

TWO EMIGRATIONS – TWO NATIONALISMS: IRISH-AMERICAN AND POLISH-AMERICAN NATIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

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Nationalism takes on various forms; it is a kind of attitude, a type of individual or group activity, a variety of solidarity, a collective link, ideology. It is a principle in the creation of a nation and a deciding factor in the formation of a state. Ireland and Poland survived as nation-states, despite their lack of independence throughout the nineteenth century. Nationalism was the factor which caused the continuation of nation-state building although there was lack of political autonomy.

In the case of both these nations, emigration played a key role in the formation of nationalism, but not in the process of the nation. It was in large part forced political emigration, establishing repression from the part of the occupying states. This were: England in the case of Ireland and Prussia, Russia and Austria in the case of Poland. Irish and Polish emigrants composed numerous and strong ethnic groups in the United States. Their members were subject to two parallel processes: assimilation and nationalization. By nationalization I mean an increase in the knowledge of one's nation of origin and involvement with nationalistic groups.

Both ethnic groups had their elite and ideological leaders. Equally Irish and Polish ethnic groups involved themselves with the development of nationalism and the goal of nation-state status for Ireland and Poland.

In this article, I take on the task of trying to explain the role of emigration in the formation of Irish and Polish nationalisms.

1. IRISH-AMERICAN NATIONALISM

Americans of Irish descent compose, according to given statistics, about 8% of the American population. In 1970, 16,325,000 persons were of Irish descent (objective criteria of descent were used, as opposed to subjective declarations). To compare, given statistics for the Polonia coming from the same source are 4,941,000 Americans of Polish descent (2.4% of the population).¹ The criterion used in determining a person belonging to an ethnic group was determined by the place of origin of an ancestor. At the same time though, in 1969, there were 2,778,000 first, second and third generation Americans of Polish descent, and there were only 1,771,000 Ameri-

¹ U. S. Census, *Current Population Reports Series*, P. 200, No 224.

cans of Irish background who were emigrants or at least one of whose parents or grandparents came from Ireland.²

Americans of Irish and Polish descent are classified in the »white-ethnic« category. A. L. Weed characterized this category as the following: »The majority of Americans of European descent who belong to the first, second and third generation are Catholics who inhabit older, industrial cities in the North. As ethnic whites, they compose a significant minority group and acquire a new sense of identity [...] characterized as alienated, forgotten, troubled, frustrated, deprived of hope and angry. Sharing among them their anger, in pair with their fresh experiences of emigration brought them together within their own ethnic group as also in the wider category of 'ethnic whites'.«³

A significant majority of the white ethnic group of Irish background has already abandoned a ghetto ethnic identity and has acquired an American sense of national identity. These are persons who A. Greeley calls »American-Irish«.⁴ They developed their own type of ethnic nationalism, which in the case of the Irish found its outlet in religion and politics.

Irish nationalism went through three phases in the United States.

In the first phase, this nationalism took on a purely ethnic character of a nation in exile. It was characterized by strong radicalism, a heightened feeling of religiosity and Anglophobia. The Irish who escaped their homeland because of persecutions, poverty and inequality did not rid themselves of their prejudice and predisposition. Within the organization of the Irish ethnic group, nationalist leaders, leaders of anti-English revolts, uprisings and demonstrations played a popular role, continuing their activity in exile. A good amount of the workings of the Irish ethnic group were spent in support of Ireland's hopes for independence. The Irish lived convinced that: »Ireland was a conquered territory. The Irish not only hated foreign rule, but also the foreign Church, which planned to subordinate the Irish as soon as possible [...]. Unfortunately, rebellions, primitive methods of cultivation, low wages and high rents, incessant civil wars between various fractions were some of the factors leading to the exodus of Irish to America.«⁵

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1969*, tab. nr 34. At the same time, according to statistics given for the year 1980, 40,166,000 Americans declared having an Irish background (including both categories, single and multi-ethnic background), whereas only 8,228,000 admitted to having a Polish background (single or multi-ethnic). See *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1989*, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington 1989, p. 41, tab. nr 48. In this same abstract, the number of Americans of Irish descent born abroad (presumably in Ireland) was counted as being only 197,000 people, where Americans of Polish background born outside U. S. boundaries was 418,000 people. See *Statistical Abstract 1989*, p. 40, tab. nr 47.

³ A. L. Weed, *The White Ethnic Movement and Ethnic Politics*, New York–Washington–London: Praeger Publishers, 1973, p. 3.

⁴ A. Greeley, *That Most Distressful Nation: The Taming of the American Irish*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972, p. 8.

⁵ C. Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of Immigrants*, The Press of Western Reserve University, 1964, p. 129.

