

ROMAN NIR

## ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF THE POLISH EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE

### INTRODUCTION

The topic of material assistance in maintaining the Embassy of the Republic of Poland at the Holy See has been the subject of many studies by historians in various time periods.<sup>1</sup> However, no attempt was made to organize the Economic Council by priests of Polish origin in America in years 1951-1956. Because the documentation was secret and located in the archives: Bishop Stefan Woźnicki, Detroit-Saginaw; Msgr. Wojciech A. Rojek, New York, and Msgr. Valerian Meysztowicz in Rome.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. KOPIEC, *Ksiądz Walerian Meysztowicz (1893-1982) – Radca Kanoniczny Ambasady RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej*, [in:] *Z dziejów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej i konsularnej*, eds. J. Faryś, M. Szczurbiński, Gorzów Wlkp.: Sonar 2005, pp. 359-362; R. NIR, *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przy Stolicy Apostolskiej*, "Dziennik Polski" 9-10 XI 1984, no. 45, p. 11; R. NIR, *Rada Ekonomiczna Ambasady RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej*, "Dziennik Polski" 16-17 XI 1984, no. 46, p. 11; R. NIR, *Dokumentacja Rady Ekonomicznej RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej*, "Dziennik Polski" 23-24 XI 1984, no. 47, p. 11; P. SAMEREK, *Zarys historii placówki (1919-1976)*, [in:] *Ambasada RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej w latach 1919-1976. Materiały do studiów nad historią*, ed. D. Wronikowska, Rzym 2016; K. TARKA, *Rząd Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na uchodźstwie i Watykan po II wojnie światowej (1945-1972)*, [in:] *Sztuka roztropności. Dyplomacja Stolicy Apostolskiej wobec Rzeczypospolitej, Europy i świata w epoce nowożytnej i XX wieku. Zbiór studiów*, eds. K. Ożóg, R. Skowron, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności 2020, pp. 297-306; T. WYRWA, *Likwidacja ambasady RP przy Watykanie w latach 1958 i 1972*, „Zeszyty Historyczne” 1990, no. 93, pp. 49-60; J. ŻARYN, *Stolica Apostolska wobec Polski i Polaków w latach 1944-1958 w świetle materiałów ambasady RP przy Watykanie*, Warszawa: Neriton 1998; J. ŻARYN, *Kościół w Polsce w latach przełomu (1953-1958). Relacje ambasadora RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej*, Warszawa: Neriton 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Scan of the documentation are in the author possession. Publication of all documentation is being prepared.

THE SITUATION OF THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
AT THE VATICAN IS AT RISK DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS

Since 1952, the situation of the Embassy has deteriorated significantly. Lack of financial resources to maintain it may lead to the need to suspend its operations. The existence of the Embassy is an expression of the Holy Father's will not to recognize the partition of Poland. The Embassy is an expression of its unity with the Catholic Church-it is a valuable tool enabling official access to higher offices of the Holy See and to representative office of other nations. From the Church's point of view, the Embassy is a tool for receiving information about Poland, in parallel with information coming from the Episcopate and religious orders.

The need for a representative Office at the Holy See is known to everyone, and even countries with a strong Protestant background maintain these representations. Lithuanians living in America find means to maintain their mission to the Vatican. The liquidation of the Polish Embassy would create a painful impression among Catholics. In Poland, it would be, figuratively speaking, extinguishing yet another light that has been burning so far.

The cost of maintaining the Embassy is \$ 12.000 per year. This is a negligible sum compared to the importance, both for the Polish Nation and for the Catholic Church. This was reported by the Canonical Counselor of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Rev. Msgr Valerian Meysztowicz in his letter to the Polish American community of October 23, 1951.<sup>3</sup>

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND TO THE HOLY SEE –  
ITS IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY OF EXISTENCE

The existence of the Embassy is very important for the following reasons:

1. It is an expression of the Catholic position of the Polish Nation.
2. It gives the Holy See the opportunity to document to the World that the Papacy does not agree with the invasion and annexation of Polish lands and opposes the oppression of the Polish Nation.
3. Due to the existence of the Polish Embassy at the Vatican Catholic countries such as Spain and Ireland took a similar attitude to the Apostolic

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<sup>3</sup> Archives of Rev. Msgr Wojciech Artur Rojek in New York, letter to the Polish American Community of October 23, 1951, sign. 223, p. 1 [hereafter: AWR]; R. NIR, *Rojek Wojciech Artur (1906-1988)*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 17, Lublin: TN KUL 2012, pp. 228.

