

JAROSŁAW PŁACHECKI

## THE POLES IN IRELAND AGAINST MARTIAL LAW IN POLAND 1981–1983

### INTRODUCTION

The Polish community in Ireland in the 20th century was small and had only a few hundred people. The 19th-century wave of Great Emigration after the 1830 November Uprising and later refugees after the 1863 January Uprising bypassed Ireland, and those few Poles who came left the island on their way to America or other countries.<sup>1</sup> Among the known Polish people of the early 20th century was Kazimierz Dunin Markiewicz, married to Constance Gore-Both, a future Irish suffragist, politician and heroine of the Irish struggle for independence. They had a daughter Maeve and lived together as a family with Markiewicz's son Staśko in Dublin, until Kazimierz left Ireland in 1913.<sup>2</sup> During the interwar period in Poland only very few Poles or people of Polish

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<sup>1</sup> There are records of Poles living only temporarily in 19th-century Ireland: ex-insurgents, Józef Czapski (1832) and Jan Bartkowski (1835–1848); members of the clergy: Fr. Franciszek Stachowski (1820–1823) (see M. KAŁUSKI, *Śladami Polaków po świecie*, Fribourg: Polonicum Machindex Institut 2008, e-book) or Rev. Dr Michael Włodarski (1866?–1874); G. BOURKE, *Reverend Dr Michael Joseph Włodarski – a Polish Nobleman in Exile?*, “The Irish Polish Society Yearbook” 8(2021), pp. 15–24. Among the others were the famous explorer and philanthropist, Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki (1847–1849), doctor of medicine Tomasz Janiszewski (1892–1893) and an English language teacher, Edmund Naganowski (1878–1886) (see M. Kałuski, *ibidem.*), or Margaret Płachecki, who according to District Registrars records in 1871 married an Irish constable, James Burns; see Irish Genealogy Civil Records, Kilmacthomas, County Waterford, Marriages, nr. 2765745, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> On his influence on artistic Irish life and culture, as well as on Constance's political aspirations, see P. QUIGLEY, *The Polish Irishman. The Life and Times of Count Casimir Markiewicz*, Dublin: Liffey Press, Raheny 2012, *passim*; and M. WHEELER, *The woman known as Countess Markiewicz*, “Tygiel Kultury”, 1998, no. 1-2, *passim*.

descent lived in Ireland on a permanent basis. Among them was Wanda Petronella Brown (née Mamach), a Red Cross nurse during the Great War, who married an Irishman, and from 1929 the Polish Consul General, Waclaw Tadeusz Dobrzyński's family, his wife Janina and daughter Krystyna. Later Dobrzyński become a founder and active member of the first Irish-Polish Society (written with a hyphen) to promote Polish education, art, culture, sport and history.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after World War Two, the number of Polish immigrants began to grow. First in dozens and then in hundreds, as war veterans from Great Britain arrived to Ireland to continue, or begin, their education.<sup>4</sup> This would not have been possible without the active role of the Irish-Polish Society and Consul Dobrzyński, the Polish Government in Exile, the Veritas Foundation, and the Irish universities and Irish Government. A mutual Catholic tradition was a platform for this Irish-Polish education project.<sup>5</sup> Soon Polish students began to organize themselves. In 1955, the annual Trinity College's event "Carnival of Nations" was co-organised by the Polish Students' Association and a special performance was given by the Polish Folk Dance Circle.<sup>6</sup> Among the migrants coming to Ireland, mostly from Great Britain and Poland, between the late 1940s and 1970s, were Polish scientists, professors and specialists: mathematician Prof. Jan Łukasiewicz (UCD), Prof. of Singing Maciej Smoleński (Royal Irish Academy of Music), Prof. of Physics Alex Montwiłł (UCD), Prof. of Design Michał Ożmin (National College of Art and Design), Prof. Zbigniew Dąbczewski (Agricultural Research Institute of Ireland), civil engineer Henryk Lebioda (pilot RAF) and architect Andrzej Wejchert.<sup>7</sup> Between 1945 and 1957, official relations with the Polish People's Republic did not exist, and, instead, Ireland still recognised the Polish Government in Exile

<sup>3</sup> The Society was also known as the Irish-Polish Circle; K. DOBRZYŃSKA-CANTWELL, *An Unusual Diplomat. Dobrzyński Biography*, London: Polish Cultural Foundation 1998, passim.