Irish nationalism in the United States had a number of developmental norms. Similar to the situation in Ireland there grew on the land religious antagonism and an »enemy« attitude toward the English. Before the U.S. achieved independence, the Irish had a small and uninfluential Catholic group. The first general statistics in the U.S. in 1790 showed that there were only a little above forty-four thousand Irish Catholics.⁷ The period of birth and national development coincided with the development of the ethnic-group organization. At the same time, Irish nationalism found incessant reinforcement in the form of following waves of escapees from the homeland.

The period of the rise of nationalism started with the end of the American War for Independence and reached its zenith in the 1860s.

The second period lasted a few decades, by which it was not homogeneous with regard to the activities of the organization and the intensity of nationalism. It remained a fundamental force until Ireland became independent.

A gradual fall and disappearance of Irish nationalism characterized the third period. On the other hand, a new type of ethnic nationalism was developing.

The fourth period – contemporary – is characterized by the dominance of a symbolic form of nationalism and a loyalty of Americans of Irish descent to the citizenship and statehood of the United States. Though this always existed, a radical, progressively less-meaningful nationalistic group supported Irish Republican Army actively in Northern Ireland.

For the first stage, typical was the rise and development of organization of local, religious self-help and finally, national character.⁸ The first Irish ethnic organization under the name of Irish Charitable Society was founded in Boston in 1737. In the 1760s, other similar organizations were founded, among them were: the Ancient and Most Benevolent Order of the Friendly Brothers of Saint Patrick (1767 – New York), Society of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick for the Relief of Emigrants (1771 – Philadelphia) and the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick (1784 – New York). In the first part of the 1780s, there began to form organizations of a national character, appealing to Celtic traditions, using the name »Hibernian«.⁹

During the second period, characteristic was the uprising in 1858 of the Fenian Brotherhood (or Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood) and in 1867 of the radical, nationalistic Clan na Gael. The Gaelic Athletic Association also had an extremist and paramilitary character.¹⁰

In the third period, organizations were founded which mostly had an ethnic »American-Irish« character, based on American or dual national identities (for example: the

⁷ Taken from O' Brien, *A Hidden Phase of American History*, New York 1920, p. 373. The author gives the number of Irish Catholics as 44,273.

⁸ The names of main Irish ethnic organizations in the United States are given with their founding date in the Index.

⁹ See Index. The terms »Hibernian« and »Irish« are synonymous.

¹⁰ W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association: Irish Nationalistic Politics 1884–1924*, London: Christopher Chelm, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987.

American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, American Friends of Irish Neutrality, American League for Undertaken Ireland, American Committee for Irish Studies).

In the last stage, Irish nationalism is not based on a clear organizational foundation. Members of the IRA are supported by secret channels of hard to identify Irish-American groups.

1.2. The development of religious nationalism

The Irish in the United States created the first Catholic minority group among Anglo-Saxon Protestant inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century. They inhabited mostly the developed British colonies, along the East Coast. The first groups of Catholics who came from Ireland were centered around Baltimore and New York, and later around Philadelphia and Boston. In 1790, the Catholic bishop (of Irish descent), John Carroll, had no more than 40,000 followers and had under his jurisdiction 25 priests. The authority of the first Catholic diocese was bounded to the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania. In 1808, there already existed dioceses in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Bardstown, Kentucky. In the same year, the number of Catholics reached 150,000.¹¹

The Irish composed by far the vast majority of Catholics in the U.S. Their numbers dramatically increased. In 1840, there were 663,000 registered Catholics in the U.S., by 1850 there were 1.6 million and by 1860 2.2 million, of which 1.6 million were Irish.¹²

The Catholic religion was the basic element involved with the integration of the Irish in America. Catholicism became a living part of Irish nationalism.¹³ Catholics from Ireland took upon themselves the grunt of Protestant prejudices towards Catholics and found themselves engrossed in a religious conflict. They also became the objects of religious and ethnic prejudices long before Germans and Poles joined them.

Given statistics clearly show that the Irish dominance in the Catholic Church hierarchy lasted for over 100 years. Out of 464 bishops consecrated between 1789–1935 in the U.S., 268 were of Irish descent.¹⁴ Among them were leaders of the Irish ethnic group: Bishop John England (Charlestown diocese), son of Irish refugees; Bishop John Hughes – famous New York archbishop born in Tyrone; John Ireland from Kilkenny, a well-known liberal and representative of workers associated with Unions; Cardinal James Gibbon, also born in Ireland (came to the U.S. in 1829 with his parents).

¹¹ S. Byrne, *Irish Emigration to the United States*, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969, pp. 45–46.

¹² J. P. O’Gready, *How the Irish Became Americans*, New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1973, p. 110.

¹³ C. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 1956, p. 90.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 91–92.