Table and continua to recognize Polish Diplomatic Missions, opposing the communist regime in Warsaw.

4. Though the Embassy at the Legations in Spain, Ireland and Lebanon, the Polish authorities in exile have the possibility of indirect, official access to the governments of all countries having their representations about the actual state of Poland.

5. The Polish Embassy to the Holy See is one of the important information channels that the Vatican has from Poland. It informs about the State of the Church in Poland and the martyrdom of the clergy and the Polish Nation. Its importance is even greater because there are no normal visits of Bishops from Poland.

6. Through its information, the Embassy may influence certain matters to be resolved by the Holy See in accordance with the interests of Polish Nation.

7. The Polish Embassy to the Vatican, as an advocate of the interests of the Catholic Polish Nation, not only outside the Iron Curtain, but also a Nation scattered around the worlds, is needed by all Poles including the Polish American community, to whom it can be very helpful in many matters.

8. The Polish Embassy at the Vatican is an important factor in the fight against godless communism. 9. Embassy of the Republic of Poland at the Holy See does not engage in internal political disputes and serves the interests of the Catholic Polish Nation.

If the Embassy ceased to exist, no one and nothing would replace this expression of the unity of the Polish Nation with the Holy See. The Holy See would lose the ability to document its protest against the invaders Spain and Ireland would lose one of the reasons for recognizing the Polish Legations. The possibility of official communications between the Polish Nation and the governments of other nations would cease. The Holy See would lose one of its last remaining sources of information about Poland. Poland would lose its official way to influence the Vatican.<sup>4</sup>

#### BISHOP STEFAN WOŹNICKI ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLISH PRIESTS ORGANIZING HELP FOR THE EMBASSY AT THE HOLY SEE

Bishop Woźnicki stated in various conversations that he was fully in favor of maintaining the Polish Embassy at the Vatican. In this regard, he

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<sup>4</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Poland to the Holy See-its importance and necessity of existence. AWR, sign. 228, pp. 2; V. MEYSZTOWICZ, *Watykan a Polska*, "Życie" 19 II 1956, no. 8, p. 1.

wrote to the main organizer of the action Rev. Msgr. Francis Kowalczyk stating that there is no doubt that this Embassy should be maintained for the benefit of Poland and Poles scattered all over the world.

This Embassy can be and should be maintained regardless of the composition of the Polish Government abroad and regardless of various political opinions abroad. This institution should somehow stand above all these political purely Polish and Catholic basis.

The obligation to maintain this much-needed facility in the current conditions falls, by its very nature, on the clergy of Polish origin in America, only because of their Polishness but also because of the belief that the Holy See can play an important role in world affairs.

Regarding the organization of the Economic Committee, the Bishop Woźnicki advises not to convene any meetings for the time being, but to organize a temporary Committee by means of correspondence with priests who would like to serve this cause. Urgent need demands haste. However, in a year or even two, convene a meeting on this matter. Involve bishops of Polish origin as advisors. This was the position of Bishop Woźnicki on March 5, 1955.<sup>5</sup>

#### I. MONSIGNOR MEYSZTOWICZ AND FATHER ROJEK

The idea of organizing an Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See has originated in Monsignor Meysztowicz's mind. His plans in the United States are carried out by Father Rojek.<sup>6</sup>

A. The Right Reverend Msgr. Valerian Meysztowicz (284 via degli Scipioni Rome), canonical advisor of the Polish Embassy at the Vatican (and postulator of the cause of Archbishop Cieplak) is responsible for the proposal of an Economical Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Correspondence bp S. Woźnicki, Saginaw, MI, of the Rev. Msgr Franciszek Kowalczyk, Passaic, NJ, of March 5, 1955, sign. 888, pp. 2 [hereafter: ADSW]; *Nowy pralat ks. Franciszek p. Kowalczyk, działacz, organizator, patriota, mówca, wychowawca, zjednoczeniec*, "Naród Polski" 9 XII 1954, no. 23, pp. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> AWR, sign. 228/1955, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> WILEMSKA E., *Meysztowicz Walerian (1893-1982)*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 12, Lublin: TN KUL 2008, pp. 674-675.