<sup>4</sup> H. DOWLING, *Polish immigrants in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland*, [in:] *Polish Emigration in Ireland in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries*, ed. J. Płachecki, Dublin-Żyrardów: Wyższa Szkoła Rozwoju Lokalnego 2012, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> G. DOHERTY, *The First Polish Students in University College Cork and the Irish Polish Society*, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 8(2021), pp. 38-44.

<sup>6</sup> Jarosław Pekarkiewicz was the Chairman of the Polish Students' Association and the vice-Chairman was Jan Kamiński, also acting as the Editor of the "Trinity News", Inter-national Affairs Chairman and future founder and first Chairman of the Irish Polish Society, established in 1979; P. QUIGLEY, *'If I haven't got a story, I'll make one'. Jan Kamiński in Trinity College*, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 8(2021), passim.

<sup>7</sup> H. DOWLING, *Polish immigrants*, pp. 21-22 and H. DOWLING, *Poles in Ireland, their contribution to Irish life and the beginnings of the Irish Polish Society*, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 2(2015), pp. 24-29.

in London and its Consulate General in Dublin.<sup>8</sup> This situation changed as a consequence of talks between Irish and Polish officials during UN sessions and the closing of the Polish Consulate in 1958. In 1964, the Polish Trade Mission Bureau in Dublin opened. Later in the 1970s, diplomatic relations were renewed, and in 1976 Ireland recognised the Polish government in Warsaw. From 1977 the Polish ambassador in Denmark was accredited in Dublin, from 1979 the Polish ambassador in Belgium and Luxemburg, and in 1981 the Polish ambassador to Holland was appointed to Ireland. From 1958 until 1990, there was no Polish embassy or consulate in Ireland.<sup>9</sup> In autumn 1979, Ireland saw a visit of yet another Polish man, Pope John Paul II. The three-day papal pilgrimage attracted crowds of 2.5 million people, nearly three-quarters of the Irish population. For the Poles in Ireland meeting His Holiness had a very different and special meaning. A new, strong community was born.

#### THE IRISH POLISH SOCIETY

When in 1977 Fr. Klaus Piotr Cieszyński searched for Polish names in the local Irish telephone book, he did not realise that he created a first data base for the Polish community in Ireland. This list of names proved to be very useful when Dr Dermot Ryan, the Archbishop of Dublin, on 21 October 1978, concelebrated a special Mass in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral to mark the election of a new Pope, John Paul II. Fr. Cieszyński found 37 Polish names and all, with their Irish or Polish families, were later that day invited to the Jesuit House for Studies in Milltown in Dublin for a tea party. "Klaus predicted that the Polish cardinal, Archbishop of Kraków, may be elected [...]. [He] was determined to keep the Polish community together and started arranging a gathering to celebrate Christmas with 'Opłatek' on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1979."<sup>10</sup> In order to organise this and any future events, early on the morning of that Sunday, another gathering took place, and a steering committee of the Irish Polish Society (IPS) met for the first time at Newpark Comprehensive School in Blackrock in Dublin. The purpose of the meeting was to establish the forms and means of a new Polish organisation with the committee elected as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> J. SKOLIMOWSKI, C. LUSIŃSKI, *Ireland and Poland. Common Perspectives*, Dublin: Embassy of the Republic of Poland 2001, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> J. PŁACHECKI, *A Timeline of Diplomatic Relations*, [in:] *Polish Diplomacy in Ireland*, ed. J. Płachecki, Dublin: Ognisko Polskie CLG 2021, pp. 46–48.

<sup>10</sup> 'Opłatek' is an old Polish custom of sharing a Christmas wafer; see H. JOHNSTON, *Early Days of the Irish Polish Society*, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 7(2020), pp.163-164.