The Catholic Church and religion was at first the most important element linking the Irish in America and the favorable appearance of Irish nationalism. The development of nationalism functioned in tandem with occurrences in Ireland. A permanent transmission of ideas, people, funds and goods (including arms) existed between Ireland and the U.S. This symbiotic relationship also included national sentiment and religious consciousness. Discrimination of Catholics by Protestants was not something new for the Irish. Protestant nativism in the U.S. led to quickened integration of Catholics and Irish ethnic groups, accompanying also the development of radical nationalism.

The number of Catholics in the U.S. before the American War for Independence was inconspicuous and largely symbolic. Historical registrations point to the fact that all except one¹⁵ of the Irish who signed the Declaration of Independence were Protestants.¹⁶ Catholics composed a small minority of poor newcomer farmers from Ireland. At first they developed their religious institutions without disturbance. There exist records that celebrations of St. Patrick's day occurred already in 1762 in New York and in 1779 the first ever St. Patrick's day parade took place there also.¹⁷

The anti-Catholic disposition the U.S. first started to rise after the year 1800, taking on a clearly anti-Irish character already after a little over a decade.¹⁸ The first appearances of anti-Irish Catholic sentiment took place in December 1806 in Philadelphia. Breaking up Christmas mass, Protestants provoked street fighting, which resulted in many wounded.¹⁹

Nativist, anti-Catholic displays by the Protestant majority led to the quickened integration of the Irish. This brought together the fight for Catholic rights with an anti-English nationalistic ideology. In opposition to Protestant discrimination, the Irish at the same time defined their own identity boundaries and ethnic belonging. In the 1830s, a series of religious conflicts gave birth to an institutionalized antagonism. In 1834, after the burning of the Ursulanek convent in Charlestown²⁰ and with the joining of two ethnic, Catholic schools in Lowell, Massachusetts with the American public school system,²¹ anti-Catholic and anti-Irish nativists took shape in the form of the Native American Party.²² The first wave of the anti-Catholic and anti-Irish movement lasted close to three decades. In this time, many rapes, attacks, riots and street-fights took place between Catholics and Protestants stemming from religious conflicts. Among other things, these conflicts led to the burning of three Catholic churches in Philadelphia in 1844 (among them St. Nicholas' and St. Augustine's).²³ As a

¹⁵ This exception was the future Catholic bishop of Baltimore Charles Carroll.

¹⁶ Irish signers of the Declaration of Independence: Mathew Thornton, George Taylor, James Smith, Edward Rutledge, Thomas Lynch, Thomas McKean, George Read and Charles Carroll.

¹⁷ W. D. Griffin, *A Portrait of the Irish in America*, New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1981.

¹⁸ J. P. O'Gready, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁹ C. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, p. 47.

²⁰ J. P. O'Gready, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 111.

²² Founded in New York in 1835.

²³ M. J. Feldberg, *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844: A Social History*, Rochester 1970.

result of days of street fighting, over tens of people lost lives and many more were wounded. In later nativist, anti-Catholic demonstrations, a monastery was demolished in Providence, Rhode Island in 1851, in 1853 regular street riots occurred in Baltimore, Boston and Philadelphia and in 1855 religious skirmishes took place in Louisville. In the 1850s arose the Know-Nothing movement,²⁴ which still had a fundamental anti-Irish attitude.

The second wave of nativism and anti-Catholicism born out of the foundation of the American Protective Association in 1887 was directed more against the later Catholic newcomers from Italy and Central-Eastern Europe.

The religious consolidation of the Irish coincided with the development of their nationalism. Religious antagonisms were beneficial from the point of view of nationalistic sentiments. The domination of Irish in the American Catholic Church facilitated the operation of nationalists, especially those directed against English Protestants.

Irish religious integration was not void of inner conflict and political play. The decade of 1840–50 came close to dividing the Irish Catholics. The cause was a debate on how to manage church property. The dominant basis, trusteeism, gave property rights to the church hierarchy, and not to the parish members or other believers. Part of the Irish church members was in opposition to this policy and almost declared a schism. In the end, trusteeism outweighed the protests and was accepted into the American Catholic Church. Later on, this led to continental conflicts at the heart of other ethnic churches, such as the German and Polish churches.

Regardless of inner conflicts and frictions, the Irish American Church hierarchy often voiced its opinion against the radical, revolutionary nationalism of Clan na Gael. Bishop Hughes declared his objection on the members of Clan na Gael and Fenians.²⁵

Whereas at first, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the term »Irish emigration« included Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists coming from Northern Ireland, after 1840, it referred solely to Catholics.²⁶ Irish domination of the American Church lasted until the 1950s. This fact caused inter-ethnic conflicts, among them Irish-Polish conflicts.

