Steampunk Association: The Project for a Polish Utopian Settlement in California in the Mid-19th Century

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Abstract

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This article provides a case study of a project for a Polish utopian settlement (Osada), which was to be established in California, USA. Author Kazimierz Tomkiewicz's, a Polish political exile from the early 1830s, developed a blueprint in Paris in 1850 and sent it to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, seeking his support for its realisation. Osada was to be an agro-industrial settlement, enabling Poles participation in the growing global technological and economic progress of the time. In the proposed model, the settlement was envisioned as an association, maintaining a democratic decision-making process and an equal distribution of goods among settlers. This paper argues that Tomkiewicz—perhaps inspired by Saint-Simonianist thinking—in fact coined a scheme for a steampunk association, believing that labour and creativity might not only improve the situation of Polish emigres, but also transform the Polish soul.

In one of his famous essays, Oscar Wilde emphasised that a map of the world that did not include Utopia was not worth even a glance. This tempting-cum-intriguing phrase may raise interesting methodological issues, which could loom large when attempting view the world atlas with hope. What kind of map might include a utopia (writ small) and what method will allow us to identify it when the general image gets blurred? The latter question becomes relevant when the object of a utopian investigation comes from an East-Central Europe on the verge of modernity, with its semi-peripheral, imperial political settings and multiple centres of cultural gravity.[1] Indeed, the pressure exerted by empires—which had dominated the region for decades—spawned phenomena that pushed any utopian ideas to alternative spheres of communication. In numerous cases, such musings could not be presented or discussed in legal outlets, and many authors from the region who dreamed of a better society were forced to spend long periods in exile. As a result, their works mirrored not only the conditions existing in the writer's homeland, but also expressed

1   For a broader overview, see: TRENCSÉNYI, Balázs et al. *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'*. Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2016.

and/or reflected concerns related to the current situation of exiles in their host countries, mostly in Western Europe. Additionally stimulating such reflections was the fact that the pace of industrial development in Western Europe was profoundly transforming the region, so much that political emigres from East-Central Europe felt that they were in a different, rapidly changing world.

To delve deeper into these intriguing tendencies, this paper focuses on a particular example of utopian work; the idea for a Polish agro-industrial settlement (Osada) in California drawn up by the Polish exile Kazimierz Tomkiewicz. The project, dated 18 October 1850, was written in Paris and subsequently sent to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski hoping to gain his support. The prince—being the leader of the so-called Hotel Lambert, i.e. an aristocratic-liberal wing of the Polish Great Emigration[2]—was the most influential figure among Polish exiles of the time. For many years, Czartoryski had managed to establish and sustain relations with numerous politicians in Western Europe, acting as a de facto Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs.[3]

Tomkiewicz's project was never published in any printed form, and remains available today only in archival fonds. As such, it consists of several dozen hand-written pages, clearly divided into three complementary sections. The introduction offers an outline of the general circumstances in which the Polish nation—deprived of its independent statehood—sought to find a way of existence and path of development. The second part details numerous regulations to be implemented followed by the persons involved in the prospected endeavour. In a short afterword, Tomkiewicz once more expounded upon the ideological foundations of his proposal. All in all, it is a coherent manuscript, offering not only valuable insight into Polish utopianism, but also novel thoughts espoused by the author.

In the broader picture, the project echoes the widespread tendency during this era of sketching a variety of models of utopian settlements that were to be implemented and expected to flourish in lands geographically very far away.[4] In particular, figures representing different variations of early socialism perceived various parts of the Americas, North Africa, Australia, and even chunks of Russia, as potential dreamlands. However, even against this broader context—an era intellectually abundant with far-reaching ideas of social change—the originality of Tomkiewicz's manuscript is tangible, as he offers both diagnoses and remedies which were atypical. In order to demonstrate the model's novelty, this paper includes a comparison of the Osada project with other similar blueprints from the period. Yet, in order to fully comprehend the matter, Tomkiewicz's background also needs to be understood. This is the purpose of the following section.

2   This paper follows the terminology proposed by Henryk Żaliński. See: *Poglądy Hotelu Lambert na kształt powstania zbrojnego (1832−46)*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1990.

3   KUKIEL, Marian. *Czartoryski and European unity 1770−1861*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1955, p. 268.

4   From the extensive literature on the subject, see especially: WILSON, William E. *The Angel and the Serpent: The Story of New Harmony*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1967 (2nd edition); SUTTON, Robert P. *Les Icariens: the utopian dream in Europe and America*. Urbana : Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994; ANTONY, Michel. Les communautés utopiques sont-elles toujours condamnées à disparaître? In *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, 2016, no. 133, http://chrhc.revues.org/5480 [last viewed on 5 May 2023]; JENNINGS, Chris. *Paradise now: the story of American Utopianism*. New York : Random House, 2017; CORDILLOT, Michel. Rethinking the failure of the French Fourierist colony in Dallas. In *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, 2018, no. 29 (3), pp. 118–133.

Biographical background

Relatively little is known about the life of Kazimierz Tomkiewicz, even his date of birth and death has not been established. Based on information provided in a letter from 1862 to the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs Department (Sekretarz Wydziału Weteranów), one may suppose that he was born in 1802.[5] In general, the dispersed facts from his biography indicate clearly that the moulds of his life were typical for Poles who found themselves in exile after the failure of the November Uprising of 1831. That year, Tomkiewicz was a second lieutenant in the Lithuanian–Ruthenian infantry legion. When the Russian Empire ultimately prevailed in the war he, along with several thousands of his peers,[6] fled from his homeland. Tomkiewicz travelled through Moravia and the German states arriving in northern France, where he remained until the later 1830s, changing his exact whereabouts several times. First he settled in Bourges, where the French authorities established a "dépôt." Dépôts in the early 1830s were intended to be alms houses for Polish exiles, while simultaneously keeping them under control and isolated from French society. In fact, they were organised based on the model of dépôts de guerre, which was also aimed at keeping former soldiers in a quasi-military discipline.[7]

Like thousands of his compatriots, Tomkiewicz would not return to Poland. Despite being a rather rank-and-file member of the Polish community in exile, during his long sojourn in France, he strived to act for the liberation of his beloved fatherland. In August 1833, Tomkiewicz joined the Polish Democratic Society, which marked the beginning of a political career which peaked during the relatively short period of 1833–1841. Established in Paris in March 1832, the Society was a coherent organisation structured into local groups (sections) and an ideological guiding headquarters (Central Section).[8] Its aim was to recreate an independent Polish state on the territories of the erstwhile Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the view of the Polish democrats, the regained state should implement numerous substantive reforms, including the abolition of corvee labour and the enfranchisement of peasants.[9] Upon joining the ranks of the Society, Tomkiewicz demonstrated likewise his negative views towards the Polish authorities and military commanders in the recent failed uprising, whom he accused of procrastination in waging war and in some cases, even of treason.

