, "Wklad Polonii Detroickiej w organizowanie robotnikow fordowskich," Glos Ludowy (Detroit) October 8, 1977. S. Nowak was the major Polish organizer for the UAW in the Detroit area and a state senator. His memoirs which are currently serialized weekly in Glos Ludowy (and have been running for over two years) are a major source for the study of the unionization of Polish workers in Detroit. Aside from an occasional politician and the Dziennik Polski, the major opposition to the unions came from some of the pastors of Polish parishes. S. Nowak,

"Udzial Polakow w organizowaniu zwiazku zawodowego robotnikow automobilowych w USA" Problemy Polonii Zagranicnej Tom VI-VII (1971). 165-189; Peter Friedlander, The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936-1939 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975)4. The parish priests were probably more interested in maintaining their influence with their parishioners than they were in supporting the claims of the capitalists. Many workers were, however, at the same time parish leaders and union activists without apparent difficulty. Nowak reports that he often heard workers tell him that "in religious matters, I follow the pastor; in work matters, I follow Nowak." S. Nowak, "Proba zlamania strajku w zakladach McCormicka" Glos Ludowy. (Detroit) November 12, 1977.

43. S. Nowak "Polonia a ruch unijny" Glos Ludowy November 5, 1977. Nowak feels that the Polonia support was much stronger in Detroit than elsewhere. In comparing Detroit with Chicago he writes, that as a result of differing community attitudes, "In every case the work of organizing there (Chicago) was much more difficult than in Detroit." In Chicago, for example, Polish workers were unable to get on any of the Polish radio programs to plead their cause and spread the union message. Nowak, "Proba zlamania..." Friedlander notes that the importance of "community organizations cannot be overestimated, for the communal aspect of the organization of the Polish workers seems to be one of the most important characteristics of the UAW in Detroit." Friedlander, 4-5.

44. Nowak, "Udzial Polakow...". In fact, a similar case can be convincingly made for the organization of the CIO in general. Over 600,000 Poles joined the CIO and they were the largest minority in key industries such as steel, auto, agricultural machinery, coal mining, and meat packing. Without their support the unions in those areas would have been crippled or destroyed. On this see Boleslaw Gebbert,"Polacy w amerykanskich zwiazkach zawodych. Notatki i wspomnienia" Przeglad Polonijny Rok II, Zeszyt 1 (1976), 151-164. Boleslaw "Billy" Gebbert was an organizer for the steel workers union. According to Friedlander, in the case he studied, the leadership of the movement seems to have come primarily from second generation Poles. Friedlander, 5. The first president of the UAW paid tribute to the important role the Poles played in organizing the UAW in a letter to Glos Ludowy. He wrote" "Polish workers in the battle with General Motors showed that they were the most progressive and militant workers in the country." quoted in Nowak "Udzial Polakow..." 188. The sitdowns of the women cigar workers, about 85% of whom were Polish and their heroic resistance for over three months in early 1937 appears to have sparked a wave of strikes and sitdowns among the thousands of women in Detroit who worked as store clerks, office workers and in other service jobs.

45. Friedlander, 100.

46. ibid, 127. He notes that "the broader involvement of the mass of Polish workers caused the union administration and the Democratic party machine of Hamtramck to become intertwined in the formation of a hybred political machine, complete with patronage." See the letter of Dodge Local #3 President John Zaremba to the Mayor of Hamtramck supporting a candidate for one of the "Ukrainian" positions on the Fire Department at the request of some members of the Heat Treat Core Assembly and Foundry Unit. ibid, 145.

47. Wood 63-64, Newsweek, March 6, 1937, p. 9.

48. Newsweek ibid.

49. Wood, 68, 77, Interview with Stanley Nowak June 16, 1977.

50. Friedlander, 21, 100, suggests about 10 percent had some socialist sympathies as a result of an urban industrial experience in Europe prior to emigration.

51. Nowak, "Udzial Polakow...", 165.

52. Wood, 62. The People's League called for increased relief, no police interference in labor disputes, end of racial, religious and ethnic discrimination, prohibition on the use of labor spies, armed guards and black lists, end of gambling and vice, repeal of the sales tax, construction of recreation centers, playground, libraries, hospitals, clinics and public toilets, preference to local contractors for city work, repeal of state sales tax, union wages on public projects and a free city employment bureau. In the 1936 election, Mrs. Zuk was the only League member elected but the mayor and two other councilmen were also pro-labor.

53. Wood, 81, 94. A study completed in the mid 1960's regards Poles as the most "militant" and class conscious of Detroit's white workers. See John C. Leggett, Class, Race and Labor: Working Class Consciousness in Detroit (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 114-115.