1.3. The development of nationalism as an ideology

Irish nationalism developed in parallel both in Ireland and through emigrants (in the U.S.). The U.S. became a place of asylum for many active members and leaders of national uprisings. In particular, the activity of nationalistic leaders started after the failed »Young Irish« uprising in 1848. Then, a substantial number of refugees emigrated to the U.S. from Ireland. In the U.S. they acted as national freedom fighters

²⁴ Its organizer was The Order of the Star Spangled Banner party.

²⁵ C. Wittke, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

²⁶ T. N. Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism: 1870–1890*, New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1966, p. 35.

and committed themselves to the widening of nationalism among Irish immigrants. Irish nationalism found favorable conditions in the U.S. There already existed an Irish ethnic group with a strong feeling of religious separation and Anglophobia.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood, founded in Dublin in 1858, was founded as a result of initiatives coming from Irish immigrants going to the U.S. The organization was established after James Stephens consulted, through a special emissary with John O'Mahoney and John Devoy.

A letter written by the IRA to Dublin became a kind of national manifesto for the Irish. As participants in the »Young-Irish« movement, they became national heroes for many Irish.

In response to the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Dublin, its sister organization was founded in New York under the same name. Its headquarters were at Moffat Mansion, near Union Square.²⁷ At the head of the organization was John O'Mahoney. This branch of Fenian caused a rise in radicalism among groups of Irish immigrants in the U.S. The watershed year for the organization was in 1865. In October of this year, the Fenian Philadelphia Congress met and appointed the Irish Republican Government in the U.S. A Fenian army was also created from veterans of the American Civil War. In March of 1868, about 100,000 Fenian members held an anti-English demonstration in Jones Wood, New York. Within the Fenian organization, two military outlooks grew in friction with each other: the one which wanted to invade Ireland, and the other which wanted the Fenian Army to attack British soldiers in Canada.

The less radical and utopian plan won out. On the night of May 31, 1866, a Fenian Army division crossed the border into Canada. At the head of the group was John O'Neil, a clan descendent who once ruled in Ulster. He led 800 Irish on an ill-fated attack on Fort Eire. After they lost the battle, the group retreated back to the U.S., but on June seventh, new divisions of Fenian groups crossed the border into Canada from Vermont.²⁸

The Fenian anti-English result quickly fell in America, not having any chances of success. The American government stayed neutral in the conflict. Fenian's calculations of unleashing a war with England turned out to be no more than an illusion. It proved, however, that: »The Irish were still a foreign people in America, not settled, but rather establishing temporary camps.«²⁹ At the same time, the same author states, »The Fenian invasion of Canada is the most astonishing example of immigrant group activity in U.S. history.«³⁰ Irish nationalism itself became something of an exception.

With the Fenian military failure, the American branch of the Irish Republican Brotherhood became an illegal entity under American law. As a result, radical Irish nationalists founded a new organization in 1867, under the name »Clan na Gael«.³¹

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

²⁸ C. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, pp. 157–158.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 150.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ Founders of the Clan na Gael included: J. Collins, John Devoy, William Carrols, John Mitchel. In

Clan set very ambitious ideological goals for itself. According to Brown, »It was building castles in the sand.«³² Many of the organization's deeds were centered on national freedom-fighting (including acts of terrorism). Leaders of the Clan carried out their own foreign policy, searching among others Russian support against England by courting the Russian ambassador to the U.S. When the chances of war with England were fading, Fenian and Clan na Gael looked for allies among other Irish national groups. On the cusp of the 1870–1880s, a great coalition was formed among Fenian, Clan na Gael, part of the clergy and part of the Irish National Land League. At the head of this new coalition was Charles S. Parnell in Ireland.

The Irish National Land League of America was founded in 1880. Its initiator was Michael Davitt, the son of a Catholic farmer. The league was established around the slogans of »End to large property holders« and »Land for the people«. It possessed a popular-agrarian program of societal and national freedom. It won great support among farmers. The establishment of the League along with disputes among nationalists about the societal program led to the fractioning of the Irish in America. Part of the Clan na Gael supported Parnell and Davitt's plan. The more radical branch, with John Devoy and O'Donovan Ross as its leaders, was still carrying out a terrorist war with England. Most of the Fenian supported a more moderate program. From this point on, extreme Irish nationalists acted more and more in isolation. Radical nationalists controlled the newspapers *Irish Nation* and *United Irishman*. The moderate nationalists published *Pilot* in Boston and *Irish World* in New York.³³

The year 1891 caused the continuation of division within the League. A moderate shoot of the Clan na Gael broke away and formed an organization under the name of Irish National Federation of America with T. Emmet as president. The federation supported the National Party in Ireland, a shoot-off of Parnello's Home Rule Party and the Irish National Land League.