Jan Kamiński as Chairman, Helena Johnston as Secretary, and other members, Sean Lyons, Paul Cusack (later resigned), Artur Tyszkiewicz, Michał Scheunert, and William Johnston.<sup>11</sup> This happened to be a necessary step since Fr. Cieszyński discovered that another Irish-Polish Cultural Society was already active with Dr John de Courcey (Ireland) as Chairman, Mary Flynn as Secretary, and seven other members. Among them only one person, Lusia Ryan, was of Polish origin. However, with similar goals of “promoting Polish culture through interactions with the Irish community”, the two societies, did not reach agreement to merge.<sup>12</sup> The de Courcey-Ireland group was considered to be pro-socialist, held few events, was soon dissolved and left no record of its activities. Similarly, the negotiations with the representatives of the Polish Trade Mission of the Polish People’s Republic never reached any conclusion and the Irish Polish Society became the only voice for the Polish community in Ireland. After a successful ‘Opłatek’ and Chopin’s Birthday Anniversary Piano and Song Recital on 22 February 1979, at the next IPS committee meeting on February 27, a new member, Dr Janina Krzyżanowska-Lyons, joined the Society – a future Chairperson and leader of the Polish community.<sup>13</sup> Soon the articles of Rules of the Irish Polish Society were written and the purpose of the Society established to “promote greater mutual interest and understanding between the Irish and Polish communities through social and cultural activities and to promote, sponsor, teach, study, advise and encourage interest in and knowledge of the culture, history, peoples, language and traditions generally of Poland and the Polish people.”<sup>14</sup> In July, a papal visit to Ireland was announced for 29 September until 1 October 1979. On the second day of the pilgrimage the Pope met the Polish people in the garden of the Apostolic Nunciature at Navan Rd. in Dublin.

Beforehand, at 6 am, the Poles practised singing together conducted by Maciej Smoleński (but sang awfully off-key in the Pope’s presence – surely out of emotion!). The Polish diaspora in Ireland was small at the time, though swelled by the Poles from Great Britain. The legendary 89-year-old Mrs. Coppens from

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<sup>11</sup> See H. JOHNSTON, *Early days of the Irish Polish Society* (part: *Appendix I, The archival documents*), “The Irish Polish Society Yearbook” 7(2020), p.168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>13</sup> See E. DOLAN, *Irish Polish Society Chairpersons in years 1979-2016*, “The Irish Polish Society Yearbook” 3(2016), p. 168.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>14</sup> See *Rules of the Irish Polish Society*, “The Irish Polish Society Yearbook” 2(2015), p. 223.

Kraków (the mother of Mrs. Dąbczewska from Carnew) was the oldest person in attendance, and several-week-old Kasia Ożmin was the youngest.<sup>15</sup>

In order to defray expenses which were incurred for His Holiness' pilgrimage, participants in the audience were asked to contribute: IR£5 per family and IR£3 per individual with no family.<sup>16</sup> Any additional contributions were to be used for future activities of the Society and had to be paid to the IPS secretary, Dr Janina Lyons at Blanchardstown in Dublin, and that is how she remembers that time:

Through my house went around 400 people. They all had to show their invitations. They had to prove that they are Poles, in order to obtain them. All kinds of different people were pulling out of their archives all sorts of information about their Polish roots. In the Phoenix Park during the Pope's visit, we had a separate sector. They all were packed, but because us Poles were less, then our sector was more loose. We involved to that our Irish friends too. It was so wonderful...<sup>17</sup>

The visit of John Paul II to Ireland and his meeting with the Poles consolidated the Irish Polish Society. Most of the events organised by the IPS were social, cultural and religious. The members, their families and friends were celebrating together the Polish National Day, traditional Christmas Eve 'wigilia' meals, egg painting at Easter; they organised many concerts and fundraisers. Also, there were Polish Holy Masses celebrated in different places, sometimes in private homes.<sup>18</sup> "The Christmas Eve on Saturday, 12 December 1981, was unique" – remembers Hanna Dowling, a longstanding secretary of the Irish Polish Society.

The Society did not have its own place and the celebration was held at the Servite's monastery in Rathfarnham, helped by Father Dermot McNeice, the then Polish "chaplain". A mass took place, carols were sung, plenty of food was served. All was "on contributory basis" – various people brought different dishes. A very warm and friendly atmosphere. An excellent Nativity scene had been prepared by the talented Ula Retzlaff O'Carroll (a graduate of Polish and

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<sup>15</sup> H. DOWLING, *Polish immigrants*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>16</sup> See H. JOHNSTON, *Early days of the Irish Polish Society (Appendix I)*, p. 185.