1. When he came to the United States in 1951, he requested the Catholic League to grant an annual subsidy to the Polish Embassy. The answer was negative for the following reasons:

- a. The activities of the Catholic League are restricted to religious assistance. The wishes of our contributors must be respected. Allocations must be made for the purpose designated. This is a matter of conscience.
- b. Since its inception, the Catholic League has been a non-political, religious relief agency, operating under Permit No. 408 the President's War Relief Control (Permit of the Bishops' War Emergency and Relief Committee).
- c. A situation might arise, in which the Catholic League would have to register in Washington as an agency of a foreign power.
- d. Any association with the Polish Embassy would have harmful effects on our collections (which are decreasing each year), would endanger our relief program in Poland and be detrimental to the Polish Hierarchy. No matter what subterfuge might be used, the fact of the League's association with Embassy would be discovered sooner or later.
- e. Any financial assistance of the Catholic League to the Polish Embassy would mean that the Catholic Church in the United States supports the Polish London government.
- f. There exists an organization, known as the "Polish National Fund" which collects money for the support of the London government, its embassies and diplomatic posts, cultural and relief agencies.<sup>8</sup>

2. However, Monsignor Meysztowicz has been asked to present a written petition to the Board of Directors of the Catholic League. On June 16, 1951, he presented the following monthly budget for three organizations, which, as he stated, are a part of the Polish Embassy:

|                                | <u>Salary</u> | <u>Rent</u> | <u>Miscellaneous</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------|
| a. Polish Social Welfare       | \$ 50.00      | \$ 25.00    | \$ 75.00             | \$ 150.00    |
| b. Committee                   |               | 25.00       | 125.00               | 150.00       |
| c. Polish Historical Institute | 100.00        | 25.00       | 325.00               | <u>450</u>   |
| PAT (Catholic Press Agency)    |               |             |                      | \$ 750.00    |

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland, letter Catholic League to the Msgr V. Meysztowicz, 1951, p. 1 [hereafter: ALCP].

This request for an annual grant of \$ 9,000.00 illustrates the methods used to get as much money as possible under the pretext of supporting the Polish Embassy. Interesting, indeed, are the amounts for miscellaneous items.<sup>9</sup>

3. Before his departure for Rome, he wrote another letter on October 23, 1951, for presentation to the Catholic League Convention in Chicago and requested an annual grant of \$ 12,000.00 (an increase of \$ 3,000.00). The matter was considered too delicate to be brought to the floor of the convention. The request was rejected for reasons already mentioned.<sup>10</sup>

4. In 1954, Monsignor Meysztowicz arrived again in the United States, presumably as a postulator of the cause of Archbishop Cieplak, but in reality to push forward his project of organizing an Economic Council.<sup>11</sup>

B. The Reverend W.A. Rojek (6 Wall Street, Passaic, New Jersey) is a Polish DP priest. He was brought to this country by Bishop McGuinness. His stay in Oklahoma and Tulsa was very brief. He spent about one or two years in the Diocese of Buffalo. He was befriended by Monsignor Kowalczyk, upon whom he exerts tremendous influence. Father Rojek works in close cooperation with Monsignor Meysztowicz and is authorized by the Polish Embassy to act as its representative in the organization of an Economic Council in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

## II. APOSTOLIC DELEGATE AND BISHOP WOŹNICKI

### 1. Apostolic Delegate:

a. In a letter to Monsignor Kowalczyk (dated February 9, 1955): "The enclosed memorandum prepared at the Polish Embassy to the Holy See in Rome was forwarded to the Apostolic Delegation by the Secretariat of State of His Holiness with the request that the proposal of an Economic Council to maintain the Embassy be considered..."

b. In a letter to Monsignor Kowalczyk (dated February 24, 1955): "... In view of the position of the Embassy and the nature of the appeal, I presume that the entire matter will be treated among friends and in a rather quiet and confidential manner... I would suggest that you keep in touch

<sup>9</sup> ALCP, Board of Directors of the Catholic League, June 16, 1951, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> The Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland, The Fourth Biennial Convention under the patronage of His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Strich, Archbishop of Chicago, October 22-24, 1951, Chicago, pp. 24.

