

Speech before  
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For all persons who are interested in the welfare of Poland, the twentieth anniversary of her existence as a republic is an occasion for gratification. Those of us who have inherited the Polish tradition have vividly in our minds the long period of struggle for Polish independence and the hardships that our ancestors had to endure in previous centuries under foreign domination. Within our own living memories, we know the difficulties and uncertainties that surrounded the first recognition of Polish rights during the great war and we know of the difficulties and struggles, both internal and external, that have marked the twenty years of Polish independence. The labors of Paderewski and Pilsudski are fresh in our minds.

Yet, at the same time that we feel gratified over the eventual accomplishment of what through the life times of our ancestors was merely a dream, we realize more fully than was ever realized before in what a troubled and anxious world Poland is coming to her maturity.

Our thoughts must inevitably turn to the question why it is that there is so much uncertainty and fear in a world that offers so many potentialities for peace and wellbeing. The new Poland has achieved her national existence in a modern world in which science and invention have made available to mankind immense resources for the enjoyment of life and for the lessening of its ills. The average human being at the present time has at his disposal more labor saving devices, more instruments of precision, more varieties of food, a greater abundance of necessities than was ever true before. Yet, in spite of this fact, vast numbers of people are hungry, unsheltered and improperly cared for; and nations instead of being busily engaged in energetic and profitable production to their mutual benefit are spending an increased part of their subsistence and their energy in preparation for war and in the intensification of animosities.

We are, of course, familiar with the fact that people are not readily satisfied with the things that they have in abundance. They are quick to fell envy and covetousness and to quarrel among themselves for the exclusive possession of what they might rather share equitably. They are the victims of their own weaknesses.

The same thing is true of nations as a whole. The present situation is one in which all parties are certain to lose more than they can possibly win. It would seem that this must be apparent and that individuals as well as nations would cease to follow courses of action that stir up enmity and insecurity. The trouble is apparently that we all become blinded by emotion and are unable to see the things that should be most obvious. We become impelled by fear. We are like people caught in a panic and struggling violently against those who are around us. In the midst of such confusion and extremes of feeling, it seems futile to urge reasonableness and self-control. It seems futile and yet I am convinced that it is only by making reason and self-control prevail that the present deplorable situation in which the world finds itself can be overcome.

In the matter of relations between nations, we are dealing as much with human frailties and human emotion as we are when we are dealing with the relations of individuals. The responsibility may appear to be less where millions are concerned than it is where only two or three are concerned, yet I see no way of avoiding the conclusion that responsibility after all goes back to the individual. Before nations can in their relations with one another feel confidence, good will, and a sense of mutual self-interest, it is necessary that individuals within those nations feel forbearing and sympathetic toward the problems of others. We have been told repeatedly to trust one another - and yet we know that trust is based on confidence - and confidence is based on the sacredness of a word given and a promise made - and never broken - otherwise suspicion and doubt take its place - and all pleading for trust is to no avail. It is very easy for us, however, to fall short of our responsibility. It is very easy to feel that the blame is all on the other side. It is easy to be tempted by the desire to gain an advantage at the expense of others. It is easy to shrug our shoulders over the difficulties that the world is suffering and to feel that such matters are not our affairs. But things will never settle themselves unless they are settled by human beings.

I think that we who are of Polish extraction are perhaps better able than many others to achieve the generous and understanding attitude which present world affairs require. The reason for this is two-fold. In the first place, we have vividly in our minds, as I have already said, the tradition and the memory of Poland's century long sufferings under alien rule, her inability to develop freely her own national characteristics and institutions and her struggle against oppression. We know what our forefathers went through and we have no wish that others should have to endure the same experiences.

In the second place, we know how fully possible it is to see the good in others. We are, on the one hand, loyal to our Polish traditions and our cultural inheritance. We take pride in Polish achievements, yet at the same time, we are Americans. We value and love the country that is now our own - the United States. We are happy to bring to its enrichment the fine things that have characterized Polish culture. For us, there is no more difficulty in feeling at home both with our Polish background and our American present than it is for a man to love both his parents and his children.

Our experience and tradition should make us free from the narrow suspicions that bar nations from enjoying one another's good will.

Likewise, it should be easier for us - living in this big and strong country - where we have equal rights and privileges - equal opportunities - and equal protection in a naturally wealthy country - with a real democratic form of government - democratic from its very inception, - it should be easier for us to look from a distance - and thus look objectively - upon the world picture as a whole and not upon any one side or any one portion of it, and think - without prejudice - but in earnest - for the general good of society.

It is highly fitting, therefore, that at this moment when we are thinking affectionately and proudly of the twentieth anniversary of new

Poland, we should also be thinking of our responsibility as Americans for the development of those world conditions under which not only Polish welfare and American welfare may continue, but under which the welfare of all people may continue.

Mr. Ambassador since to you has been given the privilege of representing the Republic of Poland in the United States, which privilege carries with it a grave responsibility, we as citizens of the United States - the country that helped much in the rebirth of Poland twenty years ago - extend to you our congratulations on this Twentieth Anniversary and our sincere wishes for the continued development of Poland economically and socially for the good of her people and for the good of the world at large. At the same time we know that you realize that our duty and our responsibility is to make as large a contribution as is possible to the welfare of the people of the United States and to the welfare of the world at large; for the welfare of a nation should always mean the welfare of the human being, since as the human being is content, the nation and the world make real progress.