<sup>17</sup> S. STOCHLA, 'The Girl-Guide Must Act' – an Interview with Dr Janina Lyons, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 5(2018), p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> J. PŁACHECKI, *The only Polish House in Dublin*, [in:] ed. J. Płachecki, *The Polish House in Ireland, An Illustrated Chronicle*, Dublin: Ognisko Polskie CLG 2019, pp. 12-15.

theatre studies at KUL, Lublin Catholic University, and a painter). It included the typical Nativity figures – angels, devil, Herod, the Magi, as well as contemporary figures – Lech Wałęsa and General Jaruzelski. Those were very hard times in Poland – shortages of basic commodities, political and economic chaos, tensions, protests, strikes. The Nativity theatricals included a “prophetic” scene – the devil egging General Jaruzelski on, to deal with those unruly Poles by means of war. The very same night General Jaruzelski announced martial law in Poland!<sup>19</sup>

#### AID FOR POLAND

The reaction of the international community as well as the Irish government was prompt but typically diplomatic.<sup>20</sup> A joint statement from the ten Foreign Ministers of the European Community after their meeting on 15 December 1981 expressed “concern at developments in Poland and profound sympathy for the Polish people”, and called on “all signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of the Polish People’s Republic.”<sup>21</sup> This was repeated and highlighted in a very special way by the Irish Senate on December 18: “We, in Ireland have always felt a special kinship with the Polish people whose history and traditions have so many parallels with our own. For this reason the Irish people feel with particular keenness the general anxiety concerning recent developments in Poland.”<sup>22</sup> Concerns regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms were often repeated, as well as the suppression of trade unions, inhuman conditions of detention and the tragic deaths of seven workers in Katowice.<sup>23</sup> Among other issues, the restoring of dialogue with the Church and Solidarity were repeatedly mentioned and the threat of coercion from outside.<sup>24</sup> In light of the

<sup>19</sup> H. DOWLING, *Polish immigrants*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> See also G. DOHERTY, *Ireland, Europe and the Provision of Food Aid to Poland 1980-81*, “Irish Studies in International Affairs” 24(2013), pp. 291-309.

<sup>21</sup> Poland, Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Ten (EEC members states), 15 December 1981.

<sup>22</sup> Statement by Senator James Dooge, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Seanad Éireann, 18 December 1981.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> The probability of intervention of the Warsaw Pact troops was noted at the Final Communiqué of the Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Ten, Brussels, 4 Jan. 1982, point 5, see also: Dr Whitaker’s speech on the situation in Poland; Motion at Seanad Éireann debate,

suppression of freedom in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the possibility of a Soviet Union invasion if the military authorities in Poland were unable to control the situation, was reported to the public by the Irish Government.<sup>25</sup> On 22 January 1982, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator James Dooge, announced the granting of aid for Poland from the Disaster Relief Fund and a sum of £50,000 evenly channelled through the Irish Red Cross Society and the relief organisation, *Trocaire*. The funds were allocated towards the distribution of food and medicines by the Catholic Church in Poland. While the official efforts of the Irish Government were developing gradually, the response of the Irish public and the small Polish community in Ireland against martial law in Poland was immediate and decisive. On December 18, the Christian Community Movement provided a container of salted herrings (111 barrels of 110 kilos each) which was delivered to the Polish ship SS Nałęczów at the Dublin docks, as well as a container of medicines and food (including powdered milk for children) provided by the Irish-Polish Society. The second container of foodstuffs and drugs from the Rotary Club, Dundalk, was stored in the Christian Community Centre at 22 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, awaiting the next shipment to the Charitable Commission of the Episcopacy of Poland in Szczecin. This channel of communication to Fr. Ireneusz Antkowiak in Szczecin was established as early as December 11, 1981!<sup>26</sup> On December 27, a special mass for Poland took place in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral, celebrated by the Polish priests and Fr. Dowling. The Chairman of the Irish Polish Society, Prof. Maciej Smoleński, made a memorable presentation about Poland and the Western attitudes towards Polish people.<sup>27</sup> On December 31 he published a letter in the Irish Times, notifying: "The Irish Polish Society would like to announce that there will be a 'vigil' outside the Russian Embassy at 3pm on Friday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982 to show 'Solidarity' with the people of Poland and to protest against the Soviet – sponsored 'State of Martial Law...'"<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the Irish Polish Society Relief Fund account number was released to the public for more donations and a call for a prompt expres-

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18 Dec 1981, vol. 96, No. 17 <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/1981-12-18/6> (accessed 19.02.2022).

<sup>25</sup> *Interview with the Taoiseach* [the Irish Prime Minister], RTE News at 1.30 pm, Thursday, 24 December 1981 and *Interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator James Dooge*, "Today Tonight", Monday, 4 January 1982.

<sup>26</sup> T.C.G. O'MAHONY, *Aid for Poland*, "The Irish Times", 23.12.1981, and Maurice WALSH, *Irish food distributed in Poland*, "The Irish Times", 21.01.1982.

<sup>27</sup> J. LYONS, *Lecture in University of Cork: 'Solidarity. A Retrospective'*, "The Irish Polish Society Yearbook" 5(2018), p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> M. SMOLEŃSKI, *Poland and Protest*, "The Irish Times", 31.12.1981.

sion of strong condemnation for the tragic events in Poland by the Irish Government was communicated.<sup>29</sup> This lack of decisive and sufficiently positive attitude by the Irish officials was noted by the Sunday Tribune's Diplomatic Correspondent, Joe Carroll in his article "'Weak' Irish line on Poland criticised" from 3 January 1982.<sup>30</sup> The second protest organised by the IPS outside the Soviet Embassy took place on January 24 and, as previously, it was announced by Prof. Smoleński in a letter to the Irish Times with a call for funds and a report on Poland's situation.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, thanks to a Polish contact in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr Jan Vincent Chak, who served there as a Russian language teacher, the meeting between the IPS Chairman delegation led by Prof. Maciej Smoleński and Minister James Dooge, took place on January 28. Among the "technical" matters further support for Poland was discussed, including food and fish, and the problem of receiving Polish refugees by Austria and Ireland, as well as the role of the IPS in Irish Government aid for Poland.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile in January, the Irish-Polish Solidarity Committee was formed consisting of 17 Polish and Irish trade unionists, students and others. The public meeting took place at Liberty Hall on March 24 and a further meeting on March 25 with the Irish Foreign Ministry with the aim of generating support for members of Solidarity in detention among their Irish colleagues – trade-union members.<sup>33</sup> On 28 October 1982, Dáil Éireann [lower chamber of the Irish Parliament] received the amendment to the Irish Parliament's resolution for recognition of free trade unions in Poland and expressed disappointment at the continuation of martial law in Poland.<sup>34</sup> The statement was repeated later during the Dáil Debate on Poland, on 4 November 1982. Meanwhile, the IPS's efforts to collect donations and organise fundraising events continued. On February 7, the "All Priests' Show" was organised in the Olympia Theatre and on March 7 a "Chopin Concert" in the National Concert Hall performed by Michal O'Rourke. Wanda Wiłkomirska, a well-known Polish violinist, who appeared on the TV programme "The Late, Late Show" on the main Irish RTE station and talked about Poland and advertised the concert. On 3 May 1982, a show in the Olympia Theatre "The Pirates of Penzance" took place and an Exhibition of Art by Patrick

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<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> J. CARROLL, *'Weak' Irish line on Poland criticised*, "The Sunday Tribune", 03.01.1982.

<sup>31</sup> M. SMOLEŃSKI, *Poland and Protest*, "Irish Times", 23.01.1982.

<sup>32</sup> Contents of the meeting between the Minister and the Irish Polish Society, 28 January 1982.

<sup>33</sup> Among the Poles Jan Cywiński, Wojciech Kowalewski and Marek Gorzdecki; A. WHITE, *Solidarity Speakers*, "Irish Times", 20.03.1982.

<sup>34</sup> M.D. Higgins, Dáil Éireann, Notice of amendment to motion, no 3, 28 October 1982.



Maguire in St. James Hospital. As a result of all the IPS activities, radio, press and TV advertisements the Irish public kept sending money and goods. On November 9, a special Mass of Thanksgiving for the Canonisation of Maximilian Kolbe was celebrated by the IPS's chaplain Fr. Dermot Mc Neice. One of the speakers was Fr. Desmond Forristal who wrote the book *Maximilian of Auschwitz*. The royalties of £5,000 from the book were donated for Aid to Poland. On Sunday, November 14, Archbishop of Dublin Dr Dermot Ryan announced a special collection at all Masses in Ireland for Aid to Poland. The amount of £250,000 was collected that day and later sent to John Paul II's office for distribution in Poland.<sup>35</sup> Within 18 months, from December 1981 until the middle of 1983, 20 containers of food and medicine were shipped to Szczecin to the Polish Episcopate, and a total amount of £300,000 of goods distributed in Poland.<sup>36</sup> Never again in the history of the Polish diaspora in Ireland were similar quotas achieved and such a huge effort by a small but well-organised community undertaken. On 26 August 1983, Fr. Ireneusz Antkowiak, the Director of the Charitable Commission of the Episcopate of Poland in Szczecin, visited Ireland to give thanks for the Aid to Poland and meet a new Chairperson of the IPS, Dr Janina Lyons. He celebrated a Holy Mass for the IPS members in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral and later met with the Society's members and their relatives. For many of them it was a very special summary of the charitable action for Poles in the old country during martial law, the miners, the Solidarity movement and Polish families. Martial law in Poland was lifted on 22 July 1983. The Irish Polish Society had become a strong and solidified organisation with the ability to influence the public, government and mass media, gathering and transferring huge amounts of money and goods for a single purpose. The Society became a united voice of Poles, their Irish families and friends and an effective Polish pressure group on Irish soil. But most of the all the Irish Poles proved to be reliable supporters of their own country of origin, mindful of their identity, power and potentials.