<sup>11</sup> AVMR, sign. 234/1954.

<sup>12</sup> AWR, letter sign. 123/1954.

with Bishop Woźnicki who is also informed about the question and who has expressed his interest...”<sup>13</sup>

2. Bishop Woźnicki:

In a letter (dated March 5, 1955) to Monsignor Kowalczyk Bishop Woźnicki shows his interest in maintaining the Polish Embassy; states that it must be supported by priests of Polish origin in the United States; suggests the organization of a temporary committee of clergy; urges speed in its formation; insists that Bishops of Polish origin act only in an advisory capacity; recommends the opening of an office which would issue appeals to priests and laity; foresees the possibility of a convention within a year or two; encloses a donation of \$ 100.00 as evidence of his interest.<sup>14</sup>

### III. ARCHBISHOP GAWLINA AND THE POLISH EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE

In a letter to the Catholic League (Liga Katolicka),(Prot. No. 1392-55, dated August 8, 1955) Archbishop Gawlina makes this important and timely recommendation:

“It has been brought to my attention that the Polish Embassy to the Holy See has sent to the United States a memorandum of its accomplishments. Would it be possible to examine its contents? I know from experience that the Polish Embassy takes credit very often for accomplishments which were performed by others...”<sup>15</sup>

Note: I have not seen this memorandum.

### IV. APPOINTMENTS BY THE POLISH EMBASSY

At the suggestion of Monsignor Meysztowicz, the Polish Embassy has appointed there priests in the United States to organize the proposed Eco-

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<sup>13</sup> Most Reverend Stephen Woźnicki, Correspondence-Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See (1954-1956), AADSW, sign. 887, pp. 10.

<sup>14</sup> AADSW, sign. 888, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Historical Sketch of the Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland, by Sister Mary Feliciana, CSSF (1943-1963), manuscript, p. 21; Memorandum Bishop Woźnicki and Bishop Gawlina and Bishops' Committee for Poland. ADSW, sign. 889, pp. 2.

conomic Council. They, in turn, met on March 24, 1955, at Passaic, New Jersey, and elected themselves “pro tempore” officers of the Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See. They are as follows:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Kowalczyk, Passaic, N.J. President  
 Rt. Rev. Msgr. Felix Burant, New York, N.Y. Treasurer  
 Rev. Wojciech.A. Rojek, Passaic, N.J. Secretary<sup>16</sup>

#### V. FORMAL ORGANIZATION

Another meeting was held on May 11, 1955, in Plaza Hotel, New York City. A formal motion was made by Monsignor Borkowicz (Detroit) and seconded by Monsignor Sikora (Boston) to call into existence “The Economic Council of Polish Embassy to the Holy See”.

The minutes of this meeting show the following:

1. Priests interested in the Economic Council:
  - a. Present at the meeting:
    - Rt. Rev. Msgr. Vincent Borkowicz, Detroit, Michigan
    - Rt. Rev. Msgr. Felix Burant, New York, New York
    - Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Kowalczyk, Passaic, New Jersey
    - Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus Sikora, Salem, Massachusetts
    - Rev. John Felczak, Pine Island, New York
    - Rev. Alexander Fronczak, Wallington, New Jersey
    - Rev. Anthony Kurzynowski, Passaic, New Jersey
    - Rev. Stanislaus Zawitowski, Paterson, New Jersey
    - Rev. Wojciech A. Rojek, Passaic, New Jersey
    - Rev. Arthur Slomka, Ramsey, New Jersey
    - Rev. A. Baj, Salem, Massachusetts
  - b. Not present at the meeting:
    - Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Adamski, Buffalo, New York

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<sup>16</sup> Msgr Francis Kowalczyk PA, Passaic, NJ. (1896-1968), President Economic Council, Protanotary Apostolic, Vice Postulator for the beatification of Archbishop John Felix Cieplak of Poland, for his work the Polish Government-in-exile in London. Active in Organizations. AVMR, sign. 100/1955; AWR, sign. 134/1955. *Naczelnny kapelan Stowarzyszenia Weteranów Armii Polskiej ks. Infulat p. Kowalczyk nie żyje*, “Weteran” 47(1968), no. 561, pp. 2; Msgr Felix Burant New York (1893-1964), Vice-President –Treasurer Economic Council; President of the Polish Immigration Committee, AWR, sign. 125/1955, p. 1.



Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael Biniszkiewicz, Buffalo, New York  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Theodore Czastka, Chicago, Illinois  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. A.A. Jarka, Brooklyn, New York  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Klekotka, Chester, Pennsylvania  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Paul Knappek, Newark, New Jersey  
Very Rev. Msgr. A.A. Lekarczyk, Webster, Massachusetts  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus A. Losieniecki, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania  
Very Rev. Msgr. John L. Mieczkowski, Erie, Pennsylvania  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Radziszewski, Buffalo, New York  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Vincent Raith, Yonkers, New York  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. S. Sierakowski, Lackawanna, New York  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus Sliwinski, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus Stanczak, Erie, Pennsylvania  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward Szumal, Orchard Lake, Michigan  
Rev. Peter Walkowiak, Hamtramck, Michigan  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Wieloch, Indian Orchard, Massachusetts

2. Election of Officers, Board of Directors, Advisory Board

a. Officers:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francisk Kowalczyk, President  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Vincent Borkowicz, Vice-President  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Felix Burant, Vice-President  
Rev. Alexander Fronczak, Treasurer  
Rev. Wojciech A. Rojek, Executive Secretary  
Rev. John Felczak, Recording Secretary

b. Board of Directors:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael Biniszkiewicz  
Very Rev. Msgr. Andrew A. Lekarczyk  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Radziszewski  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus Sliwinski  
Rev. Peter Walkowiak

c. Advisory Board:

Officers and members of the Board Directors (12 under a and b)  
This number will be increased

3. Headquarters of the Economic Council

President's residence: 6 Wall Street, Passaic, New Jersey

4. Financial Status:

|    |   |                 |
|----|---|-----------------|
| a. | <u>Contributions:</u>                   |                 |
|    | N.W.                                    | \$ 500.00       |
|    | Most Reverend Stephen Woźnicki          | 100.00          |
|    | Most Reverend James McNulty             | 100.00          |
|    | Most Reverend John Krol                 | 100.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Theodore Czastka         | 100.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Vincent Borkowicz        | 100.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Andrew Stefan            | 100.00          |
|    | Priests of the Archdiocese of Newark    | 100.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ladislaus Sliwinski      | 100.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Radziszewski     | 300.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Adamski            | 200.00          |
|    | Rt. Rev. Msgr. Paul Knappek             |                 |
|    | Total                                   | <u>100.00</u>   |
|    |   | \$ 1,900.00     |
| b. | <u>Disbursements</u>                    |                 |
|    | Balance                                 |                 |
|    |   | <u>25.76</u>    |
| c. | <u>Allocation to the Polish Embassy</u> | \$ 1,874.24     |
|    | Balance                                 |                 |
|    |   | <u>1,000.00</u> |
|    |   | \$ 874.24       |

Note: Additional contributions were received between May 11 and August 10, 1955.<sup>17</sup>

## VI. POLISH NATIONAL FUND AND THE POLISH EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE

1. The Polish National Fund (Skarb Narodowy), (42 Emperor's Gate, London S.W. 7) is an organization of Poles in about 35 counties. It collects donations for the support of the Polish London government, its embassies, diplomatic posts, cultural and relief agencies. The enclosed photo static copies represent a report of its receipts and disbursements to June 30, 1954.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the organisational meeting of the Economic Council of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland to the Holy See held on 11 May 1955 at the Plaza Hotel, New York City, pp. 6; AWR, sign. 220/1955.

2. According to this report, the Polish National Fund makes annual allocations for the support of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See, Polish legations in Madrid and Beirut and the Polish Consulate General in Ireland.
3. Since the report gives aggregate sums granted annually to the Polish Embassy and the three diplomatic posts, the Polish National Fund in London has been requested to send a report on annual grants already made and to be made in the future to the Polish Embassy to the Holy See.<sup>18</sup>

#### VII. REPORT OF GENERAL ANDERS

In a letter (photo static copy enclosed), dated August 29, 1955, General W. Anders, President of the Polish National Fund, with headquarters located at 42 Emperor's Gate, London, issues the following statements:

1. The Polish National Fund supports all diplomatic posts of the Polish London Government, including the Polish Embassy to the Holy See.
2. The Polish National Fund makes a monthly allocation of \$ 556.00 for the support of the Polish Embassy to the Vatican.
3. Last year, due to a split in the organization, the Polish National Fund was unable to meet all its obligations to the diplomatic posts, including the Polish Embassy to the Vatican.
4. Now the crisis is over and the Polish National Fund has resumed its regular payments to the various diplomatic posts, including the Polish Embassy to the Holy See.
5. In the last three months, Ambassador Papée has received regularly his monthly allocations.
6. The Polish National Fund will meet its arrearage in the amount of \$ 5,500.00 to the Polish Embassy.
7. A detailed report of payments to the Polish Embassy is now in preparation and will be mailed within a days.<sup>19</sup>

#### VIII. ANNUAL GRANTS BY THE POLISH NATIONAL FUND

In a letter (photo static copy enclosed), dated August 30, 1955, the Polish National Fund, at the request of General W. Anders, states that between January 1,

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<sup>18</sup> AWR, sign. 188/1954, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> AWR, sign. 190/August 29, 1955, pp. 3.

1951, and August 31, 1955, it has allocated the following annual grants to the Polish Embassy to the Holy See:

| <u>Years</u> | <u>Amounts</u> |                             |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1951         | \$ 593.00      |                             |
| 1952         | 8,775.00       |                             |
| 1953         | 6,590.00       |                             |
| 1954         | 4,286.00       | (See No. VII)               |
| 1955         | 1,500.00       | (See No. VII) <sup>20</sup> |

#### IX. POLISH AMBASSADOR APPEALS TO THE HOLY SEE

Rome, le 20 septembre 1955

No. 423/52

Tajne [Confidential]

Excellence Reverendissime,

Mons. Meysztowicz a eu l'occasion de vous parler, le 3 de ce mois, de l'interet manifeste par L.L. Eminences les Cardinaux de Detroit et de Chicago a la formation du Conseil pour les affaires economiques de cette Ambassade ainsi que de Leur intention de contribuer aux – memes a certaines depenses, en se servant, le cas echeant, de l'intermediaire des organisatione qui sont deja leur dispositions.

Nous sommes infiniment reconnaissante a Leurs Eminences Reverendissimes de la part qu'ils daignent prendre a nos preoccupations et nos soucis.

Il me semble cependant qu'il ne serait pas convenant que nos modestes subsides gravent sur les fonds receillis par l'Eglise et dont Elle a tellement besoin ; il nous serait d'autre part penible de toucher des sommes qui ne providraient pas d'une source polonaise. C'est a cause de cela que la formation d'un Conseil economique, compose d'eclesiastiques et laics de provenence polonaise et rassemblant des contributions d'un caractere civique, nous parait tellement importante a la bonne reussite de nos projets.

Je suis certain, que Son Excellence Monseigneur le Delege Apostolique, qui avec tant de bonte et de comprehension a bien voulu s'interesser active-

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<sup>20</sup> AWR, sign. 191/August 30, 1955, p. 1.

ment a cette initiative et auquel nous devons déjà tant de reconnaissance, saura aussi apprécier ces considérations à leur juste valeur.

En les recommandant à Votre bienveillance, je vous prie, Vxcellence Reverendissime, de croire à l'assurance de ma haute et respectueuse considération.

(-) K. PAPÉE

Son Excellence Reverendissime  
Monseigneur Angelo Dell'Acqua  
Substitut de la Secrétaire d'Etat  
De Sa Sainteté,  
Vatican<sup>21</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF CONTENTS AND COMMENTS

1. The letter expresses gratitude to Archbishop Gawlina for defending in this country the proposal of an Economic Council and asks him to continue in his efforts to save the organization.
2. The Ambassador attacks the report of General Anders which he sent to Chicago.

Comments: The attack seems to be unjustifiable. Either Mr. Papée does not know the contents of this report or he is dishonest. He does not deny that the Polish Embassy has been subsidized since 1951 by the Polish National Fund. Contrary to the Ambassador's charge, General Anders has stated explicitly that the Polish National Fund owes the Embassy \$ 5,500.00 (See No. VII: 3) and will meet this payment as soon as possible (See No. VII: 6). General Anders maintains that in July, 1955, the Polish National Fund has resumed its monthly payments to the Embassy, but Mr. Papée claims that in reality this is a payment for November, 1954. (See No. VII: 4 and 5).

3. The Polish Embassy to the Holy See cannot operate on a monthly subsidy of \$ 500.00 granted by the Polish National Fund.

Comment: Contra factum non valet illatio. As a matter of fact, the Embassy did, or at least was supposed to operate on this monthly budget since 1951. Experts on this question seem to indicate that a monthly subsidy of \$ 300.00 should be sufficient for its continued existence.

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<sup>21</sup> AADSW, sign. 890, pp. 2; AVMR, sign. 101/September 20, 1955, pp. 2.

4. Mr. Papée states that the Economic Council would have a twofold purpose:
  - a. To see to it that the Polish National Fund carries out its monthly obligations.
  - b. To pay the difference (each month) between the amount granted by the Polish National Fund and the sum of \$ 1,000.00 needed for the maintenance of the Polish Embassy.

Comments: This proposal, although clever, is impractical and dangerous. See comments above under number 3. How about economy?

5. Mr. Papée states that he has been informed that the American Cardinals (in Detroit and Chicago) are opposed to any collection in churches for the support of the Embassy and do not want any publicity in this matter.

Comments: As a matter of fact, both Cardinals, especially the Cardinal – Archbishop of Chicago, are objects of vicious and diabolical attacks by the Polish Communistic press in this country, especially in the last three months.

6. Mr. Papée suggests that the Economic Council should give the following assurances to the two Cardinals: (a) There will be no collection in churches. (b) Its activities will be carried on with discretion. (c) Definite subsidies will be paid monthly (through the Apostolic Delegate to the Secretariat of the Holy See) (at present, \$1,000.00 per month) by deducting from \$ 1,000.00 the amount paid by the Polish National Fund AFTER it meets its overdue payments.
7. The letter enumerates reasons for continued existence of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See.

Comments: These reasons are known to us.<sup>22</sup>

#### GENERAL COMMENTS:

Perhaps Archbishop Gawlina summarizes the attitude we should take towards this communication. He says: “Take it ‘cum grano salis’”<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> AWR, sign. 192/May, 1955; AADSW, sign. 887/1954-1956, pp. 10; AVMR, sign. 101/1955, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Take it “cum grano salis” – “with a grain of salt”. ADSW, sign. A/1955.

August 24, 1955

His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch<sup>24</sup>  
Archbishop of Chicago  
1555 North State Parkway  
Chicago 10, Illinois

Your Eminence:

The enclosures (together with the three photo static copies delivered last week) represent my first report in accordance with the request of Your Eminence.

This report is a summary of material in my files, official minutes of the Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See and official publications of the Polish National Fund in London. Additional reports may be expected as soon as possible.

Father Fiolek did not attend last week's meeting as anticipated. His invitation stated that the meeting was to be held on Wednesday. In reality it took place on Thursday as Your Eminence has informed me last week. Father Fiolek had other engagements and could not stay another day in New York.<sup>25</sup>

With sentiments of cordial and respectful esteem and kindest regards.

Sincerely yours in Christ.<sup>26</sup>

August 27, 1955

My dear Monsignor Piwowar:<sup>27</sup>

I thank you for your letter of the 24<sup>th</sup> of August and its enclosures. You are very helpful.

My information, through an indirect channel, is that the New York Meeting appointed a committee to call on Cardinal Mooney and me.

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<sup>24</sup> Samuel Cardinal Stritch (1887-1958), archbishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago (1940-1958). AWR, sign. 120, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Fr. Stanisław Fiolek CR, Chicago-member National Board of the Catholic League (1950-1960). AWR, sign. 121, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> AWR, sign. 120a/August 24, 1955, pp. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Rev. Msgr Stanisław Piwowar, Secretary General The Catholic League for Religious Assistance To Poland. R. NIR, *Piwowar Stanisław (1903-1990)*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 15, Lublin: TN KUL 2011, p. 770.

I shall keep in touch with you on this matter and shall appreciate your giving me any further information. Our hope is that we may be able discreetly to do a service to Holy Church.

With blessing,

+ Samuel Cardinal Strich<sup>28</sup>  
Archbishop of Chicago

Very Rev. Msgr. S.J. Piwovar  
Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland  
1200 North Ashland Avenue  
Chicago 22, Illinois

September 1, 1955

His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch  
Archbishop of Chicago  
1555 North State Parkway  
Chicago 10, Illinois

Your Eminence:

Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation for the two letters of August 29<sup>th</sup>, together with the check in the amount of \$ 4,073.39 from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. I have already thanked His Excellency Bishop Dearden for this generous donation and expressed the League's appreciation to the thirty – one Pastors who have made this gift possible.<sup>29</sup>

The enclosed photo static copy is a reproduction of a letter which I received this morning from General W. Anders, President of the Polish National Fund. This letter, and especially an itemized report promised by General Anders, will help us to reach certain definite conclusions which are becoming more and more obvious.

With sentiments of cordial and respectful esteem, I am  
Sincerely yours in Christ.

Rev. Wojciech A. Rojek<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Aloysius Cardinal Mooney (1892-1958), archbishop of the Detroit (1937-1958).

<sup>29</sup> John Francis Carinal Dearden (1907-1988), Bishop of Pittsburgh (1950-1958), Archbishop of Detroit (1958-1960); The Catholic League for Religious Assistance To Poland. The Fifth Biennial Convention Under the Patronage Of His Excellence John F. Dearden, DD, Bishop Of Pittsburgh, October 19-21, 1953, pp. 40; ALCP, sign. 400/1953.

<sup>30</sup> AWR, sign. 123/September 1, 1955, p. 1.



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## ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF THE POLISH EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE

### Summary

In 1951, Msgr. V. Meysztowicz, the canonical counsellor of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See informed the priests of Polish origin about the lack of financial resources to maintain the Embassy and the need to suspend its activities. Therefore several priests decided to establish an Economic Council. The Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See, was formally established at the meeting on May 11, 1955 in New York. It was headed by Rev. Msgr. F. Kowalczyk, and the secretary Rev. Msgr. W. Rojek. The established Council began collecting funds within its scope and without publicity. She was active in the 1955-1958. Unofficially, she had the support of bishop: Gawlina, Krol and Woźnicki.

However, official aid for Embassy came in the following years through a resolution of the American Episcopal Conference within the National Catholic Welfare Conference (American Caritas), and this aid was the official reason for the suspension of activities. The American Episcopal Conference's assistance to the Embassy turned out to be temporary. Therefore, in March 26, 1959, Msgr. W. Rojek called a meeting of the presidium of the former Economic Council and asked bishop Woźnicki to provide his valuable advice and tips on what and how we should do this matter. However, Polish priests continued to individually provide material support to the Embassy. The documentation of the Council's activities was secret.

**Keywords:** Economic Council of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See; Vatican; polish priests; United States

## RADA EKONOMICZNA AMBASADY POLSKIEJ PRZY STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ

## Streszczenie

W 1951 r. ks. prał. Valery Meysztowicz, radca kanoniczny Ambasady RP przy Stolicy Apostolskiej, poinformował księży polskiego pochodzenia w Stanach Zjednoczonych o braku środków finansowych na utrzymanie Ambasady Polskiej i konieczność zawieszenia jej działalności. Wobec czego księża Franciszek Kowalczyk i Wojciech Rojek przy aprobacie innych postanowili utworzyć radę ekonomiczną. Formalnie na zebraniu 11 maja 1955 r. w Nowym Jorku została powołana Rada Ekonomiczna Ambasady Polskiej przy Stolicy Apostolskiej, która w swoim zakresie bez rozgłosu zbierała fundusze przy poparciu biskupów: Józefa Gawliny, Jana Króla i Stefana Woźnickiego.

Zapowiedziana pomoc Konferencji Amerykańskich Biskupów w ramach działalności National Catholic Welfare Conference była przyczyną zawieszenia Rady. Jednak ta pomoc okazała się tymczasowa. Dlatego 26 marca 1959 r. ks. prał. W. Rojek zwołał posiedzenie prezydium byłej Rady Ekonomicznej i prosił bpa S. Woźnickiego o udzielenie cennych rad i wskazówek dotyczących działania w tej sprawie. Jednak księża polscy nadal indywidualnie wspomagali materialnie ambasadę, aż do jej likwidacji w 1976 r. Dokumentacja działalności Rady Ekonomicznej była utajniona.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Rada Ekonomiczna Ambasady Polskiej przy Stolicy Apostolskiej; polscy księża; Stany Zjednoczone