In the 1880s, three great Irish ideological orientations took shape in the United States. The first was a nationalistic ideology with a part of Clan na Gael. The second was a people-agrarian, moderate ideology with Davitt and Ford and the Irish Federation of America. The third ideology was party connected to the union and socialist movement. It found its support with the Knights of Labor.³⁴

In the 1890s, Irish nationalism in the U.S. weakened considerably. The Irish became for the most part neutral in relation to the national freedom movement. The few radical groups could not find support among members of the Irish ethnic groups.³⁵ One of the causes of this weakening was the fighting and quarrels between the organizations and fractions, which without end divided the Irish. Accord-

the 1870s, Clan na Gael reached its zenith in terms of radicalism. At the same time it became the most influential Irish organization in the U.S.

³² T. N. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

³³ C. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, p. 166.

³⁴ T. N. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–130.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

ding to T. N. Brown, »The nationalist movement weakened because of brawls, affairs and political games.«³⁶

The cause of the disappearance of nationalism was due in greater part however to the rise in the significance of ethnic identity. The needs and interests of ethnic groups as a part of the American society came to dominate over national interests. The number of immigrants from Ireland fell, while the number of members of the ethnic group born in the U.S. grew. Above nationalism, the group began to orient itself around one's own ethnic group and around assimilation. The Irish in America used up their national sentiments, taking more time to notice their situation in the new country. Irish nationalism entered a new phase of development. On the top were cultural elements. In 1893, the Gaelic League was activated in Ireland and the U.S. In 1903, John Devoy started publication of *The Gaelic American*. With the achievement of Irish independence, the phase of Irish nationalism came to an end in the U.S.

2. POLISH-AMERICAN NATIONALISM

The Polonia's nationalism in America, not unlike that of the Irish ethnic group, was not homogeneous in regard to its radicalism nor in its range and intensity of influence. These differences can clearly be seen through a historical analysis. Then a direct connection can be made between Polish nationalism and ideological values linked with the nation's ancestors.

One of the mechanisms used to shape the developmental process of Polish (and Irish) nationalism in the United States was a direct transmission of ideology.³⁷ First, individual elements or even whole systems of Polish ideology were transplanted from the old country to the new. One of the greatest ideological transmission phases was the period of political emigration after failed uprisings from partitioned Polish soil. Among Polish emigrants to the U.S. arose the idea of starting a »New Poland« on lands given to them by the United States Congress. A later national program created by the Democratic Society of Polish Exiles was a variation of similar programs established by the Polish Democratic Society founded in Paris in 1832. This program was based on a kind of »Poland in exile« ideology, one version of the Polonia's national ideology as the »fourth neighborhood« of Poland. Similar exports of Polish nationalism to the U.S. took place during following waves of political emigration from Poland.

The second mechanism, which had an impact on ideological development, was based upon the relationship between the Polonia in the U.S. and key emigration groups

³⁶ *Ibidem.*

³⁷ I have analysed the process of shaping Polish-American nationalism in book: *Ewolucja ideologii i przemiany tożsamości narodowej Polonii w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki w latach 1870–1970*, (*Evolution of Ideology and National Identity Transformation in the United States of America between 1870–1970*), Kraków 1989.

in Western Europe. It was a separation in two directions, by which the Polonia's ideological role in the U.S. continuously rose, until it overtook the function of acting as the main representative and spokesperson for Polish national interests in the lack of official Polish statehood. In this case, the National Defense Committee (founded in 1912)³⁸ along with the National Department, which functioned during WWI, both played a key role.

Nationalism among Polish immigrants in the U.S. developed later in comparison with the same process among Irish immigrants. It also developed at a slower pace. We can speak of a definitive form of Polish nationalism as occurring in the years leading up to WWI. Meanwhile the Irish created a fundamental ideology for their ethnic group in the 1860s.

The ideological development of the Polonia can be analytically divided into a few stages. In the development of Polish nationalism in the U.S., I distinguish between five stages.

The first stage ends with the final wave of mass political emigration to the U.S. A clear sign of the end of this period can be said to be the end of publication of the newspaper *Echo from Poland*. With the fall of the newspaper, the idea of noble-revolutionary nationalism, as seen by the participants of national uprisings in Poland ended. During the American Colonial period, Polish emigration to the U.S. is void of any great significance as an episode in the function of the Polish ethnic group.³⁹

The history of Polish nationalism in the U.S. begins with the arrival of Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski. Becoming heroes for both Poland and the U.S., they became at the same time symbols of the Polish goal of freeing their nation-state, with representative slogans such as: »For Your and Our Freedom.« Emigration from Polish soil to the U.S. before 1854⁴⁰ had a predominantly exile character. Feelings of national oppression and anti-Russian tendencies dominate in the national ideology of refugees who took part in Polish uprisings. This was not a particularly large emigration, but it was significant in laying down the foundation for Polish nationalism in the U.S. Noble-revolutionary, republican-democratic traditions, formed the main contents of this type of emigrant national ideology. In addition to T. Kosciuszko and K. Pulaski, Henryk Kalussowski and Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski (a founder of the Demo-

³⁸ M. Frančić, *Komitet Obrony Narodowej w Ameryce 1912–1918, (National Defense Committee in America 1912–1918)*, Wrocław 1983.

