

**A FORGOTTEN PROJECT FOR POLISH LABOUR
COOPERATIVISM: A HISTORICAL-PROBLEMATIC
INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF JAN WOLSKI**

ADAM DUSZYK

The 2008 credit crunch exposed all the shortcomings of the capitalist system. Unemployment, precarisation, growing social inequalities, environmental threats and other issues related to neoliberal policies gave rise to an enormous wave of dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction has generated a number of social initiatives and movements ready to tackle these challenges and look for alternative scenarios of the future. In this connection, some questions have returned: is there an alternative to capitalism and state socialism? Are there any systemic social solutions other than what we know that could offer hope for a better future?

Many a reader may regard a cooperativisation of wage labour and the elimination of sources of human labour exploitation and brutalisation in private or state mercenary work by introducing a self-government of cooperative labour a mere pipedream. Nevertheless, the idea of labour democracy has been gaining in popularity, since it meets democratic tendencies. People feel bad in hierarchic organisations, are alienated at and outside of work, they regard bureaucracy as anachronistic, are dissatisfied with inflexibility of existing institutions as well as their insufficient openness to innovations. So great hopes are attached to the development of joint participation. Such participation is presently more educational than political. Only direct democracy in the workplace that is designed to help and not interfere can trigger a breakthrough in social relations. The problem may of course be seen in a far broader perspective of full collective participation not only at work but also in civic, municipal, local government and political movements.

Let us consider, though, whether such dreams of a better world do not mean breaking down doors that have long stood open. The recipes we are looking for may have been compiled long ago but have been utterly forgotten due to their utopian nature and thus impracticability at the time. One of such concepts which I believe might be applicable to current practice is the theory of Jan Wolski.

What was that theory – a doctrine that has been nearly forgotten? To put it briefly, it was a set of socio-political views represented in the life and work of Jan Wolski (Duszyk 2008, 11–304) – an anarchist, patriot, member of the Polish Socialist Party – Revolutionary Faction, a mason, Polish soldier fighting in the war against the Bolsheviks, an eminent theoretician and doyen of the Polish work cooperative movement. Regrettably, he remains a little known figure. The following text is, therefore, intended to reintroduce Wolski's figure and discuss the key concepts of his theory (Wolski 2015, 16–599).

Who was Jan Wolski?

Jan Wolski was born in Skuryatov, northern Russia, on 24 August 1888 (Joint Libraries of WFiS UW, IFiS PAN, PTF (below: PB UW), Jan Wolski Archives (below: AJW), ref. 467, Jan Wolski's gymnasium graduation certificate, sheet 3). He undertook his education at a gymnasium from 1897 to 1907, first in Vologda and then in Vilnius, where he passed his final examinations (Joint Libraries of WFiS UW, IFiS PAN, PTF (below: PB UW), Jan Wolski Archives (below: AJW), ref. 467, Jan Wolski's gymnasium graduation certificate, sheet 3). Wolski became interested in cooperative and anarchist issues – in particular, by organising voluntary associations – when he was still in secondary school. Beginning in 1904, he was a member of students' self-education associations, which were illegal in Russia at the time (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 8).

In 1907, he entered Kharkiv University, where he studied in the Faculties of History and Languages and of Law. His research focused on Polish history, the history of the workers' movement and the organisation of voluntary associations. In his manuscripts Wolski stresses that his studies followed his own curriculum (Jan Wolski, Memo from Cracow dated 29 January 1956, sheet 1).

He earned his living in Kharkiv by giving private tuition. He also lectured on the history of Poland, giving special classes arranged for Polish children and youth. When the First World War broke out, Wolski also started working as a journalist writing about Polish issues in the Kharkiv-based *UTRO* daily, the voice of radical elements within the local academe. He also published in *The Voice of Youth* (a supplement to the *Petersburg Journal*, which concentrated the independent and socialist wing of Polish students in Russia). When in Kharkiv, he took a very active part in the life of the Polish student community, even becoming a leader of its most radical group.

Among the many associations of which he was an active member, the Society of Polish Students was of particular importance for him. He represented its independence-oriented current, which was extremely radical in social terms. For Wolski, the organisation was an excellent school of public activity and would come in very useful later on. From 1909, he also belonged to the Society of Progressive and Independence-Minded Youth ("Filaretia") and its umbrella organisation, the Revolutionary Faction of the Polish Socialist Party.¹

¹ The Polish Socialist Party (Revolutionary Faction), referred to as "the old" – a Polish socialist party established following a split at the 9th Polish Socialist Party Congress in Vienna on 19–25 November 1906 into the Revolutionary Faction and the "Left", or the "young". It resumed the name of the Polish Socialist Party in August 1909. The split was caused by "the old" striving for Poland to regain independence. The "young" believed it an unrealistic goal and pushed for cooperation with Russian revolutionaries, content with postulating an autonomous Kingdom of Poland as part of a republican and democratic Russian state

Following the outbreak of the war, he tried to remain in touch with the national independence movement and therefore set about arranging for the more “enthusiastic” of his friends to return to Poland. He himself arrived in Warsaw already before the end of winter 1915. He interviewed leaders of major Polish and Jewish political groups on the issue of independence. He also worked for the progressive democratic daily *Prawda* [*The Truth*], which was edited by the recognised writer, journalist and politician, Wincenty Rzymowski, who would later become associated with the Alliance of Democrats (Rzymowski 1933, 108). Thereafter he returned to Kharkiv, returning to Warsaw before it was occupied by the German army.

As a representative of the Polish Socialist Party, of which he continued to be a member, he gave talks on the history of Poland at worker party meetings in Warsaw. In connection with his activities, reaching beyond the strictly Polish Socialist Party milieu, he was in contact or even friends with prominent socialist and educational activist Tadeusz Rechniewski, an associate of the Polish Socialist Party-Left. It was Rechniewski who introduced him to the workers’ association, Knowledge, where he became a member of the programme committee and took part in a number of discussion meetings. In addition, Rechniewski introduced him to a group of friends to whom he was ideologically close and whom jokingly self-styled themselves *The Pickwick Club*. The group included such eminent Polish intellectuals and social researchers as: Tadeusz Rechniewski, Ludwik Krzywicki,² Waclaw Wróblewski,³ Jakub Dutlinger,⁴ Edward Grabowski,⁵ Jan Muszkowski,⁶ Edward Lipiński⁷ and several others (Cf. PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 9).