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<sup>35</sup> J. LYONS, *Lecture in University*, pp. 159-161.

<sup>36</sup> This was possible thanks to efforts of Dr Janina Lyons; see H. JOHNSTON, *Early days of the Irish Polish Society*, p. 165 and H. DOWLING, *Polish immigrants*, p. 24.

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THE POLES IN IRELAND  
AGAINST MARTIAL LAW IN POLAND 1981-1983

Summary

Aid for Poland during the period of martial law in Poland was organised predominantly by members of the Irish Polish Society, the Irish Catholic Church with the help of the Charitable Commission of the Episcopate of Poland, Polish merchant ships, Irish shipping agents, Irish pharmaceutical and food firms, and generous Irish people. A small Polish community in a short period of time managed to collect in Ireland unbelievable amounts of money and goods. During the 18 months of fundraising, £250,000 in cash and £300,000 worth of food and medicines was shipped to Poland in 20 containers. £50,000 was donated separately by the Irish Government to the Irish Red Cross and the charitable organisation *Trocaire*. A huge political effort was made to influence the Irish Government to condemn the imposing of martial law in Poland. The Irish Polish Society became a strong and solidified Polish organisation, a united voice for Poles in Ireland and an effective Polish pressure group, supportive for their country of origin and knowing their identity and potentials.

**Keywords:** Martial Law in Poland; Aid to Poland; the Irish Polish Society; Irish Catholic Church; Solidarity; Prof. Maciej Smoleński; Dr Janina Lyons; Fr. Ireneusz Antkowiak; Fr. Dermot Mc Neice.

POLACY W IRLANDII WOBEC STANU WOJENNEGO W POLSCE  
W LATACH 1981-1983

Streszczenie

Akcja „Pomocy dla Polski” w czasie stanu wojennego przeprowadzona została przez członków Towarzystwa Irlandzko-Polskiego przy współpracy irlandzkiego Kościoła katolickiego, Komisji Charytatywnej Episkopatu Polski, statków polskich linii oceanicznych, irlandzkich agencji transportu, firm farmaceutycznych i spożywczych, a przede wszystkim dzięki hojności irlandzkiego społeczeństwa. Mała polska społeczność w krótkim okresie czasu zdołała zebrać niewyobrażalną kwotę pieniędzy, produktów żywnościowych i lekarstw. Podczas 18 miesięcy na zebrano 250,000 funtów w gotówce i zgromadzono różnego rodzaju produkty na kwotę 300,000 funtów. Następnie w 20 kontenerach przetransportowano je statkami do Polski. Oddzielną sumę 50,000 funtów ofiarował także irlandzki rząd, do dalszej dystrybucji przez Irlandzki Czerwony Krzyż i organizację charytatywną *Trocaire*. Olbrzymim wysiłkiem udało się wpłynąć na irlandzkich polityków, aby zdecydowali się na oficjalne potępienie wprowadzenia stanu wojennego w Polsce. Towarzystwo Irlandzko-Polskie przekształciło się silną i zwartą organizację polonijną, będącą jedynym głosem Polaków w Irlandii i efektywną grupą nacisku. Dali się także poznać jako oddani sprzymierzeńcy ich dalekiej ojczyzny, świadomi swojej tożsamości i potencjału.

**Słowa kluczowe:** stan wojenny w Polsce; pomoc dla Polski; Towarzystwo Irlandzko –Polskie; Kościół katolicki w Irlandii; Solidarność; prof. Maciej Smoleński; dr Janina Lyons; ks. Ireneusz Antkowiak; ks. Dermot Mc Neice.