³⁹ Many historians have written about Polish emigration to the U.S. before the War for Independence. The historians' works I had in mind include: M. Haimana, *Polish Past in America*, Chicago 1939; W. Kruszki, *Polish History in America: From the Oldest to the Earliest Times*, v. I and II, Milwaukee 1937; P. Foxa, *The Poles in America*, New York 1922; and A. Brożka, *The American Polonia 1854–1939*, Warsaw 1977.

⁴⁰ This year is seen as the beginning of mass economic emigration from Polish lands to the U. S. The first group of Polish farmers (from Opole region of Silesia) settled in Texas in this year. See A. Brożek, *Ślężacy w Teksasie: Relacje o najstarszych polskich osadach w Stanach Zjednoczonych, (Silesians in Texas: Reports from the Oldest Polish Settlements in the United States)*, Wrocław 1972.

cratic Society of Polish Exiles in America) had a great effect on the development of this form of nationalism.

The years 1864 and 1912 form the conventional boundaries of the development of Polish nationalism in the U.S. In December of 1912, the Committee for National Defense was established. This fact signaled the end of one type of evolutionary phase of national ideology, giving rise to the next. Between 1864 and 1912, the Polonia's organizational system was consolidated. In this period, the Roman Catholic-Polish Union, Polish National Union, Falcon Union came into existence. In this way, the socialist and union oriented current developed. In the years 1864–1912, ideological divisions of the Polonia crystallized around two main camps: clerical-conservative and national-liberal. Then, assimilated and nationalistic tendencies competed, each with their own ideological versions for the »fourth neighborhood«. Towards the end of this stage, Polish nationalism achieved its developmental apogee in regards to the level and domain of influence.

The third stage, falling between the years 1913–1919, was in effect short, but deserves special attention for its role in the strengthening of nationalism among the Polonia in the U.S. To speak of unity among the Polish ethnic group during these years would be nothing short of fiction. The Polonia was unable to create a nationally unified program. It was a culmination stage in the development of Polish nationalism and with it came the beginning of a decline in its influence and popularity. At the end of this period, the feeling of foreignness became something more inner and the group interest was seen no longer as belonging to the Polish nation but rather as striving to become a part of American society.

In the years 1920–1939 there occurred a kind of turn around in the Polonia's ideology, back in the direction of ethnic-nationalism. In 1938, the Polish American Council was created, which symbolized the evolution of the Polonia's national consciousness from nationalism to the domination of ethnic interests.

The fifth stage lasts until today and revolves around the Polonia's transformation into the ethnic category. Currently, nationalism is a rare and marginal occurrence.

2.1. Religious nationalism among the Polonia in the United States

Strong ties to religion and the Catholic Church characterized Polish emigrants to the U.S. The parish became the fundamental organization and social institution for Polish immigrants. A typical characteristic example is the group of Polish immigrants from Silesia (around the city of Opole), who came to Texas in 1854 as an organized group of settlers. Another typical characteristic is that the spiritual and overall leader of the group was the Catholic priest Leopold Moczygemba.⁴¹ From the beginning, religion became the foundation for integration of Poles in America. The vast majority

⁴¹ A. Brożek, *op. cit.*

of Poles who participated in the emigration waves between 1860–1890 were farmers. They were not set as ideological nationalists, but were characterized by an unusual tie to their cultural traditions. They were inclined to identify themselves with a denominational group, religion or their own social class. This furnished them with a national consciousness, which S. Ossowski called a link with a »private fatherland«. One of the elements of this link became an identification with the parish. It is not surprising then that Poles in the U.S. adopted the same forms of organization as the Irish had done earlier. They created their own national parishes, around which the social life of immigrants was centered.

Polish emigrants in America were not a homogenous ethnic group. The Polonia was established by people coming to the U.S. at different times and from various political sides. The people who came from Polish lands occupied by the three occupying states were generally poor and poorly educated. This group accepted the leadership of the Church and clergy in the organization of everyday life in the new environment. The parish was a familiar community, enabling the immigrants to adopt old and well-known models of living. The first elite leaders of the Polonia came from the parish-church circle. The Roman Catholic Polish Union arose as an expression of tendencies toward integration, in which the feeling of religious unity was stronger than that of national unity. Regardless of the various divisions between Polish immigrants in the U.S., especially between the elite, the fundamental ideological conflict was the primary importance of religious values above national ones.