² Ludwik Krzywicki, 1859–1941, was a sociologist, economist, anthropologist and social activist, professor at Warsaw University, the Warsaw School of Economics and the Free Polish University and member of the Polish Academy of Learning. He was an organiser at the National Office for Statistics and Collegium of Socio-Economics. He was also a leading theoretician of historical materialism and proponent of scientific socialism in Poland and a co-translator of Marx’s *Das Kapital*; see his *Works* (vols. 1–9).

³ Waclaw Karol Wróblewski (pseudonym Christopher), 1878–1934, was a well-known communist activist, member of the Polish Socialist Party-Left since 1906 and co-founder the Communist Party of Poland. He emigrated in 1924 and edited a number of party journals.

⁴ Jakub Dutlinger (pseudonym Jakub Mariański), 1885–1937, was a communist activist, member of the Polish Socialist Party-Left from 1906, then of the Communist Party of Poland. He was also a trade-union activist, worked at the Profintern from 1929 and died during the era of mass reprisals in the USSR.

⁵ Edward Grabowski (pseudonym Michał Góralski), 1880–1961, was a communist activist, lawyer and member of the Polish Socialist Party-Left and of the Communist Party of Poland. He was also a professor at the University of Economics and the Free Polish University between 1919 and 1924. He defended Polish communists at their trials and was president of the Polish Bar Council from 1951 to 1955.

⁶ Jan Muszkowski, 1882–1953, was a book historian, bibliographer and librarian. He was also a professor at the University of Lodz and the Free Polish University and director of the Krasieński Library from 1920 to 1935. He organised library studies in Poland and authored *Życie książki* [*Life of the Book*].

⁷ Edward Lipiński, 1888–1986, was an economist and social activist, professor at the Warsaw School of Economics and at Warsaw University, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and president of the Polish

In November 1915, he and Aleksander Hertz⁸ were arrested by the German political police at a Polish Socialist Party workers' meeting, where he was delivering a lecture on Polish history. A great majority of the Filaretes were ordered to remain part of the underground military and political movement at the time of the German occupation. Things became complicated after their arrest, since Germans found some documents proving their associations with both the Polish Socialist Party and Filaretia. The Germans were especially interested in the latter. Aleksander Hertz recalled some very dramatic interrogations (Hertz 1991, 344–345).

Together with Hertz, Wolski was imprisoned in Pawiak and then sentenced to a prison camp for their independence activities. He served time in Szczypiorno, Lauban (Lubań) in Silesia, and at Celle castle, where Wolski became friends with Adolf Warski.⁹ His prison itinerary ended in Gardelegen, where he again gave talks and lectures to Polish prisoners on historical, social and economic problems (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 9).

He was released in March 1917 and allowed to return to Warsaw. He entered the legal faculty of the recently established Folk University. His life took a dramatic turn there as he came to know a man who would change his entire life. This man was Edward Abramowski, who persuaded him to work for the cooperative movement.

Right from the outset, his stand on the cooperative movement was clearly socialist, a position he affirmed in both his spoken and printed statements. He was an auditor, editor, organisational instructor, lecturer and organiser of workers' education clubs in a variety of cooperatives. His activities focused on the Dąbrowa Basin and Łódź. During this time, he also wrote a great many articles, brochures and books.

Economic Society in 1946–1965. He was also a founding member of the Workers' Defence Committee, and wrote major works on the history of Polish economic ideas and theory of political economics. He authored, among other works, *Studia nad historią polskiej myśli ekonomicznej* [*Studies Into the History of Polish Economic Ideas*].

⁸ Aleksander Hertz, 1895–1989, was an outstanding sociologist in the US after 1940. He focused on the history of sociologist doctrines and the sociology of political relations. His key works include: *Socjologia współczesna* [*Contemporary Sociology*], *Amerykańskie stronnictwa polityczne* [*American Political Parties*], *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej* [*Jews in Polish Culture*]. He was one of Jan Wolski's closest friends and remained in regular contact with him throughout his life.

⁹ Adolf Warski (proper name Adolf Jerzy Warszawski, pseudonym Michałowski), 1868–1937, was a communist activist and member of the First Proletariat. He co-founded a Polish Workers' Association in 1889 called Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania in 1893 (he was on its Executive Council from 1902 to 1918) and the Communist Party of Poland in 1918 (on its Central Committee in from 1919 to 1924 and from 1925 to 1929). A Communist Internationale activist, he died as part of the mass reprisals in the USSR.

The outbreak of the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920 interrupted his activities. Most young people of the “Cezary Baryka generation”¹⁰ were once again called up for the war effort, and Wolski was no exception.

Having been in the army since 1920, he was tasked with organising a cooperative network to replace soldiers’ canteens on the frontline (with the Third Division of the Legions). Released from service, he did not return to Społem,¹¹ but instead worked as an organisational instructor for the Society of Workers’ Cooperative Associations in Warsaw. At that time, he became close with Aleksander Ostrowski and Jan Hempel. However, when such major activists as Hempel, Tolwiński, Ostrowski and Bolesław Bierut (later a communist activist, NKVD agent, chairman of the State National Council, president of Poland since 1947 and long-time leader of the Polish United Workers’ Party) were removed from the society’s governing council of the society, he protested by resigning from the institution (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 12).

At the same time, Wolski also showed a special interest in students cooperativism. He even personally initiated and organised a student cooperative in a Vilnius school in 1921–1922. He was also invited to write an instruction and propaganda book for children and youths. The result of several years’ efforts, *Czy to bajka, czy nie bajka?* [*Is It A Fairy Tale Or Not?*] came out in 1925 and became to the students cooperative movement what Falski’s primer was to those learning to read and write.¹² It was appreciated by teachers, supervisors of school cooperatives and young people alike (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 11). Wolski continued to be active in every field with potential connections to cooperativism.

The most puzzling aspect of Jan Wolski’s biography deserves a mention here. His manuscripts never mention his membership of the Polish Freemason movement. He was admitted to the Warsaw Grand National Lodge of Poland in the early 1920s and assumed the name of Zygmunt Karaczewski (Hass 1999, 542–543).

In 1923 he launched forceful propaganda in support of work cooperativism. In the second half of 1926, the Labour Ministry awarded him a subsidy to leave for Italy and study the experience of the Italian labour cooperative movement (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 12).

¹⁰ The “Cezary Baryka generation” is a literary designation of the Polish youth who had returned to their newly independent country in 1918. Cezary Baryka is the protagonist of Stefan Żeromski’s *Przedwiośnie* [*The Spring to Come*], a novel on the difficult beginnings of the re-emerging Second Polish Republic.