54. The author who was raised in Hamtramck can attest to the deep emotional tie to unions and to the Democratic Party by personal experience. A sophomore in high school, I returned home from school the day after Eisenhower defeated Stevenson in 1952 to find my father hunched in a chair dejectedly and my mother sitting on the edge of a chair nearby weeping softly. When I asked the problem, my mother replied "They won, now there's going to be another depression." My father, a rubber worker who was a veteran of the organizing period in the 1930's, said "With the Republicans in, the bosses are really going to get down on us."

55. On the failure of unions in getting their candidates elected, see Greenstone, 110-140.

56. Poles in Detroit, as elsewhere, took up again their purchases of homes after the Depression on a massive scale. The insecurity of the Depression years when added to the traditional attractions of home owning for the Poles may have helped to accelerate the process. Thus Poles as a group had a disproportionate tendency to own real estate. Edward O. Laumann, Bonds of Pluralism: The Form and Substance of Urban Social Networks (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 166.

57. An interesting instance of this political schizophrenia came in 1964 when the 15th and 16th Congressional Districts were merged and John Lesinski, Jr. was forced to run against John Dingell, Jr. Lesinski was one of the few northern Democrats to vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which it might be thought would enhance his appeal in an ethnically homogeneous

area inhabited by owners of small homesteads and threatened by Black migration from the central city. Yet the election went to Dingell. Greenstone, 126. The Polish vote for the liberal George McGovern (59-60%) which was higher than the vote he got from college professors (57%) also testifies to the continued willingness to vote for left-liberal state and national candidates.

58. Leo J. Nowicki, an immigrant, was a graduate of the University of Michigan and the first registered Polish-American Civil Engineer in Michigan. He was elected Wayne County Drain Commissioner during the Democratic tide of 1932. In 1936, he was elected Lieutenant Governor in a very tight race to become the first Pole to attain so high a state position (a second Pole, T. John Lesinski has held that post for one term since). He lost narrowly in 1938 and missed a chance to become the Governor as the newly elected Governor, Fitzgerald died in office shortly after inaugaration. He served as State Budget Director under Governor Van Wagoner until he resigned to take a Commission in the Transportation Corps in 1942. After World War II, he returned to work on the Staff of the Detroit City Planning Commission. When he ran for political office again in 1948, he no longer had close ties with the Democratic Party. He received strong support from the business community and Detroit newspapers in his successful campaign for Common Council.

59. Gribbs sometimes received criticism from some segments of the Detroit community because he did not "do enough" for Polonia or did not appoint enough Poles to patronage posts. However, the mayor of Detroit because of the 1918 reforms has less than 50 patronage appointments and most of those require specialized knowledge and experience. Gribbs feels that if he had chosen to run again, his chances of being reelected were excellent. However, he chose not to run because the position took too much time and energy away from family life and because he wished to return to his first interest, the law. Interview with Roman Gribbs June 17, 1977. On Gribbs' political style and his reputation as a "private" man and low key administrator who operated in an "incredibly businesslike manner." See L. Yourist "Gribbs remains a Puzzle" Detroit News, December 31, 1973, 9-A.

60. Most commentators have seen only the first part of the problem and not the second. For example, Robert Shogan and Tom Craig, The Detroit Race Riot (Philadelphia: Chelton, 1964), 19 write "The Poles, looked down upon by the more established nationality groups in Detroit, took out their resentment against Negroes, whom they regarded as a threat to the economic gains they were struggling to make." For my comments on these two factors and their relationship see: Radzialowski, 125-150.

61. Kornhauser, 13, notes that 6 percent of his Detroit sample felt the city would be improved by the removal of "foreigners," 13 percent would deport Blacks and 21 percent considered the "Hillbillies" as the most undesirable.

62. S. Nowak "Polacy i murzyny" Glos Ludowy, November 19, 1977. Also interview with S. Nowak June 16, 1977. See also Lawrence Carter "Poles, Blacks Won Harmony in '32 Election." Detroit News, May 4, 1975. Carter is a prominent Black leader and columnist in Detroit. His column is devoted to his memory of Polish-Black cooperation in the 1930's.

63. Radzialowski, 134-137. Deskins, 107.

64. This was the Sojourner Truth Project on Detroit's east side. See Deskins, 140-141, Shogan and Craig, 29-31. The Federal office of Facts and Figures (OFF) after investigation cited a shortage of housing and hostility between Negroes and Poles as a major source of racial tension.