5   Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie (BCz), fond (f.) 6652 III T.2. Archiwum Hotelu Lambert. Stowarzyszenie Podatkowe – Instytucja Czci i Chleba; Korespondencja i podania w sprawie udzielenia pomocy kierowane. Letter of Juliusz Daniel Jedliński to Rufin Piotrowski, Paris, 30 September 1862.

6   KALEMBKA, Sławomir. *Wielka Emigracja: polskie wychodźstwo polityczne w latach 1831–1862*. Warszawa : Wiedza Powszechna, 1971, pp. 56–57.

7   KUK, Leszek. Wielkie zakłady emigracji w latach 1832–1833. Rys historyczno-statystyczny. In KALEMBKA, Sławomir (ed.) *Rozprawy z dziejów XIX. i XX. wieku przygotowane dla uczczenia pamięci Profesora Witolda Łukaszewicza*. Toruń : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1978, pp. 47–60.

8   KALEMBKA, Sławomir. *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie w latach 1832–1846*. Poznań; Toruń : TNT/ Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966.

9   BROCK, Peter. *The Political Program of the Polish Democratic Society*. New York : Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1969; ŻALIŃSKI, Henryk. *Kształt polityczny Polski w ideologii Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego (1832–1846)*. Wrocław; Warszawa; Kraków; Gdańsk : Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1976.

From the very beginning, Tomkiewicz was an active member in the Society and his position in the organisation gradually grew.[10] After the dépôt in Bourges was dissolved, he moved to Caen, where he co-created a Section of the Society, quickly becoming its leader. Later he settled in Bayeux but shortly thereafter, in 1837, moved to Poiters to become editor-in-chief of the journal *Demokrata Polski* (Polish Democrat). He was directly solicited to take up this position by one of the crucial ideologues of the Society, Jan Nepomucen Janowski. This took place during the period of ideological crystallisation and the reinforcement of the organisational coherence of the Polish democrats in exile. The Central Section thus strived to publish a journal in which it would be possible to spell out the principles of the Polish democratic movement.[11]

However, as early as 15 January 1841, Tomkiewicz was ousted due to his lack of a "light pen." His meticulous organisational skills turned out to be insufficient to keep the role and he lacked journalistic skill. Indeed, in four years he penned only several minor articles, while columns of the journal were filled with papers of other figures, such as the above-mentioned Jan Nepomucen Janowski or Wojciech Darasz. The latter, while acting officially as an editor's assistant, had been the de facto editor-in-chief and a prominent author contributing to the journal since 1838.[12] As recalled by Wiktor Heltman, Tomkiewicz limited his efforts solely to writing short "bandes" (columns), and delivering printed copies to the post office. The decision concerning his resignation was made as early as 1840.[13] After jettisoning Tomkiewicz, the boards of all Polish democratic journals were moved to Versailles.

Tomkiewicz did not readily accept the decision. From May 1841, he began to publish his own journal under the same name, *Demokrata Polski*, in Poitiers, a situation which confused many subscribers. At that time, he visibly focused on criticising the politics pursued by the Central Section of the Society. In essence, he expressed support for the tactics and programme espoused by the Zjednoczenie Emigracji Polskiej (Union of Polish Emigration), which strived—in accordance with its name—to unify the entire Polish community in exile under one organisational umbrella.[14] As Heltman noted in one of his letters from that time, Tomkiewicz "[m]ade this step in order to revolutionise the Society and unify the entire emigration under one umbrella."[15] Tomkiewicz had to have been aware that he was treading on thin ice, and shortly thereafter the game was over. On 7 August 1841 Tomkiewicz was, according to the decision of the Fraternal Court (Sąd Bratni) in Strasbourg, removed from the Polish

10 KALEMBKA 1966, Towarzystwo, p. 34.

11 KALEMBKA, Sławomir. *Prasa demokratyczna Wielkiej Emigracji: dzieje i główne koncepcje politycznie (1832–1863)*. Toruń : UMK, 1977, pp. 58–59.

12 KALEMBKA 1977. Prasa demokratyczna, pp. 58–62.

13 ŁUCZAKÓWNA, Helena. *Wiktor Heltman, 1796–1874*. Poznań : Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1935, p. 142.

14 CYGLER, Bogusław. *Zjednoczenie Emigracji Polskiej 1837–1846*. Gdańsk : Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1963.

15 *Letter of Wiktor Heltman to Walery Breański, 11 June 1841*. Quoted in ŁUCZAKÓWNA 1935, Wiktor Heltman, p. 143.

Democratic Society.[16] About a year later, in August 1842, after publishing only 28 issues in an irregular manner, Tomkiewicz ceased editorial activity.

Interestingly however, as early as 1843, Tomkiewicz established close ties with Czartoryski's faction, becoming a member of the Monarchic Society of the Third of May (Towarzystwo Monarchiczne Trzeciego Maja).[17] As he explained in a letter to Czartoryski, he found monarchy to be the most suitable political system for Poland, because "[a]longside independence and territorial integrity, [it will ensure] freedom and equality under the law, the proper administration of justice for the people, in other words, that the implementation of all democratic principles serves as the purpose of its aspirations and efforts, as the strength and foundation of its existence."[18] What is more, in the letter, he expresses a belief that the Poles in exile should search for a way to unite. In 1846, Tomkiewicz, at that time living in Tours, published a short paper—once more on unity of Polish exiles—in the *Trzeci Maj* journal. The journal was edited by supporters of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, and was at odds with the views of *Demokrata Polski*.[19]

However, at this point Tomkiewicz's journalistic and political career was over and he only sparsely took part in endeavours by the Polish emigre community. Much later, in 1858, perhaps disappointed by the general course of ongoing events, he investigated the possibility of returning to his homeland by requesting amnesty, although he never managed to realise the plan. At that time, he was likely ill and lived in poverty, subsisting on support from charitable organizations. As stated by Juliusz Daniel Jedliński, in 1862, Tomkiewicz was "so weakened and plagued by coughing that he should be considered a cripple."[20] Despite that, later in 1869, he once more supported the initiative aimed at the unification of the Polish political emigres.[21] This appears to be his last recorded involvement in public affairs.