The Polish Roman Catholic Union along with the elite assembled around the church, composed in large part by clergy, valued religiosity above nationalism. At the same time though, this religious-conservative orientation paid a great deal of attention to the organizational and structural problems of the Catholic Church of the Polonia in the United States. Disputes and antagonisms about church property did however have their impact. In the 1890s, these led in part to a brake in the Polonia Catholic Church unity, with the establishment of the Polish National Catholic Church in America.⁴²

Religion was one of the main ethnic ties among Poles in the U.S. It also served a similar role in integration, as in the case of Irish immigrants. The Church made the first direct contacts between Polish and Irish Catholics possible in America. From the very start, the Polonia church was dominated by a predominantly Irish hierarchy, which became the source of antagonisms between the two ethnic groups. Part of the church hierarchy worked to demolish this dominance,⁴³ but without meaningful effects. Because of frictions about opposing orientations, both within the group and outside, a rise in nationalism within the Polonia resulted.

⁴² H. Kubiak writes about the origin and development of this Church in *The Polish National Catholic Church in the United States of America 1897–1965*, Wrocław 1970.

⁴³ These efforts are described by W. Kruska in *Siedm siedmioletni, czyli pół wieku życia. Pamiętnik i przyczynek do historii polskiej w Ameryce*, (*Seven Seven-year Periods, Half a Century of Life. A Diary and Contribution to Polish History in America*), Poznań–Milwaukee 1924.

The Polonia's nationalism was based upon the feelings of foreignness and alikeness in an alien social environment. Having populous, religious and cultural roots, with time it was reborn into national ideology. Polish nationalists in the U.S. created their own political agenda. One of the most mature expressions of ideological nationalism was the National Defense Committee, which was unable to uniform the Polonia around a single set of values or national goals. Nationalism became the ideology of the elite, not of the entire Polonia.

2.2. The development of ideological nationalism

Characteristic of Polonia's social organization was plurality and heterogeneity of its institutions, organizations, associations and societies.⁴⁴ At first, these organizations had the adjective »Polish« in their name and possessed a national character. With the passage of time, the organizations transformed into ethnic forms, with programs oriented around interests vested in the immigrant community as a part of American society. Before this occurred, Polish national ideology was clearly defined. It went through its own evolution and road of development. Polish nationalism in the U.S. developed in two versions. Dewey describes the first as being: reactive, clerical, anti-Semitic and nationalistic;⁴⁵ developed by activists and ideologists assembled around the Polish Roman Catholic Union.

The second, radical, revolutionary, anti-clerical, republican, expressed its views through the Polish National Union.⁴⁶

Generalizing the problem, one must stress the following regularities seen in the transformation of Polish nationalism:

1. Nationalism that grew out of weakly articulated and unenlightened forms of national consciousness and turned into the ethnic group's national ideology.
2. Religious, language, state nationalism being reborn citizen nationalism.
 - Homogeneous programs transformed into numerous programs with varied ideologies.
 - Single-generation stretched into multi-generation nationalism.

Polish and Irish national ideology found support from following waves of political emigration. Its universality and intensity acted on various levels, up until both countries gained independence. The homeland for Poles and Irish who settled in the U.S. – and especially their children and grandchildren – became America. For Americans of Irish descent, nationalism became a kind of organizational-ideological mo-

⁴⁴ J. Piekoszewski described the situation: »There were so many slogans, names and programs that it was hard sometimes to get a grasp on everything, especially when you are not in on the secret.« *Problemy Polonii amerykańskiej*, (*Problems of the American Polonia*), Warsaw 1981, p. 28.

⁴⁵ J. Dewey, *Conditions among the Poles in the United States: Confidential Report 1918*, after: M. Frančić, *Komitet Obrony Narodowej*, p. 207.

⁴⁶ M. Frančić, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

del, which allowed them to actively take part in American society (and American politics). The Irish make up the first Catholic ethnic group which belongs to the »ethnic-white« category. The Irish ethnic group took advantage of its nationalism to achieve a meaningful position among American society.

Will the Polonia also take this road of development? To what extent will it achieve the success that Americans of Irish descent have? In what phase of assimilation do Americans of Polish descent find themselves?

A comparison and analysis of the course of assimilation of Polish and Irish ethnic groups in the United States could bring answers to the above as well as other questions. One of the most complex problems yet to be solved has to do with the range of regularity in the process of assimilation of particular ethnic groups in the United States of America.