¹¹ “Społem” was the then everyday name for the Union of Polish Consumer Associations, the main centre of the “neutral” current among consumers’ cooperatives. It was derived from the title of the organisation’s magazine, *Społem!* [*Jointly!*], issued since 1906 (the title was invented by the eminent writer and supporter of the cooperative movement, Stefan Żeromski). It was at *Społem* that Jan Wolski began his cooperative career.

¹² Marian Falski (1881–1974), pseudonym Rafał Praski – a Polish pedagogue and educational activist, specialist in educational system and organisation, author of the most popular Polish primer.

On returning from abroad in late 1927, Wolski was commissioned by the Council of Ministers' Economic Committee to draft a memorandum titled *W sprawie kooperacji pracy i ułatwienia jej rozwoju w Polsce* [On Labour Cooperation and Facilitating Its Development in Poland]. The memorandum was gladly accepted and published.

The foundation of an autonomous Labour Cooperation Section with the Polish Welfare Policy Society on 30 April 1928 was another fruit of his endeavours. Wolski naturally became its leader. In 1933, the section was transformed into a formally independent Society for the Support of Labour Cooperation. During the German occupation the Society was renamed as the Association of Labour and Manufacturing Cooperatives in Poland. The Association stayed active until the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

As far as the remaining aspects of Wolski's activities are concerned, it should be noted that he continued to be involved in the Polish Freemasonry. He became a member of the "Copernicus" Lodge, the Grand National Lodge of Poland in Warsaw, in the early 1930s, whose secretary he would become in 1935–1939 (Hass 1999, 543).

Another organisation of which he was an active member includes the Democratic Club. On 18 September 1937, he took part in its first meeting (New Archives (below: AAN), Residual Sets Collection (below: ZZS), ref. 88, The Democratic Club in Warsaw, sheet 24).

With the Nazi occupation, Wolski was clearly compelled to restrict his cooperative activities to most pressing matters and to writing programme manifestos. It was also at that time that he became actively involved in the so-called Józef Ziabicki club or group.¹³

Impressed with *The Atlantic Charter*, Wolski then compiled a very important document, *Przesłanki i wytyczne ustrojowe* [Premises and Guidelines for a Social and Political Order], published under the pen-name of Jan Zacharkiewicz (a friend of Wolski's who had died in the 1920 war). It soon became a manifesto of the Warsaw Freemasons during the Second World War. The entire group insisted that the manifesto ought to be produced by an anarchist, hence they requested that Wolski do it. "The votaries of the royal art" dispersed after the Warsaw Uprising, thus putting an end to the club movement (Chajn 1984, 391).

Wolski was in private and in constant touch with a range of activists of both the socialist groupings until the end of World War II. He was on close, even friendly, terms with Stanisław Tolwiński, to become the first president of post-war Warsaw, the interwar leader of the Polish Socialist Party Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, Jerzy Czeszejko-Sochacki, representative of the Communist Party of Poland with the Communist Internationale and diplomat Juliusz Łukasiewicz (Hass 1991, 67). He remembered Henryk Purman as the most

¹³ Józef Teofil Ziabicki was born on 13 November 1871 in Atashany and died on 22 August 1958 in Wądzyn. He was a Polish engineer, manager and diplomat as well as a freemason, in which capacity he founded the so-called Józef Ziabicki group. (During the Nazi occupation, a handful of Polish Freemasons met at the Ziabicki's at Słupecka Street in Warsaw. The meetings contravened the decision of the Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, who had dissolved the Polish Freemason movement on account of the war).

active and creative collaborator with the Society for the Support of Labour Cooperativism (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 14).

On 7 December, he moved to Cracow to head the department of Labour Cooperativism at the Union of Polish Cooperatives. As the war came to its desirable end, Wolski banked on the full realisation of his theoretical concepts. This genuine idealist anarchist and cooperativist fully believed that, as the socialist system prevailed in Poland after 1945, the new authorities would give far-reaching support to his solutions, which had already been tested in practice. It soon turned out that the new authorities had no intention of taking advantage of his knowledge and experience. Wolski, an inflexible, uncompromising and disinterested idealist, did not fit in with the new reality.

In the meantime, he was appointed Director of the Central Training Centre for Labour Cooperativism at Wola Justowska near Cracow, which he had founded (AAN, the Union of Polish Cooperatives (below: ZRSRP), Socio-Educational Department (below: WSW), ref. 1284, Application to the Governing Council of the Union of Polish Cooperatives to establish a Central Training Centre for Labour Cooperativism at Wola Justowska, sheet 1). Yet the Centre was closed after several months of operation (Ibidem, ref. 1285, Letter of 28 May 1947 concerning liquidation of the Centre at Wola Justowska, sheet 8).

Between 1945 and 1948, he also taught at the Cooperative College of Jagiellonian University (Jagiellonian University Archives (below: AUJ), the Academic Senate III (below: S/III), ref. S III 246, sheet 2) and the University of Social Sciences in Cracow. As the “Stalinisation” of Poland progressed, the governing structures of the entire Polish cooperative movement were reorganised in mid-June 1948. Unfortunately, the doyen of Polish cooperativism was omitted from this reorganisation.

Until almost the end of 1956, Wolski remained almost completely isolated. He did find fake or even genuine odd jobs from time to time, yet they matched neither his qualifications nor his expectations. The most lasting job was one he undertook with a Cracow clothing cooperative, where he ran a library and arranged tours of Cracow (PB UW, AJW, ref. 466, Jan Wolski, A personal memo, sheet 16).

From 1956 to 1958, in the aftermath of October '56, the attitude of the cooperative authorities to Wolski began to shift.¹⁴ He was allowed to return to Warsaw. In January 1957, the Second Congress of Delegates to the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives resolved unanimously to express its recognition of his long years' of efforts for labour cooperativism and obliged its authorities to provide organisational and financial support for the initiative to

¹⁴ October '56 was the first of the so-called Polish months, which is to say a series of major political crises affecting the People's Republic of Poland. The political crisis in 1956 was triggered by a worker uprising in Poznań (June 1956). As a result of these developments, Władysław Gomułka became the new socialist leader of Poland. Social and political life underwent some liberalisation at the time. This did not continue for long, though, and a wave of social euphoria was followed by further disappointments with the Communist system.

found the Cooperative Institute of Labour Self-Government. This joy was not to last, however, since the Institute was given few opportunities for development and abolished in late 1959. Wolski's formal contacts with the cooperative movement collapsed following the Third Congress of the Union in June 1959. At this time, he was very active in the Krzywe Kolo Club, where he gave talks on labour cooperativism.¹⁵ These activities gave his longstanding hopes a new lease on life. Wolski also dreamt of reinstating the Polish Freemasonry.