Little can be said about Tomkiewicz's worldview as he wrote only a few short papers. Certainly, he shared a generalised democratic stance and was familiar with important political authors (like Montesquieu) and crucial documents (like the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789*). In a letter from 1834, he explained that among the key principles of a "happy human society" lie such values as virtue and conscience.[22] Furthermore, he

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16   Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (BJ), fond (f.) 3685/3, Korespondencja J.N. Janowskiego, Letter of Wiktor Heltman to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, 12 August 1841, p. 70; *Dodatek do Demokraty Polskiego*, vol. 4, 1841, 8 pages.

17   For more about monarchism in Czartoryski's environment, see: RYSIEWICZ, Mikołaj. *Monarchia, lud, religia: monarchizm konserwatywnych środowisk politycznych Wielkiej Emigracji w latach 1831−1848*. Kraków : Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015; LIEBICH, André. The man who would not be king: Adam Czartoryski and Polish monarchy. In *History of European Ideas*, 2021, DOI 10.1080/01916599.2021.1921411

18   BCz, f. 6590 III, Archiwum Hotelu Lambert Towarzystwo Instrukcyjno-Monarchiczne Trzeciego Maja, Listy deklaracyjne do ks. Adama Jerzego Czartoryskiego wojewody, Poiters, 25 November 1843, p. 15.

19   *Trzeci Maj*, 1846, no. 11−12, pp. 241−244.

20   BCz, f. 6652 III T.2., Letter of Jedliński to Piotrowski.

21   TYROWICZ, Marian. *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie, 1832−1863: przywódcy i kadry członkowskie: przewodnik biobibliograficzny*. Warszawa : Książka i Wiedza, 1964, pp. 701−702.

22   BJ, f. 3685/7, Korespondencja J.N. Janowskiego, Letter of Kazimierz Tomkiewicz to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, 24 January 1834, p. 76.

expressed a firm conviction that citizens in legal and political terms should no longer be perceived as rich men or noblemen, as was the case in the old Commonwealth, for such a definition was far too narrow for the current period. Instead, he opted for a more comprehensive understanding of equality, allowing the term "citizen" to apply to "everyone who is a part of society."[23] In the same letter however, Tomkiewicz described concerns about unlimited liberty, which would lead "to debauchery, to luxury, or to harm and injury to another, finally to mastering the will of another, to despotism."[24] Finally, in this conceptually and intellectually rich communication, Tomkiewicz delved into political systems, and in particular to the differences among Poles and Frenchmen in their definitions. As he explained, "Frenchmen call the usurpation of power 'anarchy', and for them an anarchic government is one that does not obey the people's will [...]. [We] understand by 'anarchy' the absence of any authority, i.e. a state without government."[25]

Perhaps the most important evidence of Tomkiewicz's engagement in political frays, besides joining the Polish Democratic Society, is the fact that his name may be found among the long list of signatories of a public statement issued in 1834—well-known among Polish political emigrants—openly criticising Czartoryski's politics.[26] At that time the prince, and all the more so his supporters in exile, claimed that he was predestined to represent and speak on behalf of the Polish nation in the situation where no official Polish government existed. Such a posture on the part of Czartoryski and his followers triggered harsh criticism among democrats, who questioned the legitimacy their actions. In fact, people sharing even moderate democratic views opted for an alternative model of political representation—a more inclusive one, albeit also grounded on patriotic ardour, not in past legacies and alleged personal virtues.[27] This is why many democrats began to collect signatures under the formal statement that the prince did not represent the Polish nation—even if some of the signatories (from among the 2 840 signatures) supported the petition because of their personal ties with other signatories. One may suppose that this was not the case with Tomkiewicz, who had already been an active democrat. It may look paradoxical then that as early as in 1850, he sought Czartoryski's support for his utopian settlement project. Such contradictions, however, were not unusual for his generation of Poles in exile,[28] and stemmed from overwhelming feelings of dislocation that may be understood in both geographical and political terms.

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23   BJ, f. 3685/7, Letter of Kazimierz Tomkiewicz to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, p. 77.
24   BJ, f. 3685/7, Letter of Kazimierz Tomkiewicz to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, p. 77.
25   BJ, f. 3685/7, Letter of Kazimierz Tomkiewicz to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, p. 77.
26   *Akt z roku 1834 przeciw Adamowi Czartoryskiemu wyobrazicielowi systemu polskiej arystokracyi.* Poiters : w Drukarni F.A. Saurin, 1839.
27   KULIGOWSKI, Piotr. From "de facto king" to peasants' communes: a struggle for representation in the discourse of the Polish Great Emigration, 1832−1846/48. In *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 2020, vol. 15, no 1, pp. 108−113, DOI 10.3167/choc.2020.150106
28   WITKOWSKA, Alina. *Cześć i skandale: o emigracyjnym doświadczeniu Polaków*. Gdańsk : Wydawn. słowo/obraz terytoria, 1997.

Searching for new solutions

It is no coincidence that Paris was the city in which Tomkiewicz elaborated on the project discussed in this work. The capital of revolutions in the first half of the 19th century became a shelter for international revolutionaries fleeing their homelands. In hosting them, Paris acted as a political laboratory in which exiles could meet and establish transnational spaces.[29] There, in pubs, higher education facilities, banquet halls and hotel conference rooms or in private apartments they discussed the burning issues of the day and cultivated hybrid political ideas that synthesised and intertwined their experiences and expectations. The metaphor of a laboratory seems all the more relevant, for in Paris the conditions to think and speak up politically were much more welcoming than in many European countries. Indeed, in France political exiles could act and debate beyond local conditions and entanglements, in particular, beyond the eyes of censors and the scope of imperial powers, which gave them a wider space for public expression and made it, so to speak, more sterile.