To what extent did newcomers have to conform to the same rules as their predecessors?

**Index I: Significant Irish ethnic organizations in the United States
Names and year founded**

- 1737 – Charitable Irish Society (Boston)
1767 – Ancient and Most Benevolent Order of the Friendly Brothers of St. Patrick
(New York)
1771 – Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick for the Relief of Emigrants from
Ireland (Philadelphia)
1784 – Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in the City of New York
1799 – Hibernian Society of Charlestown, South Carolina
1803 – Hibernian Society of Baltimore
1816 – Shamrock Friendly Association (New York)
1825 – Friends of Ireland
1836 – Ancient Order of Hibernians in America
1848 – Hibernian Benevolent Emigrant Society (Chicago)
1856 – Catholic Society for the Promotion of Actual Settlement in North America
1858 – Fenian Brotherhood
1867 – Clan na Gael
1869 – Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America
1876 – United Irish Societies in Chicago
1880 – Irish National Land League of America
1890 – Gaelic Athletic Association (Chicago)
1891 – Irish National Federation of America
1891 – American Irish Historical Society
1904 – United Irish Counties Association of New York
1916 – Friends of Irish Freedom
1920 – American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic
1937 – Eire Society of Boston
1940 – American Friends of Irish Neutrality
1947 – American League for the Undertaken Ireland
1960 – American Committee for Irish Studies
1962 – Irish American Cultural Institute
1963 – American Irish Foundation
1967 – American Irish Immigration Committee
1970 – Irish Northern Aid Committee
1971 – American Committee for Ulster Justice
1974 – Irish National Causes
1975 – Ireland Fund
1977 – Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs

**Index II: Significant Polish ethnic organizations in the United States
Names and year founded**

- 1873 – Polish Roman Catholic Union (Chicago)
- 1880 – Polish National Alliance (Chicago)
- 1887 – Polish Falcons (Pittsburgh)
- 1890 – Polish Union of the United States of America (Wilkes-Barre)
- 1890 – Polish Union of America (Buffalo)
- 1895 – Polish Association of America (Milwaukee)
- 1895 – Alliance of Poles of America (Cleveland)
- 1898 – Union of Poles in America (Cleveland)
- 1898 – Polish Women's Alliance (Chicago)
- 1900 – Polish Beneficial Association (Philadelphia)
- 1900 – Polish Socialist Union in America
- 1903 – Association of the Sons of Poland (Jersey City)
- 1903 – Polish National Alliance of Brooklyn
- 1906 – Polish White Eagle Association (Minneapolis)
- 1908 – Polish National Union of America (Scranton)
- 1910 – Polish Alma Mater (Chicago)
- 1912 – United Polish Women of America (Chicago)
- 1912 – National Defense Committee
- 1913 – Federation Life Insurance of America (Milwaukee)
- 1920 – Union of Polish Women (Philadelphia)
- 1942 – National Committee of Poles of American Descent (New York)

POVZETEK

DVOJE EMIGRACIJ – DVOJE NACIONALIZMOV:
IRSKOAMERIŠKI IN POLJSKOAMERIŠKI NACIONALIZEM V ZDA

Tadeusz Paleczny

Za poljsko in irsko emigracijo v ZDA so značilni podobni asimilacijski procesi. Kljub mnogim razlikam med njima, povezanim npr. s časom prihoda v ZDA, kulturnimi temelji in zgodovinskimi tradicijami, sta imeli omenjeni skupini tudi veliko skupnega. Izseljenci so zapuščali Poljsko in Irsko iz podobnih razlogov: zaradi revščine, preganjanja in pomanjkanja državljskih pravic. Eni in drugi so se izseljevali z osvojenih oziroma zasedenih ozemelj. Katoliška vera in nacionalne ideologije so igrale pomembno vlogo v procesu njihove integracije.

Spričo nekaterih zgodovinskih vzrokov (narodnih in deželnih tradicij, kulturnega, jezikovnega in verskega duha skupnosti) se je v obeh skupnostih razvil močan nacionalistični občutek, ki so ga podpirale in krepile nekatere etnične organizacije in skupinske ideologije. Irskoameriški in poljskoameriški nacionalizem sta stopala skozi podobne razvojne faze. Razvila sta se iz homogenega nacionalizma, usmerjenega proti matični skupnosti, prek dvojnega nacionalizma (faza etničnega nacionalizma) do ameriškega (državljskega) nacionalizma. Prevladujočo smer v razvoju irskega in poljskega tipa nacionalizma v ZDA so spremljale različne vrste ekstremnih nacionalističnih ideologij.

Članek poskuša predstaviti prevladujočo smer v razvoju irskoameriškega in poljskoameriškega tipa nacionalizma v ZDA.