From 1961 to 1975, he was a founding member and speaker of the revived Copernicus Lodge, an independent Warsaw-based lodge (Grochowska 2001).

At a time of waning social resistance, certain political processes were under way that provided the background for the famous case of Anna Rudzińska and Jan Wolski in 1961, as a result of which he suffered various sorts of humiliation for the distribution of *Paris Culture* and his contacts with Jerzy Giedroyc (The Institute of National Remembrance (below: IPN), the Bureau of Provision and Archivization of Documents (below: BUiAD), Files of the operational case concerning Jan Wolski and Anna Rudzińska, ref. IPN 0330/289, vol. 3, Minutes of an interrogation of Jan Wolski on 12 Oct. 1961, sheet 80). Wolski had already become a genuine symbol, being known as the “patriarch of Polish dissidence”.

In the new political climate of 1971, the National Cooperative Council decided to request a Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta in connection with Jan Wolski's 83rd birthday, a distinction that he accepted.

He was also an active member of the Society of Moral Culture, from which he withdrew as a result of some disputes and misunderstandings in 1974, as did the philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński. He took part in discussion meetings of the Historical Society, the Economic Society, the Writers' Union and the Sociological Society (PB UW, AJW, ref. 476, Jan Wolski's letter to Aleksander Hertz dated 15 Dec. 1962, sheet 26).

When he and his wife concluded that they could no longer manage on their own, they retired to the Home for Distinguished Cooperative Activists at Wycześniak near Skierniewice. Jan Wolski lived there until the end of his days. Shortly before his death he received the prestigious Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation Award in January 1975. He died in a Skierniewice hospital on 12 July 1975.

¹⁵ The Krzywe Kolo Club is the name of a freethinking discussion club critical of the Communist authorities that operated in Warsaw from 1955 to 1962. The name is derived from the location of its meetings, Krzywe Kolo Street in the old town of Warsaw.

What was the theory of Jan Wolski and what relevance does it have for us today?

The fundamental assumption underlying Jan Wolski's theory was that the state's role should be reduced to a maximum reduction, above all by expanding cooperativism and any forms of self-government so as to reduce the state's functions and structures to a minimum. Like his ideological master, Edward Abramowski, Wolski was not an orthodox anarchist. He tended to support constructive building, not destruction. Wolski's version of anarchism was not a thoughtless replica the views of his anarchist predecessors.

The eminent Polish sociologist Aleksander Matejko classifies Wolski's theory as syndicalist anarchism. In his penetrating article titled *Wolszczyzna [The Theory of Jan Wolski]* (Matejko 1971, 1), he begins by discussing the essence of the dispute between the Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin, a proponent of anarchism, and Karl Marx, who stood for socialism, and his sympathies tended towards anarchism.

Anarchists should be given due credit as their profound distrust of any organisations built on coercion, thus primarily of the state, allowed them to anticipate what would happen to socialism failing to attach sufficient weight to the fundamental issue of liberty: instead of private capitalism, they got state capitalism; instead of satisfying society's consumer needs of society, they got the development of totalitarian production for its own sake; instead of democracy, the rule of parasitic cabals beyond social control. [...] Bakunin warns against the ominous consequences of the centralisation of power (Matejko 1971, 29).

According to Matejko, anarchists were right in their dispute with socialism by positing that power always corrupts those who wield it and that rejecting it is the best of all possible solutions. Matejko evidently realised that anarchism was bound to lose out against socialism, since the former is commonly perceived as a utopian doctrine that is conspicuous in its radicalism.

What is Wolski's position against this general backdrop of the Bakunin–Marx debate? While he is clearly on Bakunin's side, Wolski's views go a step further. Neither Bakunin nor any anarchist visionaries managed to put forward any specific organisational project. Beside raising empty slogans like “New Man” and new society, they tended to focus on criticising the existing system or objecting to other alternative solutions. They were only able to demolish things but unable to construct anything new.

In this connection, a particularly noteworthy fact is that, while other anarchists totally rejected power and administration, Wolski concentrated on attempts at finding liberty within an organisation that would allow for freedom of action. Aleksander Matejko was correct to note that:

In this sense, Wolski is probably more realistic and specific than the founders of anarchism, for whom the question of organisation was nearly non-existent, as if it would somehow be solved automatically once power had been seized by means of a revolutionary coup or general strike (Matejko 1971, 31).

Wolski espoused his views as late as the occupation during World War II. In 1943, he wrote *Program upowszechniania spółdzielczości i uspołdzielczenia ustroju publicznego* [A Programme for Propagation of Cooperativism and Cooperativisation of the Public System] (PB UW, AJW, ref. 509, pp. 49–73. J. Wolski, *Program upowszechniania kooperatywności i uspołdzielczenia ustroju publicznego* [A Programme for Propagation of Cooperativism and Cooperativisation of the Public System], Warsaw 1943, manuscript). He produced it with the underground Warsaw-based Inter-Union Cooperative Committee and Socialist Planning Commission in mind. In Wolski's view, the new type of state-owned planned economy should be based on a universal and professional labour self-government. Labour cooperatives of various levels, operating as voluntary associations of workers in a given profession or industry, would play the key role. All exploitation, humiliation or devaluation of labour was to be entirely excluded. These cooperatives would rely on a universal self-government of users as well.

The state, as a separate and supreme factor that tended to overshadow the rest, would cease its opposition to the bottom-up, self-governing creativity of free people. It would gradually become the emanation and crowning of self-government, the latter arising from the free, bottom-up activities of free citizens at the highest levels of coordination, planning, control and the executive.

The state would cease to be an objective in itself, an abstraction prevailing over the genuine interests of living people, and violating their liberty by turning them into the defenceless victims of political games, of lawlessness and the arbitrary experiments carried out by those wielding state power at any particular time.

The state will meanwhile become an association of free citizens existing not to shackle and enslave them but to expand the reach of their liberty and promote the benefits

arising from universal solidarity and a planned state-owned economy as part of a great commonwealth comprising the population of an entire state that also maintains comprehensive connections of solidarity with the whole world (Wolski 1957, 210).