It should be noted, however, that after the failed revolutions and unrest of 1848, the situation of political exiles in Europe changed profoundly. A number of political radicals had engaged in the upheavals and seeing the movement stifled, along with the growing wave of anti-communist and anti-revolutionary reactions,[30] decided to leave France. The inner circle of the Polish Democratic Society also followed, with its Central Section operating in London in the 1850s.[31] Others, including many Frenchmen, completely abandoned any hope for transforming the political landscape in Europe and emigrated to the Americas. Facing a world in turmoil, numerous Polish radicals remaining in France, including Tomkiewicz, sought support from Czartoryski. Indeed, Hotel Lambert in the 1850s was the only relatively coherent and vivid political milieu for Polish public life in exile. However strangely it might seem, many of those who signed the petition against the prince in 1834 and represented plainly democratic inclinations, attempted to convince Czartoryski to support their plans in the 1850s.

In proposing the idea of establishing Osada, Tomkiewicz aimed to overcome all of the difficulties experienced by the Polish community in exile with one decisive step: the creation of a Polish settlement in California. It is worth recalling that California was annexed by the United States only in 1848, as the discovery of abundant amounts of gold in this region led to a massive influx of migrants. Apparently Tomkiewicz's imagination was captured too. This explains why in the introductory part of his project report, Tomkiewicz offered a long explanation delving into why he proposed California, contrary to numerous authors who prepared utopian settlement projects without elucidating in a coherent way why they should be established in the specific region

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29   SAUNIER, Pierre-Yves. Circulations, connexions et espaces transnationaux. In *Genèses*, 2004, no. 57, pp. 110−126.

30   See: APRILE, Sylvie et al. *Comment meurt une république: autour du 2 décembre 1851*. Grâne : Créaphis, 2004.

31   RZADKOWSKA, Helena. *Działalność Centralizacji Londyńskiej Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego 1850−1862*. Wrocław; Warszawa; Kraków; Gdańsk : Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich/Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1971.

chosen. Unexpectedly, economic and geopolitical arguments were invoked. He described California with admiration, imagining the region as an area of infinite possibilities. Tomkiewicz visualised the land as a vast area with "hills unoccupied, valleys uninhabited, waiting for newcomers, where crops can be harvested three times a year."[32] Simultaneously, he was convinced that California was a new world pivot point, because it was situated at the crossroads of crucial trade routes. Creating a Polish settlement in this particular location would thus enable Poles to benefit from the burgeoning global economic and technological progress, especially taking into account that while several hundreds of Tomkiewicz's compatriots had already settled in the US, they were dispersed all over. Last but not least, the prospect of developing international connections also played a role here. Tomkiewicz hoped to establish a productive relationship with "native peoples, similar to us in their political conditions," but in particular with "that famous Anglo–Saxon–American race."[33]

It is essential to note that in presenting such a perspective, Tomkiewicz did not perceive the USA as a country tainted by the worst features of capitalism. On the contrary, he interpreted the spirit propelling the development of the country as neither egotism nor cupidity. Rather, similarly to numerous early socialists from the era, the American Fourierists first and foremost, Tomkiewicz was convinced that the country was saturated by an associationist spirit that laid the foundations for creativity and imagination.[34] By unleashing these impulses, California could rapidly develop: "Where previously there were a few poor cottages, now thousands of wealthy houses are erected [...] undiscovered valleys, wild meadows now produce wealth [...] from bays [...] emerge new impressive harbours that soon, due to their location, will [...] become global centres of trade."[35] Tomkiewicz stressed that this economic miracle would not be short-lived, for in California, the power of steam engines coincided with wise decisions concerning building a canal—soon to be the Panama Canal—and railways connecting this maritime thoroughfare with crucial American cities.[36] It is noteworthy that Tomkiewicz, convinced that his settlement would be connected with the growing global circulation of goods and people only in California, formulated such reflections at a time when the world was not fully interconnected yet.[37] Despite that, one may presume that he wholeheartedly supported the general course of capitalist development insofar as it paved the way for facilitating travel and transportation capacities.

What is then striking in Tomkiewicz's blueprint is that he justified it not chiefly in terms of the misery of existing conditions, but rather by claiming that the area's technological progress fashioned highly conducive circum-

32   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza pod tytułem Osada Polska w Kalifornii, p. 303.
33   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 306.
34   WOLSKI, Kalikst. *Do Ameryki i w Ameryce: podróże, szkice obyczajowe i obrazki z życia mieszkańców Ameryki.* Lwów : Drukarnia Zakładu nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1876; GUARNERI, Carl. *The utopian alternative: Fourierism in nineteenth-century America.* Ithaca; N. Y : Cornell University Press, 1991.
35   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 304.
36   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza.
37   FREY, James W. The Global Moment: The Emergence of Globality, 1866–1867 and the Origins of Nineteenth-Century Globalization. In *The Historian*, 2019, no. 81(1), pp. 9–56.

stances. For this reason, the introduction of his project contains paragraphs that constitute, in essence, an unexpected extolling of technological and economic progress and the willingness to join it via the new settlement. Therefore, Tomkiewicz turned the perspective shared by numerous authors of alternative utopian settlement projects from this time upside down, including not only minor authors, but also prominent figures such as Etienne Cabet, Robert Owen and Victor Considerant. At various stages of their political engagements, each of them had opted for utopian settlements, diagnosing the crisis of the social world as an all-encompassing phenomenon which could corrupt even the most ambitious social reformers.[38] Therefore in their view, the new society—be it Icaria, the New Moral World, or Harmony—should be built from scratch on virgin land. Tomkiewicz was at odds with such a perspective. He claimed that the reason why the Polish exile community suffered such endemic poverty, and why the Polish national community was unable to develop its material well-being, was that it existed outside of the vital tendencies propelling global progress. Osada was proposed as a way to join these trends, not run away from them.