65. Although there is no evidence that Poles played, in any sense, a central role in the Detroit Race Riot, General Gunther who commanded Federal troops in Detroit noted the bitter feeling between "Negroes and the young hoodlum element of the Polish population" and the fact that this "element" harassed and even threatened to attack Federal troops for intervening in the riots. ibid, 88. In some districts, police put the blame on gangs of "Italians and Syrians" and still others on "Southerners." Alfred McClung Lee and Norman Humphrey Race Riot (New York, Octagon Books, Inc., 1968) 81. It would appear that the rioters, Black and white, represented many segments of the Detroit community.

66. C. O. Smith and S. B. Sarasohn, "Hate Propaganda in Detroit" Public Opinion Quarterly, X (1946-47), 24-52.

67. The upper and middle classes began to flee Detroit to escape the immigrant working class masses early in the 20th century to the North Woodward area and east to the Grosse Pointes. As a result, Detroit by 1930 was one of the most proletarian of cities. Interestingly enough this also seems to have been the case for immigrant groups. Detroit foreign-born groups in 1930 had smaller elites than in other large cities. On this see R.D. McKenzie, The Metropolitan Community (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967) 122-123, 182-184. Class homogeneity and ethnic discrimination ironically have functioned to hold the Polish community together. See Leggett, 20. Leggett, a sociologist, a decade ago was still describing the Poles in Detroit as a "semimarginal" working class group with rates of unemployment higher than other white groups. ibid, 107, 219. Detroit Poles rank in the lowest one fifth on the Duncan Index of Socioeconomic status based on occupation. Only "Anglo Baptists" and Not Affiliated Protestants ranked lower among the 15 white ethno-religious status groups. The lower two groups presumably contain a large number of southern white migrants, the d spised "Hillbillies." On these see Laumann, 191-195.

68. William Bunge, Fitzgerald: The Making of a Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman Publishing, 1971) 38, writing about the development of a neighborhood community on Detroit's west side at the beginning of the 20th century notes: "While the prejudice against Poles, gypsies, Negroes and Indians was intense, other prejudices tended to melt." Leggett, 109-115 found in his Detroit study in 1966 that the majority of the

Black, high-status white (German and Anglo-Saxon) and Polish respondents agreed that next to Blacks, Poles were the least likely group in Detroit to be invited to join a Grosse Pointe Club (Blacks 59%, high-status whites 60%, Poles 51%). Blacks had a view of the Poles as having a lower status in the broader society than the Poles accorded themselves.

69. Holli, p. 66-68. The Michigan Catholic, of course, had no reason to love a people who just a few years earlier had forced Bishop Foley from his home in a church dispute. Polish workers also played a central role in the riots against the Detroit City Railway Company in 1891. These views of the Poles were probably reinforced by the prominent role played by Poles in sitdowns, picketing and street confrontations with the police during the tumultous thirties.

70. George Catlin, The Story of Detroit (Detroit: The Detroit News, 1923). Catlin was the librarian of the Detroit News. The situation had not improved significantly fifty years later. Bunge in a 1970 survey of textbooks notes "The heavy Polish contribution to the building of Detroit is ignored..." Bunge, 191.

71. The paucity of Poles in Detroit executive suites is notorious. The unions are not much better. In spite of the heavily Polish membership of the UAW and the key role played by Poles in creating the union, there is only one Polish American UAW International Representative at Solidarity House, the Union's international headquarters in Detroit. Until after World War II, Polish women had to change their names to German or English names in order to get positions as sales clerks in fashionable Detroit department stores such as J.L. Hudson. Women who did not hide their Polish identity could aspire only to lesser posts such as cleaning women. Only one Pole ever became a high school principal in the entire history of the Detroit school system. On this and other discrimination in Detroit see Radzialowski, 140-141.

72. William Buffalino, "From Screening to Rule 9--to Fair Housing Laws" Ethnic Communities of Greater Detroit (Detroit: Wayne State, 1970) 200-207.

73. Hamtramck Citizen, November 13, 1969.

74. According to the 1970 census, foreign-born Poles and their children make up 14.2 percent of the population of the Detroit Metropolitan area. The addition of third and fourth generations would probably double the figure.

75. J. David Greenstone sums up very well the nature of the reformed Detroit system and its social and political implications for working class ethnic groups such as the Poles:

> the imposition in Detroit of a non-partisan political system with at-large city council elections... by Detroit's Protestant elite early in the century made it difficult for working class and ethnic minority groups to attain symbolic recognition through winning elective office or later, favorable policies on public housing and the like...In these respects Detroit local

politics notably diverged from the partisan ethnically oriented systems of all the other very large eastern and midwestern cities with large European and Black immigrant populations. By comparison with other American cities, Detroit presented an extreme case of both the economic grievances that Marx emphasized and the sense of exclusion from the political community that concerned Bendx.

Greenstone, 137-138.