This passage implies that Wolski did not seek a complete overthrow of state authority (the central postulate of other anarchists) but, above all, a possibility to end wage labour by its cooperativisation. This would make work humane and turn hirelings into citizens equal to their employers. Wolski thus argued that society should be organised into cooperatives of labour and users, with the means of production owned publicly. Authorities, workers and consumers would collaborate with one another within enterprises that tried to harmonise all their interests.

In summary, Wolski's systemic theory is a programme for a society organised into permanent institutions interlinked by means of mutual representatives who are the subjects, not the objects, of a national plan. His labour-and-user cooperativism has a distinctly anarchist background. His idea of society presumes both individual (although limited by shared welfare of the remaining community members) and, even more so, group liberty.

The issue of the specific organisation of labour self-government was a key strand of his anarcho-syndicalism. As Wolski put it:

A maximum number of meeting and decision-making members of each organisational link and at each level of the multi-layered system should not as a rule exceed ten and should be even lower in some circumstances. Higher-level links in this system are not authorities who reign supreme over lower-level links. Conversely, the higher steps of the system are dependent on the lower steps, which act within clear guidelines, using interim powers under the constant and detailed supervision of their principals. There are no super- and subordinate parts in a system of multi-level federalism. Instead, duties are clearly divided and each organisational link of a multi-level system – regardless of the level it occupies – is equipped with full powers (The author's own resources, J. Wolski, *Wnioski z doświadczeń ustrojowo-organizacyjnych samorządu pracowniczego. Tezy do dyskusji w Klubie Krzywego Koła dnia 16 IX 1960* [Conclusions from systemic and organisational experience of labour self-government. Theses for a discussion at the Krzywe Koło Club on 16 Sep. 1960, Warsaw 1960], p. 2, manuscript).

The lower the organisational cells and basic units of self-government, the better, since the full and true liberty provided by direct democracy can only be realised in a small, uniform group. There was no need to select a managerial elite that would then manipulate all others.

Wolski desired to build a system for society rather than for the state, one based on the principle of multi-level federalism with free individuals and dedicated cells associated through voluntary self-selection, starting from small groups up to multi-part federations, as fundamental parts.

The assumption that such a federation would encompass not only production or service teams but also users of the former's products or services, that is, users, also organised into small teams, was the cornerstone of the theory. Universal labour self-government and universal self-government users were the two pillars of Wolski's conception (Matejko 1986). Such a solution would pave the way for a classless society and consequently a stateless, or anarchist, society (Matejko 1973).

Wolski's theories, appropriately transplanted to the Polish economy, could become remedies for a number of socio-economic problems of our country in the twenty-first century. Regrettably, today, his ideas are little understood and in any event continue to appear impractical to many. In 1925, Jan Wolski suggested establishing a labour cooperation department in the Labour and Welfare Minister extant at the time, but the authorities expressed no interest in the idea. The ministry, however, supported by the Society of Cooperativists, did issue Wolski a three-month grant to work in Italy in 1926. That was also a time of organisational weakness when no Polish literature on the subject was available. In 1927, forty-three labour cooperatives were registered, with some to be wound down soon and others registering no activity. Does this not ring a bell? Wolski saw the roots of that weakness in lack of interest shown by the state authorities, self-governments and the public. His Italian experiences showed that labour cooperativism stood no chance of success without governmental support. So, he dispatched memos to the President of the Council of Ministers Economic Committee and the Labour and Welfare Minister, although the established political authorities were no great friends of labour cooperativism. New initiatives are always difficult to implement, both 90 years ago and today. However, the faith and work of eager people – such as Jan Wolski – have more strength than a bad system and poor understanding. The human will can achieve a lot despite the obstacles it faces from enemies and the scepticism of friends.

Wolski's entire conception was driven by the desire to create forms of social and economic organisation that would offer absolute individual freedom and opportunities for self-fulfilment from work that is joyous, free from enslavement and exploitation to people throughout the world. In accordance with Wolski's recommendations, therefore, an alternative to the capitalist economy today should not be a state economy, one centrally managed by elites working in their own interest, but a cooperative-based economy, one that grows from the bottom up and embraces successive areas of commodity production and distribution.

Even if a state-owned economy gets built one day, it will still be crucial to ensure that worker exploitation and labour alienation are not revived despite the change in ownership relations. This is why Wolski placed such a strong emphasis on the ideal of liberated labour, that is labour that is self-governing at all organisational levels, leaving the worker and the working collective free. Labour for Wolski could be authentic, good and creative only if put in the complete control of the employed.

This left-wing idea used to be known as the “liberation of labour”. Wolski wrote about “the anachronism of hired labour”. Just as top-down institutions and compulsory solutions cannot be reconciled with either individual or collective freedom, the same applies to a worker’s dependence on the owner of the means of production, who- or whatever – a private owner, a state institution or a cooperative. Free individuals and free workers are synonymous in Wolski’s theory. For him, the most important thing was to free the individual from tangible and symbolic shackles, and to do so not individually but collectively, together with other members of society.

I believe that were Wolski’s ideas to be appropriately applied today, they would stand a chance of remedying poverty and unemployment, such as that, for instance, in the Polish countryside. They could be also successfully applied to a number of dimensions of contemporary socio-economic life. Wolski’s theory also teaches us about the desirability of universal collaboration and brotherhood.

Wolski’s theory – its roots, historical polemics and an attempt at evaluation.

Under the pressure of social protests, 1956 induced a “thaw” and brought hopes for a more humane system. The same is true of the cooperative movement. Buoyed by the waves of transformations, Wolski – unemployed or hired to do “fake” cooperative jobs while, ignored as an activist, he lived with his wife in abject poverty – returned to the mainstream of Polish cooperativism. Amid condemnations of “errors and abuses”, the doyen of the Polish labour cooperativism was brought back in from the cold, was again being invited to meetings and solicited for advice. A resolution of the Second Congress of the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives expressed its gratitude to and recognition of Wolski. He was even decorated as a Deserving Cooperative Activist, elected to the Governing Council of the Union and to the National Cooperative Council. He himself pinned great hopes on Polish October, thinking it could lead to the building of a genuine cooperative movement and the liberation

of hired labour. In January 1957, he became head of the Cooperative Institute of Labour Self-Government, established upon his initiative.