What is more, he was convinced that in California, the immediate results of the continuing progress were so tangible that "today and tomorrow are not similar to each other."[39] Evaluating such changes, he was convinced that new inventions might soon occur, such as devices allowing cheaper and faster transportation. He even mentioned aerial navigation (żegluga napowietrzna), i.e. aircraft, as lurking around the corner. Interestingly, Tomkiewicz was not the first Polish author who forecasted the emergence of aviation. Several decades earlier, a similar idea was postulated by Wojciech Gutkowski, the author of a utopian, Enlightenment novel, in which he described specific devices called "powietrzne czaty" (flying spy missions) that were to exist in an ideal, Polish-speaking state situated in the Australian interior.[40] However, it is unlikely that Tomkiewicz was familiar with Gutkowski's work because, though it was written in the 1810s, it was not published in printed form until 1956.[41] Likewise, during the November Uprising, a gunner and mathematician named Ludwik Kobecki (alias Ludmilew Korylski) suggested the concept of forming a reconnaissance balloon battalion.[42] Contrary to both of these ideas, however, Tomkiewicz's proposition was not meant for military operations. Instead he dreamed of increasing the possibilities of transporting goods and mainly civilian, peaceful purposes.

The novelty of Tomkiewicz's conception lies not solely in his creativity in imagining novel technological devices, however. The aspect of key importance

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38   As examples, see: WILSON 1967; BEECHER, Jonathan. *Charles Fourier: the visionary and his world*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1986; DAVIDSON, Rondel Van. *Did we think victory great? The life and ideas of Victor Considerant*. Lanham : University Press of America, 1988; FOURN, François. *Étienne Cabet ou le temps de l'utopie*. Paris : Vendémiaire, 2014.

39   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 306.

40   See: GUTKOWSKI, Wojciech. *Podróż do Kalopei*. Edited by Zygmunt Gross. Warszawa : PWN, 1956, p. 160.

41   More on Gutkowski's work, see: BARTYŚ, Julian. *Wizjoner czy fantasta: o życiu i działalności Wojciecha Gutkowskiego (1775–1826)*. Lublin : Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1983; NAJDOWSKI, Zygmunt. *"Podróż do Kalopei" Wojciecha Gutkowskiego: studium z dziejów myśli polskiego Oświecenia*. Warszawa : PWN, 1988.

42   *Kuryer Polski*, no. 553, 1 July 1831.

here is that he investigated the possibility of employing technology to transform not only the material world, but also the human soul. Indeed, Tomkiewicz was convinced that the breath-taking achievements of inventors and engineers also necessitated that "Philosophy and politics must change their old clothes."[43] In expressing such views, Tomkiewicz overcame the ingrained convictions held by most of the Polish exiles. Being saturated by the Romantic spirit, many were convinced that technological innovations play a minor role in the social world, being subordinate to the lofty, powerful ideas that were the true, genuine factors propelling human activity. This explains why many of his compatriots seemed to overlook changes occurring in production and transportation, as if perceived not worthy of particular attention. From their point of view, genuine changes ought to happen in other spheres of human activity.[44] In this context, Tomkiewicz's statements could be seen as highly controversial by his peers because he contended that it was progress in the material world that caused the change in the sphere of many ideas toward change, and not the other way around.

The entire passage on technological progress in the work, and Tomkiewicz's intense eagerness to participate in it ran contrary to the paradigm—offered by his peers—of a suffering nation immersed "en masse." While the terminology necessary to express this condition did not exist in the late 18ᵗʰ century, it was soon invented by the Romantic generation, mainly by a collection of poets inspired by German Romanticism.[45] Such a means of expression soon reached a crescendo among Polish emigres. At the same time, there was barely language to express and describe the affairs which attracted Tomkiewicz's attention, and all the more so hardly imaginable to discuss them in such an optimistic way, to evoke strong emotions while simultaneously neglecting Romantic patterns. In response, Tomkiewicz had to come up with a way out of the vicious circle—ardour, patriotism, insurrection, sacrifice, and more ardour—in which the Polish nation seemed to be trapped.[46] The alternative path he shaped led through labour, technology, taming nature and exploiting natural resources in order to break the circle of more insurrections or bloody rebellions, like those in 1830 or 1848. Instead, Tomkiewicz promoted constant, gradual progress for the sake of the entire Polish nation.

It would be misleading, however, to interpret Tomkiewicz's piece as an overly optimistic, light-hearted sketch of a developing world, promising an even brighter future. Rather, he penned all these passages because, much to his chagrin, there was no discernible path to Poland regaining its independence in the near future. Viewed from this angle, Tomkiewicz's project is a response to the feeling of having been deceived by the insurrectionary solutions that resulted from the collapse of the wave of 1848 upheavals and unrest sweeping Europe. As mentioned previously, these national-cum-revolutionary movements had triggered new hope among political exiles from a range of countries, even inclining

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43   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 305.
44   JANION, Maria. *Romantyzm i jego media*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Universitas, 2001.
45   WIERZBICKI, Andrzej. *Spory o polską duszę: z zagadnień charakterologii narodowej w historiografii polskiej XIX i XX wieku.* Warszawa : Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2010.
46   JEDLICKI, Jerzy. *Błędne koło 1832–1864.* Warszawa : Instytut Historii PAN/Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008.

many of them to return home and involve themselves in insurrections in their homelands. What was actually brought about, however, was disappointment, bitterness and a feeling of having been deceived. This is the reason why, according to Tomkiewicz, the question of redefining the role that the Polish nation ought to play was such a burning issue. Using lofty phraseology—typical of the widespread Romantic spirit—he explained that Poles were destined to produce goods, extract resources and receive profit through hard work and intelligence, and that the path was indicated by God's finger.[47] It seems that Tomkiewicz was able to strike a Romantic chord in order to propose a positivist solution.

Settlement model

Contrary to Tomkiewicz's introduction and afterword, which are both imbued with ideological explanations, the section of the document referring to the propounded model and the internal organisation of the colony is both casuistic and concise. It is divided into 21 sections including 73 points, regulating the paramount administrative questions lurking ahead insofar as a settlement model was concerned. However, Tomkiewicz never claimed that he had invented the ideal structure once and for all. He stressed that because of the general instability of the lives of Poles in exile, the regulations of Osada should be renegotiated and amended every five years.[48] Even if well-organised and properly detailed, the future of the settlement was too unpredictable in such turbulent times.

In essence, Tomkiewicz sketched an association-ist model of a prospective colony, albeit with a rather complicated bureaucratic system to be implemented. Indeed, he proposed a multi-layered hierarchy of rights and duties. The position of a member of the association would depend on various factors; in particular on responsibilities, devotion, diligence, competencies and financial contribution, which duly reflects the economic and industrial core of the prospective endeavour. Certainly, in focusing on the industrial aspect of Osada, Tomkiewicz offered a rather detailed description of the organisation of production capacities, as well as on how property rights would be preserved and how to share the common income in a just way. The latter element was important as Tomkiewicz's association was to be grounded in the shareholder system. Workers labouring in Osada would be paid not in money, but in stocks of the settlement (with an expected interest of 5% yearly), though, shareholders could sell at any time in a cashier's office. All inhabitants were obliged to work—only the ill or handicapped were permitted to be financially dependent on the settlement.

Osada was designed as a productive association, not dominated by agriculture like many parallel projects, especially those by Polish authors,[49] but rather industry and mining. Tomkiewicz clearly specified that the goals of the Polish settlers in California that should focus on: "Mining of gold or other ores, establishment of factories and workshops, as well as houses, shops and

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47   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 305.
48   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 309.
49   As an example, see: "Gmina" by Polish Fourierist Jan Czyński: KULIGOWSKI, Piotr. Un fouriériste dans la vie politique polonaise: polémiques de Jan Czyński (1801–1867). In *Cahiers Charles Fourier*, 2019, no. 30, pp. 125–142.

trading offices."[50] He believed the success of the endeavour might persuade Polish engineers, miners, architects, agronomists, chemists, technologists, blacksmiths and representatives of other branches of modern industry to join the community and contribute to its development.[51] As it appears, he was conscious that numerous rank-and-file Polish exiles in France pursued extra-curricular education and gained valuable professional experience in a range of French enterprises.[52]

Similarly to other utopian settlement projects, the Osada proposed by Tomkiewicz was to centralise, and—as he believed—at the same time facilitate the production and distribution of basic goods. Therefore, the first step of its establishment was to build the necessary public facilities: "first, a church will be built in the settlement, then a health house for the sick and a rest house for the settlers who have fallen from strength will be established, then a school and a library will be erected."[53] Consecutively, the colony would establish other companies, centralising certain branches of production. For instance, there would only be one bakery for the entire population because, as he believed, such a solution would be both cheaper and more efficient in practical terms. This is why Tomkiewicz opted for the central distribution of goods: "Clothing and footwear, within the limits of necessary and justified needs, will also be provided ex officio at the general cost of each settler. Someone who, in any case, consumes more than half more shoes and clothing than others, shall pay the excess out of his pocket at the cost price when reckoning."[54] With respect to luxury goods, a special tax was to be imposed. In sum, Tomkiewicz opted for a highly equal society, with a certain standardisation of individual consumption.

Insofar as internal political arrangements were concerned, the settlement was to obey strictly democratic rules. For instance, all the positions, and especially the prominent offices, would rotate in order to avoid the emergence of an inner circle deciding on crucial matters unilaterally. What is more, in order to sustain the internal equality among the participants of the community, he proposed that the mayor of the settlement (Gospodarz Naczelny) was to earn no more than five times the monthly wage of an ordinary worker at Osada. Tomkiewicz also proposed certain limits in age: Gospodarz should be no younger than 24, while those who vote no younger than 20. To discuss and address public matters, the Ogół (General Assembly), composed of those who were at least twenty years old, would have all the legislative power and meet at least every three months.[55] He did not specify whether women could participate in decision-making processes but it seems rather unlikely. Between the mayor and the assembly, a Rada Nadzorcza—an executive power constituted to run the settlement and directly implement the decisions made by the Ogół—was proposed.

50   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 310.
51   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 309.
52   See: KUZICKI, Jerzy. Kursy wojskowe, kształcenie zawodowe oraz praktyka rzemieślnicza uczestników emigracji polistopadowej we Francji w latach 1831–1834. In *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 2022, vol. 84, pp. 109–144, https://doi.org/10.12775/RDSG.2022.04
53   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 311.
54   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 318.
55   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 313.

In practice, Tomkiewicz's casuistic project did not raise too expansive a reaction among his fellow exiles. Only a political emigre and supporter of prince Czartoryski's politics, Leonard Niedźwiedzki, penned a more extended commentary. On 20 October 1850, he produced three pages of manuscripts full of deletions and corrections[56] praising various merits of the proposed settlement. Interestingly however, in referring to the project, he commended in particular the aspects coupled with national affairs. As he wrote, the settlement could act as a national representative, but to secure its un-curtailed representation, it ought to be established in a country in which civil liberty existed. Thus, it was particularly vital given that: "[T]he entire globe is somehow close to us, we suffer the most pathetic poverty, all the governments of the Western world scorn us with the utmost contempt."[57] Following Tomkiewicz's reasoning, Niedźwiedzki was also convinced that California was the most appropriate choice, for its territory lies close to the Isthmus of Panama, soon to become a pivotal global maritime transit way. Moreover, similarly to the project's author, Niedźwiedzki claimed that when successfully established, Osada offered a reliable prospect for the Polish nation to leap from the "epoch of dependency" to the "epoch of development."[58] He clearly felt that Tomkiewicz's arguments, however novel they may be, could sound convincing to his peers.

In terms of practical realisation of the project, Tomkiewicz, like such figures as Charles Fourier, believed in the support of the wealthy, in particular, a supportive businessman or an open-minded monarch.[59] His intention was to ask for financial support from the most influential and wealthiest Polish aristocratic families, like the Działyńscy, Braniccy, Lubomirscy and the like. In fact, however, he apparently did not make any effort to win any of these families over for his ambitious project. Moreover, Tomkiewicz most likely believed that due to support from Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, who managed to establish a vast network of contacts among numerous statesmen, the endeavour would be supported financially by the French government.

In sum, there is no evidence that the project was ever actually implemented in any form, nor was the plan published in a printed version. As such, like many other pieces of works belonging to East-Central European utopianism, it remained doubly unrealised. First as a project with certain goals and prospected stages and second, as an intellectual contribution that could potentially galvanise debate and help shape new arguments. Tomkiewicz's project—having no direct ancestors or predecessors—thus symbolises the discontinuity in the history of the region well.

Overarching concepts and inspirations

The Osada project is grounded in several overarching concepts that were widespread among other authors (including French ones) sketching utopian

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56   A clear version was sent to Adam Jerzy Czartoryski along with the entire project.
57   Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN (BKPAN), fond (f.) 02420, Uwagi nad pismem Kazimierza Tomkiewicza pod tytułem "Osada Polska w Kalifornii", p. 1.
58   BKPAN, Uwagi nad pismem Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 2.
59   On Fourier, see: BEECHER 1986.

settlement projects, as well as in the milieu of Tomkiewicz's compatriots in exile. Therefore, even if original in his propositions, the author's vision of Osada was based on notions that had already put down roots in the political discourse of the time. Simultaneously, Tomkiewicz openly declared his reluctance to accept the highbrow theories of the day, stating that: "We leave others to talk extensively and loudly about the philosophical declaration or the new socialism and we ourselves want to strictly pursue the evangelical brotherhood of Christ in a spirit of humility."[60] Interestingly enough, in this passage, he did not renounce the principles of socialism (as he understood it). Rather, he perceived it as an artificial, redundant theory which may be fully realised through applying and obeying the simple and instinctive principles of Christian brotherhood. The latter concept seems to play a crucial role in the intellectual structure undergirding the project, appearing many times in the work.

In putting this at the forefront of his narrative, Tomkiewicz was far from being original. One should bear in mind that the concept of fraternity played a particular role in the Polish political discourse in the mid-19th century, especially as far as the climate of political emigres is concerned. Unfortunately, still no comprehensive work exists touching on the conceptual history of fraternity in Poland. However, several important remarks could be suggested. First and foremost, contrary to their French peers, who in the course of 1848 attempted to inscribe fraternity into the framework of the French legal system, even using the concept in official letters,[61] Poles quite consistently understood it as a category belonging to the higher order of universalisation. For this reason, for Polish political authors, "fraternity" meant a new type of social or even spiritual relations, which may be established and cultivated only among peers and citizens. As such, fraternity was seen as even more critical for the existence of a community than a proper legal or constitutional system. Without a fraternal spirit, there could not be other values upon which to build a better, just society. Essentially, fraternal bounds between "souls" were perceived as a precondition of any significant social change. At the same time, realisation required a profound societal transformation, in particular the abolishment of corvee labour, in order to ultimately reconcile the peasantry and nobility.

The second overarching concept—strictly related to fraternity—is discussed in Tomkiewicz's proposition as "unity." Likewise, this concept was at the core of the political discourse of Polish political emigres from that time, although its meaning varied depending on the specific use.[62] In relying on this concept, Tomkiewicz harshly criticised its counter-concept, which was "opposition" in his view. He paired the concept of opposition with the slogan "I do not agree" (nie pozwalam), i.e. the liberum veto typical of the political traditions of the old Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Indeed, the liberum

60   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 319.
61   DAVID, Marcel. *Le printemps de la fraternité: genèse et vicissitudes, 1830–1851*. Paris : Aubier, 1992, p. 183.
62   KULIGOWSKI, Piotr. The Pathogenesis of the Public Sphere in Exile: Anarchy and Unity in the Political Thought and Mentality of the Great Polish Emigration. In *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 2019, vol. 126, no. 3, pp. 61–96, http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/KH.2019.126.SI.1.03

veto as a political rule became utterly discredited, because it allowed even one single nobleman to break parliamentary proceedings, which over time led to the paralysis of the entire state. In setting up the nexus opposition-unity, Tomkiewicz offered a unique understanding of the latter concept. Contrary to peers who based the concept of unity on moral characteristics, Tomkiewicz related it to a specific vitality that, in conducive circumstances, might beget such virtues as diligence, serviceability (zdatność), and perseverance. As he emphasised, despite the difficult living conditions in exile, Polish emigres managed to find prestigious positions in public administration, industries or trade in Western Europe.[63] The goal he wished to implement was to unify these individual talents and let them flourish for the Polish cause.

It is hard to state precisely what the sources of his intellectual inspirations were. To be sure, there is a tangible resemblance between his worldview as spelt out in the manuscript and certain conceptions exposed in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, especially insofar as concerns his passages expressing a fascination towards the new, modernising world. However, one should bear in mind that in the mid-19th century, the *Manifesto* was barely known among radicals, not only Polish.[64] It is more probable that Tomkiewicz was familiar with Victor Considerant's *Manifesto of Democracy*. In this piece, the French theoretician likewise displayed convictions that technological progress, along with proper social organisation—understood in architectural terms as well—may work for the sake of the entire humankind.[65] Such a claim is in line with Tomkiewicz's ideas, but it cannot be determined if Considerant's work was an actual source of inspiration or whether it is nothing more than structural isomorphism.

Moreover, one may infer that Tomkiewicz was familiar with Saint-Simonianism, or at least with certain elements, like praising technological progress as something that made global connectivity possible. Henri de Saint-Simon and his supporters were similarly convinced that technological progress is both unstoppable and desired, because it multiplies both the potential and possibilities of humankind to such an extent that it might render politics and philosophy subjugated, and not the other way around.[66] Based on these principles, as early as in 1825, French lawyer P. J. Rouen formulated a project of industrial association, which was to be grounded in shares bought or received for work by persons engaged in the establishment.[67] Tomkiewicz's model was close to this vision.

As it seems however, the Polish thinker was likely acquainted and developed not only the Saint-Simonianist perspective on technological progress but the hints at organisation of an industrial endeavour. He seems to be familiar

63   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 309.
64   CARVER, Terrell. The Manifesto in Marx's and Engels's Lifetimes. In CARVER, Terrell – FARR James (eds.) *The Cambridge companion to the Communist manifesto*. New York : Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 67–84.
65   CONSIDERANT, Victor. *Principles of Socialism: Manifesto of 19th Century Democracy*. Translated by Joan Roelofs. Washington DC : Maisonneuve Press, 2006 (first published in Paris 1847).
66   MUSSO, Pierre. La religion du monde industriel: analyse de la pensée de Saint-Simon. In *Qaderni*, 2006, no. 62, pp. 119–126.
67   *Le Producteur*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1825, pp. 11–20; 117–125.

with the specific periodisation of history—and more broadly, with the theory of historical time—proposed and advocated by followers of Saint-Simon. Deriving from Nicolas de Condorcet's published output, it was Phillipe Buchez who in particular coined a full-blown theory of "critical" and "organic" epochs. While the former were seen as times of crisis and mayhem, the latter, on the contrary, brought about prosperity and progress.[68] Even if not evoking such terms verbatim, Tomkiewicz still used parallel logic, writing that: "The Polish emigration, i.e. that part of Polish nation living a pure national life, after having passed through its initial era, the imprecise era, the era of complete dependence, both in terms of stay among other nations and their material support, is to pass and should pass to the next era, the era of free development and material independence until the end of a complete release to freedom for oneself and for the country."[69] In this quote, one may see an explicitly stated belief that a new, better epoch should come after the period of crisis has passed. Therefore, even if there is no direct evidence corroborating the hypothesis that Tomkiewicz was familiar with Buchez's historiosophy, his concept is visibly supported by a similar perspective on historical time.

