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## Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie Before the National Convention of the Polish-American Congress

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE  
DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES  
BEFORE THE  
NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE POLISH-AMERICAN CONGRESS

- - -

Sheraton Cleveland Hotel  
Cleveland, Ohio  
September 27, 1968  
4:30 o'clock p.m.

Those of us whose roots are in Poland know the fruits and the burdens of living in a Democratic society. We understand the struggle for freedom which is still being waged around the world today.

We are saddened that our relatives and friends in Poland cannot enjoy the blessings of liberty.

Yet, while we all pray for a better day for Poland, we recall with pride her contributions to the cause of liberty and freedom.

We remember Pulaski's brave assistance to the cause of American independence. We remember the impact of Paderewski on Woodrow Wilson during World War I. We remember the valiant resistance of Poland against Hitler and his Nazi invaders during World War II.

We remember those thousands of Poles who fought outside their country when it had been overrun, and those other thousands who remained in Poland to resist the Nazi occupation. We remember Poland's resistance to Russian communism after the war.

(Applause)

As we remember all of these things, we recall the words of Paderewski. He said, "Poland shall not die, our martyred bretheren, she shall not die. She shall live for all eternity, mighty and glorius -- for you, for us, for all mankind." And the words of Poland's national anthem, "As long as you live, Poland shall live."

That, I suppose, is directed to us to hold Poland's heritage.

1 My father came to this country as a young man, like  
2 so many of your fathers and your grandfathers, to escape tyranny,  
3 to find freedom. And he believed that this country provided man's  
4 best answer to the age-old problem of making freedom work. He  
5 believed in an America in which all men are truly equal and in  
6 which every man has the right to progress as far as his abilities  
7 will take him.

8 My father found that freedom for himself, and more  
9 importantly, he found opportunity for his children. He lived  
10 to see me become Governor of my state, and I can't imagine that  
11 a man could have died more justified by the beliefs that had  
12 prompted him to leave home, to come to a strange land, and to  
13 build his life.

14 And his story is the story of millions of Polish-American  
15 cans who brought to this country a deep and abiding faith in  
16 the spirit of freedom.

17 (Applause)

18 You in this organization have kept the free spirit of  
19 Poland alive, for all Americans, by calling attention to Poland's  
20 history of freedom over a thousand years, and Poland's struggle  
21 with tyranny over most of that time. You have kept that spirit  
22 alive for our young people by your emphasis on Polish cultural  
23 traditions. The pride you have fostered in our Old World Tra-  
24 ditions, has strengthened our pride in the new. Your work has  
25 strengthened America in her diverse traditions.

But I am troubled, as I am sure you are, by the  
attacks on our family traditions, by the social unrest which  
threaten community stability, and by crime and violence which  
threatens our security.

You and I have struggled to overcome the disruptive  
effects of poverty, ridicule, discrimination and poor housing.  
Today, quite naturally, none of us want to see the fruits of  
our labors swept away. We do not want to lose the material  
benefits of our society -- our homes, cars, television sets,  
our jobs and schools -- nor do we want to lose the security  
against fear a free society should bring.

In this election year of 1968, our society and our  
system of government is being tested as never before. For the  
seeds of a new oppression are all around us. They are fear,  
hate and intolerance. They are the ugly facets of disunity and  
lack of trust in each other and in our basic institutions.

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WARD & PAUL

25 K Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

1 Thomas Jefferson once said that the ultimate objective  
2 of government in our society is the happiness of its people.  
3 When you say the "happiness of its people," we mean the happiness  
4 of all of them without exception, without distinction.

5 And I think that is the lesson we must learn all over  
6 again in this election year.

7 It isn't an easy idea to pursue, because Americans are  
8 many different kinds of people, of different races, of colors,  
9 cultures, national origins, and economic groups. We have  
10 different educational backgrounds and different tastes. But the  
11 lesson of our country is that people, nomatter how different,  
12 can live together and advance each other's interests.

13 (Applause)

14 This is what my father believed about America. This  
15 is what he taught me, always on end, when I was a boy. This is  
16 what I would want. But others apparently don't share that  
17 belief.

18 Where there is poverty, they sew hate. Where there  
19 is love, they sew distrust. Where there is comfort, they sew  
20 fear. And where there is common interest, they sew division.

21 You and I know that hate, distrust, fear, and division  
22 can only lead to anarchy and tyranny, the twin offspring of the  
23 enemies of freedom. Because you and I know that no one can be  
24 free unless all are free.

25 (Applause)

26 You and I who have gained so much in this great land,  
27 should be in the forefront of those who want to help Americans,  
28 who still suffer from discrimination -- those who have not  
29 enjoyed the fruits of equal opportunity and equal participation  
30 in our society.

31 The great freedom fighter, Kosciusko, left all his  
32 money in America for the emancipation of the slaves.

33 (Applause)

34 Those of us who are his spiritual descendants should  
35 be the first to work for an equal chance for those descendants.

36 You and I should be the first to reject those who  
37 parade under the banner of suppression, disguised as law and

1 order. For we know that suppression breeds discontent; discon-  
2 tent breeds rebellion; and rebellion breeds violence and oppres-  
sion.

3 Public safety we must have; crime we must fight,  
4 because the first objective of an organized society is to pro-  
tect its people, to protect their lives, to protect their families,  
5 their homes, their streets, their communities, and their nation.

6 But we can achieve those objectives only within the  
guarantees of our constitution, and in a society where there  
7 is mutual trust, where poverty is no more, where youth has hope  
and age has dignity, and where men and women of whatever color  
8 or social status control their own destinies.

9 You and I know, and those who came from the old  
country, that walls which divide segments of a society are the  
10 walls of hatred and distrust and violence for every member of  
such a society.

11 (Applause)

12 Two months before he died, Paderewski said: "I am  
13 grateful to the supreme deity that he permitted me to come here,  
to this free soil of the United States, that he granted me the  
14 strength still to serve Poland."

15 The best way that you and I can serve Poland and  
America is to be free in the sense that we want others to be  
16 free as well.

17 (Applause)

18 And you know, that is the real reason why I was proud  
to accept Vice President Humphrey's invitation to join in his  
19 campaign. Because I saw this campaign, not so much as a contest  
between candidates representing different political parties, as  
20 a struggle within the hearts and minds of the American people.  
Because I suspect that within each of us there is a dilemma,  
21 whether we should reach out first for security for ourselves,  
or reach out first for opportunity for others.

22 We want them both but when we think they are different  
objectives, we attempt to reach for the first and to brush aside  
23 the second.

24 This is true of each of us, so I think this election  
is going to be decided, not so much in the ballot boxes on  
25 November 5 -- although that choice will be important in connec-  
tion with that same battle -- but this election will be decided

1 in the hearts and minds of every American. And the question that  
2 you must decide is this: Do you want a divided America, or do  
3 you want a truly united America.

3 (Applause)

4 So as we head out for that not so distant objective  
5 of November 5, may you ponder these questions as I know Poles  
6 will ponder. I know you will come up with the right answer,  
7 whatever it is, and as you travel along the road, may God bless  
8 you all.

7 You know, I don't know too much Polish because there  
8 aren't too many Poles in my home town. My mother tells me until  
9 I was four, Polish was all I could speak. Then I went to school  
10 where there was none spoken. Then I used to go to Buffalo to  
11 visit my mother's family, and they used to teach me Polish which  
12 I didn't quite trust.

10 (Laughter)

11 For a warm welcome, may I limit myself to this:

12 "Moj Drodzi." (My dear <sup>FRIENDS</sup> ONES)

13 (Applause)

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