Polish October brought a range of changes for Jan Wolski. It can be even said that a totally new era was about to begin in his life. Finally rehabilitated, he was allowed back to Warsaw and welcomed for active participation in the Polish cooperative movement. In the new political climate, a factual debate on the so-called theory of Jan Wolski, to which he had long looked forward, could be held in Warsaw.

No attempts have even been undertaken to define the concept of “Wolski’s theory” correctly and objectively, even though it is familiar to all cooperative circles in Poland. Aleksander Matejko wrote an article in 1971 that mentions the theory in its title and aims at an overall evaluation of Wolski’s conception of organisation. Matejko wrote his text from the position of a disciple who owed a lot to Wolski, however. He had been his student and a true friend, treating Wolski as a master and educator. The issue deserves a closer look, therefore. A number of understatements and inaccuracies can be corrected by analysing issue 10 of *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw dated 1958 (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, pp. 1–27, manuscript facsimile).

That publication contains synopsis of a lecture by Jan Wolski himself, titled *What is the theory of Jan Wolski?* The author began by recalling why and when he became interested in labour cooperativism, the subject of his university studies, and went on to discuss its basic merits. After presenting his significant contribution to the development of the Polish labour cooperativism, he then proceeded to explain “the theory of Jan Wolski”.

The Labour Fund had been established in the early 1930s. Inspired by a propaganda campaign of the Society for the Support of Labour Cooperativism (founded by Wolski), the Fund showed interest in labour cooperativism as a form of organising proper jobs for the unemployed. It was in this connection that the Polish neologism for Jan Wolski’s theory was born (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 3, manuscript facsimile).

Wolski reported the Fund’s interest in labour cooperativism and encouraged a variety of resourceful individuals and associations to found pseudo-cooperatives to obtain resources from the Fund under false pretences and to facilitate the acquisition of orders for work and supplies from public institutions. Wolski’s Society was the only obstacle in their way. Following the negative assessments that the Society for the Support of Labour Cooperativism provided to the Labour Fund, cooperative trade unions, and the State Cooperative Council (in connection with declarations of purpose), a number of such pseudo-

cooperative initiatives never came to fruition. Hence, the obvious dislike of the Society and the continual attempts to undermine its growing authority (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, pp. 1–27, manuscript facsimile).

Since it is always easier to attack a person than a whole institution, the charge of “the theory of Jan Wolski” was only levelled at Wolski himself, as head of the Society for the Support of Labour Cooperativism. It must be noted the accusation had no specific content at the time. No factual or principled polemics against Wolski’s conception were initiated. Those raising the charge had not the faintest idea about cooperativism or about labour cooperativism in particular. They were therefore neither willing nor able to argue with the Society. For them, Jan Wolski’s theory stood for something that was allegedly doctrinaire and impractical, for a position that was therefore socially harmful (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 4, manuscript facsimile).

In his paper Wolski stated that the attacks on his theory escalated even further with the creation of the Camp of National Unity (OZON) and its unit dedicated to labour cooperativism. Counting on financial support from the Labour Fund, the state apparatus and the local authorities, the unit tried to take over existing cooperatives and expand those established by the Camp, thanks to the Labour Fund’s financial foundations and a client base including various public institutions. As Wolski and his Society for the Support of Labour Cooperativism strongly resisted those attempts, Camp activists joined in the hate campaign against Jan Wolski’s theory (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 4–5, manuscript facsimile).

Attacks on Wolski were interrupted during the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of Poland. The Society was transformed into the Union of Labour and Manufacturing Cooperatives, the sole patron of labour cooperatives in Poland. The Union’s activities thus won unquestioned recognition.

When the People’s Republic of Poland was established after the war, Wolski believed that Polish labour cooperativism then enjoyed great new opportunities for implementation and that it would burgeon. Beside those favourable conditions, however, circumstances arose that fostered unpredictable, amateurish experiments and, as Wolski kept describing them, “scavenging” and organisational aberrations (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club

with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 6, manuscript facsimile).

In those early beginnings, the supervision of labour cooperativism was provided by the Labour and Other Cooperatives Department of the Polish National Union of Cooperatives. As Wolski recalled:

The emergent scavenging had to be prevented, its symptoms destroyed and exterminated. The insane intentions and organisational manoeuvres of ambitious dilettantes (occasionally with powerful contacts) had to be stopped by means of persuasion and, if that proved vain, resistance and objection. Since I headed the Department of the Governing Council of the National Union, individuals and factions who found the expert and factual approach of the Department inconvenient again made accusations about Jan Wolski's theory (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 6, manuscript facsimile).

Worse still, however, was the far more threatening accusation that Jan Wolski's theory, on top of being doctrinaire and utopian in its conception, maintained an anti-socialist position inimical to the People's Republic.

Wolski, not being a Party member, was unable to defend himself against the new political assaults. Most painfully for our anarchist, so-called decision-makers began to view him with suspicion, antipathy, and ultimately even hostility in connection with the ongoing attacks on his person. Jan Wolski's theory, as for it, continued to be nothing other than an expert, reliable approach to the difficult issues and problems of labour cooperativism.

Ultimately, Jan Wolski's theory would be officially condemned and Wolski himself utterly rejected; the slightest trace of the theory vanished from the Polish cooperative movement over the next few years (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 7, manuscript facsimile).

Substantial shifts came about as a result of Polish October in 1956. Wolski himself characterises things as follows:

I was allowed to voice my opinions after Polish October. Some advantage is already being taken of my utterances (thus of my knowledge and organisational experience of

global labour cooperativism). Several postulates of Jan Wolski's theory have been adopted in the new charters of labour cooperatives, first of all, the definition of goal (hence, indirectly, the definition itself, too) of the labour cooperative. The charters made provision for the establishment of labour self-government units as part of the prevailing organisational arrangement. Theoretical and practical interest was shown in the problem of labour and users cooperativism. Some postulates of the theory elicited objections among cooperative activists and opinion-making groups, however. In effect, Jan Wolski's theory again became an expression of criticism of any postulates deemed doctrinaire and impracticable (Historical Museum of Cooperativism (below: MHS), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 8, manuscript facsimile).