Interestingly, such a way of perceiving historical eras was rather widespread among Poles, who were disappointed with the actual outcomes of the social unrest and political upheavals sweeping across Europe in 1848. These ideas on the "Polish way" brought about positivism, with faith in technological development setting the scene for societal progress as well. Being a society deprived of an independent statehood, the populace gradually abandoned the idea of armed struggles and insurrectionary conspiracies and replaced them with less-spectacular yet efficient "organic works" which were to lead to building a better future for the entire society, and in the more distant future, give rise to a genuine organic epoch.[70] It was widely acknowledged that this era could not be organic without an independent Polish state. Tomkiewicz, however, believed in the possibility of perpetuating such activities in exile, while proper positivists called for "organic works" to be realised on the Polish lands. Therefore, in Tomkiewicz's perspective, the future still could be bright, despite the present-day miserable conditions he observed and personally experienced in the emigre community.

Conclusions

The project of a settlement of compatriots in California penned by Tomkiewicz was neither the first nor the last in the long lineage of comparable propositions by Polish authors. To the contrary—especially after the failed 1848 revolutions—many Poles (along with Frenchmen[71]) pinned their hopes on

68   ISAMBERT, François André. L'idée de politique positive. In *Revue française de sociologie*, 1965, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 291–304, 299; MCWILLIAN, Neil. *Dreams of Happiness. Social Art and the French Left, 1830–1850*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 131–132; 157.
69   BCz, f. 5660, Pismo Pana Kazimierza Tomkiewicza, p. 297.
70   HINC, Alina – PRACZYK, Małgorzata. Praca organiczna. Teoria i praktyki. In PRACZYK, Małgorzata (ed.) *Poznań w działaniu. Społeczne inicjatywy dawniej i dziś*. Poznań : Stowarzyszenie Czasu Kultury, 2017, pp. 15–38.
71   CORDILLOT, Michel. *Utopistes et exilés du Nouveau Monde: des Français aux États-Unis, de 1848 à la Commune*. Paris : Vendémiaire, 2013.

implementing a variety of projects and endeavours in the Americas, which co-incided with a growing number of Poles actually migrating to the continent.[72] However, the blueprint for Osada is noteworthy due to its novelty.

Above all, the justification proposed by Tomkiewicz for the endeavour was quite original, resulting in a project of melodramatic structure, with rapture and vitality interplaying with despair and frustration. The introduction begins with a description of the deep crisis in which the Polish community was trapped, but what follows is the author's enthusiastic opinion on the current state of global economic and technological development. In this way, by overcoming the Romantic patterns in an unusual way Tomkiewicz developed a model that may be dubbed a "steampunk association." Indeed, the well-being of settlers was to be secured solely by their participation in the ongoing global transformation, with engineers and inventors constructing not only new mechanical devices, but also transforming political thinking. Tomkiewicz, clearly disappointed with actual results of the insurrections, believed that Poles should profit from technological and economic progress, but to do so they needed a specific instrument fit for the task. Due to the lack of independent statehood, he proposed the establish-ment of a settlement in the new California territory.

It is visible that this experiment was not aimed at escaping from the rot-ting European or Western civilisation per se, which had sunk into egotism and worshipping false idols like money and luxury. Tomkiewicz's proposition was focused on moving in the complete opposite direction, for his project of asso-ciation was to create frameworks by which to benefit from the ongoing trends, which he defined in a positive way, like creativity, an association-ist spirit and last, but not least, the growing connectivity of different parts of the world.

In this way one may conclude—twisting the famous expression of Ernst Bloch—that Tomkiewicz wanted Poles to live and act "in the same now" as inhabitants of the most developed countries.[73] What is all the more striking is that these ideas were formulated by a person from a non-industrialised and non-capitalist country, who most likely never had the occasion to work in a modern industry or profit directly from its development. This is perhaps the reason why he did not share the ambition—typical for so many other projects of utopian settlements from the day—to transform the whole of global society. Tomkiewicz's goal was rather to connect the Polish community to the pres-ent-day developments and not to change them. What was at stake was to over-come the asymmetries typical to the modern world in the making,[74] which were so harshly experienced by Tomkiewicz and his peers in exile.

Even in the chaotic melange of semi-peripheral biographical experiences faced by persons bearing the bitterness of failed revolutions, it appears that un-expectedly optimistic, future and progressive-oriented conceptions can emerge.

72   STASIK, Florian. *Polska emigracja polityczna w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1831–1864.* Warszawa : PWN, 1985.

73   BLOCH, Ernst. Nonsynchronism and the obligation to its dialectics. In *New German Critique*, 1977, no. 11, pp. 22–38; at p. 22 he wrote: "Not all people exist in the same Now".

74   MARZEC, Wiktor – ZYSIAK, Agata. Historicizing the asynchronous modernity in the Global East. In *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2020, vol. 61, no. 6, pp. 663–685, https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2020.1838311

However, given the time and era, they could exist only in the margins, without a real chance to be realised or even in some cases, to be printed and publicly discussed. Perhaps there are more similar projects stored in East Central European archives, projects which were overlooked in their time and currently remain forsaken and hidden from sight. One may wonder if these marginal projects might—if and when rediscovered—significantly alter our "mental maps" of the region as on the verge of modernity, espousing an intellectual creativity and utopian ardour more daring than one may expect.

Acknowledgments