Nevertheless, Wolski was hugely delighted that condemnations of Jan Wolski's theory were no longer simply about condemnation for condemnation's sake and had been replaced by a factual debate that he believed could only benefit Polish cooperativism. In his eyes, a scientific and competent critique such as this was something healthy and useful. The synopsis of Wolski's paper offers several key preliminary statements based on his experience of global labour cooperativism, which are developed into theses able to be criticized and possibly rejected. To shed more light on the issue, it is worth listing these postulates:

- 1) The healthier labour cooperatives are, and the better they exhibit their intrinsic strengths, the more their activities are limited to labour cooperative self-government.
- 2) Labour cooperatives require close links with user groups for their healthy and continued operation. The links should in no way restrict the full self-government of cooperative labour, however.
- 3) The better and more efficiently that labour cooperatives and the enterprises they run function, the better and the fuller their labour self-government, which, in larger cooperatives, appears as two mutually supplementary types of self-government, that is, the self-government of professional groups and the self-government of working teams. The principle of small organisational units connected by way of multilevel federalism is the necessary condition for real and authentic workers' activity in labour self-government (Cf. PB UW, AJW, ref. 498, Jan Wolski, *Co to jest "wolszczyzna"*? [*What is Jan Wolski's Theory?*], sheets 1–9, manuscript).

The debate concerning Jan Wolski's theory at the aforementioned discussion club was opened by an eminent theoretician of labour cooperativism, Henryk Landesberg, who had authored of several dozen publications on the subject. In his opinion, the issue was far broader and related to some fundamental aspects of Poland's political system and economic model. First of all, Landesberg postulated the need to accurately define the object of discussion. He found Wolski's talk insufficiently exhaustive and serving merely as a starting point for continuing the debate, since if the theory of Jan Wolski was regarded as an attempt at genuine labour cooperativism, free from any "scavenging", features and characteristics of pseudo-cooperativism, none of the cooperative activists would be ready to protest against such an idea (MHS, *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 11).

According to Landesberg, labour cooperativism cannot be identified with Jan Wolski's theory, despite the fact that they had fully overlapped at some points of our history. Much changed in the interwar period and the Jan Wolski's theory became but one of the many currents in labour cooperativism, represented by a specific group of older activists. The suppression of Wolski's views had been mainly ideologically driven. Landesberg did not agree that labour cooperativism had been taken over by people ignorant of cooperation after the war. In his view, criticisms of Jan Wolski's theory arose because the original social movement had strongly resisted the Party's influence in its cooperativism (MHS, *Biuletyn Informacyjny [Information Bulletin]* of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, 12–14).

A well-known publicist and cooperative activist, Stanisław Wieloński, went on to take the floor. He criticized Wolski for what he called theoretical hypertrophy and for the gaps in his economic education, gaps shown up by the new realities of Polish cooperatives post war. Wieloński also objected to Wolski's utopian views, based as they were on "the abstract individual". This criticism applied to a motif recurrent in Wolski's life and work, which is to say anarchism with its belief in the elementary and necessary goodness of human nature.

The next speech was delivered by a theoretician and practitioner of labour cooperativism, Franciszek Krakowiak, who was a member of the Central Union of Labour Cooperativism. Krakowiak declared that pre-war solutions could not be transferred to the time of a developing socialist economy, though he insisted that the very idea of exploring Jan Wolski's theory was completely the right way to go.

The next participant was Stanisław Szwalbe.¹⁶ He admitted he had never encountered the expression "Jan Wolski's theory" before the war, and first heard it said after

¹⁶ Stanisław Szwalbe (b. 3 June 1898 in Warsaw, d. 17 September 1996 in Warsaw) was a Polish state activist, member of the Polish Socialist Party and Polish United Workers' Party and a cooperative activist.

the war in a spirit of unreasonable malice. Szwalbe, who first met Wolski during Abramowski's "ethics clubs" (they were both his disciples) (Szwalbe 1996, 12–17), emphasised his huge appreciation of Wolski, as the undoubted pioneer of labour cooperativism and a doyen of the entire Polish cooperative movement. Szwalbe also included Wolski among Polish intellectuals with anarchist sympathies, whose roots went back to 1918–1939. During this time, cooperative ideas, he said, evolved with "their heads in the clouds", totally abstracted from the interwar realities.

Szwalbe went on to call supporters of Jan Wolski's theory proponents of syndicalism, anarcho-syndicalism, of the theories of Abramowski, Sorel, Kropotkin, etc. Thus, Szwalbe lambasted Wolski's views, claiming they were completely utopian. As he put it: "Such phrases are harmful because if people believed them, they would stop acting in other dimensions and turn all state-owned enterprises into labour cooperatives" (MHS, Biuletyn Informacyjny [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, 23).

Stanisław Andruszkiewicz, a recognised publicist and cooperative activist, usefully summed up the whole discussion around Jan Wolski's theory in a talk titled *Święta wojna czy twórcza polemika* [*Holy war or a creative polemic*]. He pointed out that the whole dispute over Jan Wolski's theory was based on a huge misunderstanding. He claimed that Wolski's views, while utopian, or at least unable to be implemented overnight, were highly valuable for their nonconformism, especially as they arose from his own theoretical perceptions and personal practice. Even if they diverged from prevailing opinions that had been accepted without reflection or opposition, all the better for the theory and its author.

These are the beginnings of any creative turmoil in intellectual movements in any area of our knowledge. Clashes of occasionally extremely different views that rule out any counterfactual arguments and prejudices can only be useful as they ultimately result in a synthesis. [...] It is risky to label views that are not universally acceptable yet only because of their novelty or the fact that they refer to disputes from a half century ago (MHS, Biuletyn Informacyjny [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, p. 26.)

Wolski decided to respond and present more of his ideas at a subsequent meeting of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives on 17 February 1958. He pointed out an important matter he claimed had been ignored by opponents to Jan Wolski's theory. Most elements of the conception attributed only to him were not his personal contributions, but the achievements of practitioners and theoreticians stemming

from a variety of countries. To be more accurate, the term Jan Wolski's theory should only refer to what Wolski himself had come up with, and which he proposed to call the theory of cooperative labour self-government as an alternative (PB UW, AJW, ref. 498, p. 24. Jan Wolski, Introduction to the talk *What is the theory of Jan Wolski?*, manuscript).

Wolski stressed the attack against him had originated from an ideological position, while Jan Wolski's theory did not and could not have any ideology, just like theories in astronomy or other sciences contained no ideology. Some ideological, non-scientific stimuli for interest in this or that scientific theory could exist, on the other hand. Also, certain scientific theories could be useful or inconvenient for this or that ideology. Wolski cited the example of the Copernican theory that undermined ideologies based on geocentrism. Wolski thus advocated focusing on the factual and scientific aspects of Jan Wolski's theory, and pointing out any errors in argumentation before moving on to ideological issues (PB UW, AJW, ref. 498, pp. 25–26. Jan Wolski, *Introduction to the talk What is the theory of Jan Wolski?*, manuscript).

How shall we evaluate Jan Wolski's theory? The term has been used pejoratively by some, and positively by others. There can be no doubt that Jan Wolski's theory deserves, thanks to the contributions it made and the polemics it triggered, a permanent entry in dictionaries of political and legal doctrines as an instance of an original, creative and inspiring body of thought. Not only for that – also for promoting the liberation of “the ordinary individual” from all forms of exploitation and enslavement.

To me, Jan Wolski's theory will forever remain synonymous with labour romanticism. It is the history of an ethos, of a certain nobility. It is a part of a world that is no more.

References

- Chajn, Leon. 1984. *Polskie wolnomularstwo 1920–1938 [Polish Freemasonry 1920–1938]*. Warszawa: Czytelnik.
- Duszyk, Adam. 2008. *Ostatni niepokorny. Jan Wolski 1888–1975 (anarchista – wolnomularz – spółdzielca) [The Last of the Disobedient. Jan Wolski 1888–1975 (Anarchist – Free Mason – Cooperative Activist)]*. Kraków: Radomskie Towarzystwo Naukowe.
- Grochowska, Magdalena. 2001. “Jan Józef, ambasador marzeń” [Jan Józef, An Ambassador of Dreams]. *Gazeta Wyborcza* 8–9 September.
- Hass, Ludwik. 1991. “Dmowski i Kierenski o sprawach polskich wiosną 1915” [Dmowski and Kerensky On Polish Affairs in the Spring of 1915]. *Dzieje Najnowsze* Issue 4 [pages missing XXX]
- Hass, Ludwik. 1999. *Wolnomularze polscy w kraju i na świecie 1821–1999. Słownik biograficzny [Polish Freemasons domestically and internationally 1821–1999. A Biographical Dictionary]*. Warszawa: RYTM.
- Hertz, Aleksander. 1991. *Wyznania starego człowieka [Confessions of an Old Man]*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Matejko, Aleksander. 1986. “Marxists against a Polish Anarchosyndicalist: The Case of Jan Wolski.” In *A critique of marxist and non-marxist thought*. Eds. A. Jain and A. Matejko. Toronto: PRAEGER.
- Matejko, Aleksander. 1973. “The self-management theory of Jan Wolski.” *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* January, Vol. 10, No. 1 [pages missing XXX]
- Matejko, Aleksander. 1971. “Wolszczyzna” [The Theory of Jan Wolski], *Kultura* (Paryż), issue 1.
- Wolski, Jan. 1957. *Spółdzielczy samorząd pracy [Cooperative Labour Self-Government] (layout)*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Centralnego Związku Spółdzielczości Pracy.
- Wolski, Jan. 2017. “Work Cooperatives.” In *Cooperativism and Democracy. Selected Works of Polish Thinkers*. Ed. B. Blesznowski. Leiden: Brill [pages missing XXX]
- Wolski, Jan. 2015. *Wyzwolenie. Wybór pism spółdzielczych z lat 1923–1956 [Liberation. Selected Writings on Cooperatives From 1923–1956]*. Eds. R. Okraska and A. Benon Duszyk. Łódź: Nowy Obywatel.
- Rzymowski, Wincenty. 1933. *W walce i burzy. Tadeusz Hołówko na tle epoki [In Stormy Fighting. Tadeusz Hołówko and His Times]*. Warszawa: self-published by the author.
- Szwalbe, Stanisław. 1996. *Wspomnienia i komentarze [Memories and Comments]*. Ed. M. Jaworski. Warszawa: Energopol.

Archives

New Archives

Fonds:

– The Union of Polish Cooperatives (below: ZRSRP), Socio-Educational Department (below: WSW)

– Residual Sets Collection (below: ZZS)

Jagiellonian University Archives

Fonds:

– The Academic Senate III (below: S/III)

Joint Libraries of the Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, Warsaw University, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Polish Philosophical Society

Fonds:

– Jan Wolski Archives (below: AJW)

The Institute of National Remembrance

– The Bureau of Provision and Archivization of Documents (below: BUiAD)

Historical Museum of Cooperativism

– [*Information Bulletin*] of the Discussion Club with the Central Union of Labour Cooperatives in Warsaw, issue 10, pp. 1–27 (manuscript facsimile).

Adam Duszyk – b. 1972 in Radzyń Podlaski, a history teacher at the 6th Jan Kochanowski Secondary Comprehensive School in Radom, historian of socio-economic movements in the 19th and 20th centuries. Major publications: *Problematyka absolutnej wolności jednostki w działalności i poglądach Michała Bakunina* [*Problems of Absolute Individual Freedom in Activities and Views of Mikhail Bakunin*] (Radom 2004); *Ostatni niepokorny. Jan Wolski 1888–1975 (anarchista – wolnomularz – spółdzielca)* [*The Last of the Disobedient. Jan Wolski 1888–1975 (Anarchist – Freemason – Cooperative Activist)*], (Kraków 2008). President of the Radom Scientific Association in 2007–2010. Holds a PhD in philosophy from the Warsaw University.

ADRESS:

Radomskie Towarzystwo Naukowe

ul. Kościuszki 5a

26-600 Radom

E-MAIL: duszyk@poczta.fm

CITATION: Duszyk, Adam. 2018. “A Forgotten Project for Polish Labour Cooperativism: A Historical-Problematic Introduction to the Works of Jan Wolski.” *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 1(27): 61-84.

DOI: 10.14746/prt.2018.1.3

FUNDINGS: This paper is part of the project, “Tradition of the Polish Cooperativism: Between Idea and Practice”. The project is financed under “The National Programme of Humanities Development”, as part of the “Tradition” module.

Adam Duszyk – ur. 1972 w Radzynie Podlaskim, nauczyciel historii w VI Liceum Ogólnokształcącym im. Jana Kochanowskiego w Radomiu, historyk zajmujący się dziewiętnasto- i dwudziestowiecznymi ruchami społeczno-ekonomicznymi. Najważniejsze publikacje: *Problematyka absolutnej wolności jednostki w działalności i poglądach Michała Bakunina* (Radom 2004); *Ostatni niepokorny. Jan Wolski 1888–1975 (anarchista – wolnomularz – spółdzielca)* (Kraków 2008). W latach 2007–2010 prezes Radomskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego. Doktorat z filozofii uzyskał na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim.