

*Piotr Kuligowski*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6251-0482>

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences

## MECHANISMS OF CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN THE DISCOURSE OF POLISH POLITICAL EMIGRATION AFTER THE NOVEMBER INSURRECTION OF 1830-1\*

### Abstract

This essay investigates the mechanisms of conceptual change in the discourse of Polish political emigration after the November Insurrection of 1830-1. To this end, a methodological apparatus is employed that has been elaborated by scholars of the German 'history of concepts' (*Begriffsgeschichte*) school and by Anglo-Saxon researchers specialised in the intellectual history and studies on ideology. Quoting a series of period source materials, I argue that the decades of 1830s and 1840s are interpretable in the Polish context as the time of a fundamental breakthrough in the sphere of ideas and political concepts. This turn was caused, for one thing, by the absorbability of Polish political discourse of the time, with a number of new ideas and concepts appearing, particularly those borrowed from the French debates ongoing in the period concerned. For another, it resulted from ardent disputes going on in the circles of the Polish Great Emigration. The concluding remarks stress the need to render a method applicable with such considerations empirically rooted since the dynamism of conceptual change is fundamentally different depending on the period as well as national and linguistic context.

**Keywords:** conceptual change, history of concepts, the Polish Great Emigration, nineteenth-century history, transfer of concepts

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## I INTRODUCTION

The tension between stability of a communication community and changeability of a social reality that is described and, moreover, co-created by all acts of communication is an inseparable part of the history of socio-political ideas and concepts. All the same, the *Begriffsgeschichte* perspective seems to provide better tools with which to record the changes in specific meanings in time than to explain the mechanisms of such changes. It has, however, to be noticed that the theoretical updates of Koselleck's method are to a more considerable degree oriented toward tracing the evolution of concepts, be it though analysing the mechanisms of translations and borrowings between different linguistic contexts<sup>1</sup> or even in the perspective of global intellectual history. Practitioners of the latter look at how ideas travel the world and adapt to new realities in diverse parts of the globe.<sup>2</sup>

No less problematic in this aspect are the research methods worked out in the circle of scholars associated with the so-called Cambridge School. As these methods clearly emphasise speech acts and focus on discourse structures, they make one much more sensitive to the changeability of ideas; their extreme forms go as far as negating any stability of meanings, which has incited some authors to pose legitimate questions about the historicity of the thus understood intentional interventions ('speech acts') in the political domain.<sup>3</sup> Still, the set of tools constructed by the Cambridge School authors is not directly translatable into examining the history of ideas or concepts.

This happens, despite the efforts taken by scholars not associated with any of the research traditions mentioned above, who consistently

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<sup>1</sup> Martin J. Burke and Melvin Richter, *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought* (Leiden–Boston, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher L. Hill, 'Conceptual Universalization in the Transnational Nineteenth Century', in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds), *Global Intellectual History* (New York, 2013), 134–58; Sebastian Conrad, 'Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique', *American Historical Review*, cxvii (2012), 999–1027.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph V. Femia, 'An Historicist Critique of "Revisionist" Methods for Studying the History of Ideas', in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton, 1988), 168–73.

strive to reconcile both perspectives.<sup>4</sup> Some authors are even positive that any attempt to overly strictly separate the methods elaborated by Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck (to recall these two prominent names) on the level of research practice is not only a problematic exercise: it is, outright, nonsensical too.<sup>5</sup> Such warnings essentially seem to suggest that a historical interpretation worthy of its name must be undogmatic at the stage of formulating research questions and conclusions, while any bogging oneself down in interpretive schemes leads to a loss of the richness of meanings hidden in texts.

This study seeks to show the mechanisms of conceptual change in the political discourse of Polish ‘Great’ Emigration – the wave of political émigrés that followed the defeat of the November Insurrection of 1830–1. As James Farr points out, a conceptual change can be described as a “strikingly imaginative outcome of the process of political actors attempting to solve the problems they encounter as they try to understand and change the world around them”. In order to adequately grasp these problems, Farr continues, it has to be borne in mind that “concepts are never held or used in isolation, but in constellations, which make up entire schemes or belief systems”.<sup>6</sup> Expressing this in other words, it can be accepted that a change in the meaning of a given concept or idea primarily stands for its update, which always occurs when individual actors come across specific shifts – as when reflexively inheriting the ideas conceived and elaborated by the preceding generations, or coming in touch with entirely novel phenomena that call for naming and comprehending. A change of this sort takes place also when a completely new idea or

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<sup>4</sup> Jacques Guilhaumou, *Discours et événement: l’histoire langagière des concepts* (Besançon, 2006); Marc Angenot, *L’histoire des idées: problématiques, objets, concepts, méthodes, enjeux, débats* (Liège, 2014), 153–73.

<sup>5</sup> Kari Palonen, ‘Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives on Conceptual Change. Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck’, *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, iii (1999), 43; Eirini Goudarouli, ‘Introduction: A Focus on the History of Concepts’, *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, xii (2017), 50.

<sup>6</sup> James Farr, ‘Understanding Conceptual Change Politically’, in James Farr, Terence Ball, and Russel L. Hanson (eds), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge, 1989), 33. Michael Freeden proposes a somewhat similar ‘constellation’ or ‘galaxy’ concept in respect to the category of ideology as a mosaic of mutually interdependent concepts/ideas; see *id.*, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford, 1998).

concept appears in the said ‘constellation’, marking out new fields of divisions and disputes.

To operationalise these general reflections proposed by Farr, let us remark that ideas and concepts tend to alter as part of a complicated game taking place between words, the ideas/concepts themselves, and things. On the most general level, this game is observable in three aspects. First, naming new ideas/concepts and things calls for inventing new words, borrowing them from another language, or using old words in a new meaning. Second, a conceptual change entails the need to rename concept or idea, juxtapose it with a different (or, new) counter-concept, or refer it to a new thing. Furthermore, third, new things (phenomena; *Sachen*)<sup>7</sup> call for new names as well as for being thought over and evaluated by political actors. All these dimensions of changeability were represented, in various proportions, in the Great Emigration’s discourse.

The thus-comprehended conceptual change seems to be possibly graspable in the textual matter, in at least three types of utterance. The first is translations, of all and any sort: in respect of the Great Emigration, suffice it to mention the *Commentaire sur les droits de l’homme* penned by Albert Laponneraye, or *Le livre du peuple* by Félicité Robert de Lamennais; both, translated by Jan Nepomucen Janowski, exerted a considerable impact on the formation of democratic discourse. The second was the change caused by all the texts written in the form of questions-and-answers, which at that time were often entitled a ‘catechism’. This form of ‘catechisation’ policy was by no means specific to Polish authors: between 1789 and 1914, as many as 392 ‘political catechisms’ came out in France, of which 260 were composed of questions and answers only.<sup>8</sup> Authors of such forms recalled the existing ideas or concepts and proposed their (re)considered redefinitions, usually pretending that their intentions were completely different. Such reflections were many a time embedded with an indication that the respective meanings of the concepts under discussion were commonly known; subsequently, their particular definitions, beneficial for a given political circle or milieu, were given. Thirdly, conceptual change in

<sup>7</sup> Palonen, ‘Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives’, 41–59.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Charles Buttier, ‘Peut-on catéchiser la Révolution? (1789–1848)’, *La Révolution française*, iv (2013), <https://journals.openedition.org/lrf/898?lang=de> [Accessed: 8 June 2020].

specific historical moments is attested by the moments where the authors quoted individual words that still sounded alien and odd to them, italicised and in parentheses. Paradoxically, however, many of those words, almost all of them of French origin, finally took root in the Polish language. For instance, still in 1840 Ludwik Królikowski used in one of his works the word *zachowawcy* [‘conservatives’; now obsolete in Polish], adding (in brackets) a French equivalent, closer to the author’s intent – i.e. *conservateurs*.<sup>9</sup> The *Demokrata Polski* periodical published someone’s conviction that that “the *juste milieu* party has no name in Polish and does not correspond with the Polish character”,<sup>10</sup> whereas a text on the Whigs had the description ‘liberal [ones]’ put in italics,<sup>11</sup> thus marking its alleged foreignness and distinctiveness.

## II

### THE GREAT EMIGRATION: A POLISH *SATTELZEIT*?

These general remarks already illustrate a series of mechanisms of changeability observable in the Polish Great Emigration’s discourse. It is therefore worth emphasising that the focus on the community of post-November émigrés, as part of the so-delineated research, reduces the framework of the present argument to a relatively narrow stage (in terms of time and space) of the development of Polish political language. This, in turn, considerably facilitates the finding of connections and juxtaposing the concepts formulated within such a framework. Moreover, real and deep changes were taking place in the Great Emigration’s discourse, which may make at least partly legitimate the description of the period in question in terms of a Polish *Sattelzeit* (though, in the specific case of Polish history, with its peculiar complexity, it would probably be more apt to refer to several *Sattelzeit* periods). The émigrés themselves considered the development of Polish political imagination as one of their chief missions, thereby giving excuses for their refusals to accept an amnesty and giving grounds for their persistency in exile.

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<sup>9</sup> Michał Chodźko, *Dziesięć obrazów z wyprawy do Polski 1833 r. 1834–1835. Poema, z muzyką do dwóch pieśni, i czterema portretami. (Objaśnienia i przypisy)*, ed. by Ludwik Królikowski (Paryż, 1841), 222.

<sup>10</sup> *Demokrata Polski*, ii: 1838–1840 (7 Nov. 1838), 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* (22 Feb. 1839), 66.

As probably any other political emigration, the Polish emigration was a form of protest; hence the post-November emigrants initially placed at the foundation of their self-identification a daydream of their triumphant armed return to the Polish lands. Considering, however, the fact that their time as émigrés was extending, they began to compensate for this unfulfilled hope through proclaiming the necessity to create new ideas and a new type of political language. This issue was expressed in no uncertain terms already in the Founding Act of the Polish Democratic Society, published in 1832. The authors remarked unambiguously: “What used to be in the life, these conceptualisations, these persons who directed and acted for the Polish cause, are already effete”.<sup>12</sup> Jan Bartkowski expressed this in a more moderate way: “Whoever felt inside himself a good-enough intellectual capacity, he would have read the work on the rights of man, on the social arrangement, on constitutionalism, and so on, in order to become educated – if not as a steers-man, then at least as a gifted sailor who would lead the future native land’s body-politic”.<sup>13</sup> Notably, the activists at home – even if reluctant toward the émigrés’ leadership of the Polish independence-oriented movement – basically accepted the image of the emigration as a forgery of new ideas. Henryk Kamieński, a confirmed follower of autonomy of organisations at home, indicated in a significant work that disputes around Polish political circles in the emigration, are beneficial in seeking the truth.<sup>14</sup> It has to be admitted, after all, that the émigrés tried hard to fulfil this task in an appropriate fashion. Not without evident irony, Władysław Mickiewicz recollected that he had met no Pole in France who would have never written at least one political text.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth emphasising, though, that the Great Emigration’s discourse did not evolve continuously or regularly. On the contrary, some fundamental moments are discernible within its framework, where conceptual change and, from a broader perspective, ideological search, gained momentum. To a degree, a correlation with the activities of the

<sup>12</sup> ‘Akt założenia Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego’, in *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie. Dokumenty i pisma*, ed. by Bronisław Baczeko (Warszawa, 1954), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted after Helena Łuczakówna, *Wiktor Heltman, 1796–1874* (Poznań, 1935), 49.

<sup>14</sup> [Henryk Kamieński], *Katechizm demokratyczny czyli opowiadanie Słowa Ludowego* (Paryż, 1845), III.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted after Bronisław Baczeko, *Poglądy społeczno-polityczne i filozoficzne Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego* (Warszawa, 1955), 158.

Polish diaspora in emigration, in general, is visible there: for instance, the scale of changeability of the language partly coincides with the quantitative development of Polish press in emigration. Comparing this trend on a year-to-year basis, we can see that in the 1830s and 1840s the Polish émigré community published more than twenty press titles per year, with only ten to twelve in the fifties.<sup>16</sup> However, reducing this issue only to this particular dependence would be a simplification, for it would lead to overlooking a moment of paramount importance to conceptual change. What I have in mind is the landscape that followed the tumultuous events of the years 1846–51 (i.e. between the Cracow revolution and Napoleon III's *coup d'état*). It was then that a few interesting shifts appeared, whose mechanisms were somewhat different from the first wave of the language's evolution, which occurred mainly in the early 1830s. Initially, the emigrants made a series of conceptual transfers and subsequently took efforts to re-conceptualise the notions and ideas not yet well-settled in Polish political imagination.

As part of these introductory remarks, it should be noted that individual political milieus differed in their approaches towards the changes in the political language. The radicals (I use this term as a collective description of Polish democrats and those who were inspired by diverse currents of early socialism, for the divisions between them were fluid in several cases) substantially made this question one of their missions, indicating that the former ideas or concepts had already been consumed, no more consonant with the new challenges. Their opponents, be it those representing the *juste milieu* (i.e. the moderate camp), or the camp of Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (which included liberals, conservatives, and monarchists), opposed the conceptual change in several moments. This is not to say that their political commentaries are to be neglected as part of thus oriented research. It is worth to pay attention to the fact, though, that these milieus more willingly resorted to manipulation (in the descriptive, and not evaluative, meaning) with individual words and used utterly different justifications for their ideas, whereas the radicals basically tended to display an inclination for drawing inspirations directly from other language contexts.

It is worthwhile to ponder for a while on the aforementioned 'manipulations'. I reckon that any ideological party or faction produces

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<sup>16</sup> Władysław M. Kolasa, 'Prasa Wielkiej Emigracji (1832–1870) w polskim prasoznawstwie', *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, lvi (2013), 389–400.

not only a positive and a negative message (the latter is based on criticising the opponents) but also a series of defensive concepts and rhetorical arguments. This is how a peculiar dilution of even the most extreme conclusion occurs, which might have ensued from the findings made by the given milieu; in extreme cases, opinions precisely opposite to the group's own ideological core or main direction of action are proclaimed. It was not without a reason that the Romanticists, who criticised the Enlightenment's reason, displayed a tendency to declare that their journalistic or publicist pieces and theoretical considerations theoretically led to 'lighting the lights', 'bringing light into the darkness', 'exposing to the brightness' – as if they were willing to convince the auditorium that they would shed light better and more efficiently than the preceding, Enlightenment generation was capable of doing. I should think that such declarations might have had a preventive function and been used in defence always whenever someone would have accused a representative of the Romanticism of reluctance toward science and education. Such actions are also visible in the discourses of individual political parties or factions. The conservatives, for example, could willingly write about progress – the 'genuine' one, to be sure, as was the case with the Greater Poland's (Wielkopolska) Catholic press publications in the 1840s.<sup>17</sup> The democrats, for a change, despite their anticlerical attitude, sometimes used phrases typical of a religious language, in order to refute the accusations regarding their 'curricular' anti-religiosity, if not atheism.<sup>18</sup>

### III

#### DISPUTES, PAMPHLETS, SUBTILISATIONS

Significantly, the Great Emigration's discourse was never narrowed down to the Polish language. Hence, the research objective defined as an analysis of the changeability mechanisms related to the concepts appearing in this discourse calls for looking closer at texts in foreign

<sup>17</sup> Przemysław Matusik, "Nadeszła epoka przejścia..." *Nowoczesność w piśmiennictwie katolickim Poznańskiego 1836–1871* (Poznań, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> This issue was repeatedly used in their attacks against the democrats by, for instance, the publicists of *Trzeci Maj* periodical. For example, in his text 'Co jest demokracją?' submitted to the editorial board, Wojciech Doświadczyński considered a 'hatred of religion' the current's main treat; *Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie*, 5330, 'Emigracya. *Trzeci Maj* 1831–1848', 550.

languages as well. The language of the post-November émigrés was quite absorptive as far as borrowings from other contexts are concerned – particularly, from the French language, whose influence on Polish political imagination was overwhelming at that time. The year 1820 saw twenty-two texts in French published by Polish authors, with nine such texts published in 1830 and as many as sixty-five in 1840. With time, the number became decreasing: in 1850, thirty French texts came out, the figure for 1860 being thirty-eight. To make this list even more precise, let us mention that a total of 583 works were published in 1820 (one periodical standing for one item), the respective 1840 and 1860 figures being 693 and 1,320.<sup>19</sup> What it shows is a considerable scale of popularity of the French language and culture (things French, in general) at the peak of the emigration circles' activity. It might have even been higher if we take into account single articles published by Polish authors in French-language periodicals. Lastly, the volume of letters exchanged between Polish émigrés and foreigners is hard to assess, though also in this respect it seems that a rather considerable scale of such contacts, particularly with Frenchmen, was characteristic of the Great Emigration period.

Quite importantly, in the time of Louis Philippe, France was an arena of formation of the first mass political movements, with the resulting '-isms' and other 'concepts of the movement', with their peculiar traits and functions.<sup>20</sup> For this reason, the intellectual exchange with the French and conceptual transfers from their language perforce accelerated the ideologisation of the discourse of Polish émigrés. In any case, no notional innovation is 'pure', as it must in each case be entrenched by specific operations in order to become efficient and comprehensible. The Great Emigration authors primarily sought to justify the Polish community's actual need to absorb and adopt more socio-political ideas and concepts. It was not without a reason that Adam Czartoryski's followers so willingly emphasised a 'foreignness', if not a destructive potential, of democratic and radical ideas introduced to Polish political imagination. As a *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej* author put it, "Foreign thoughts are at times more harmful to our Homeland than

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<sup>19</sup> After Karol Estreicher, *Bibliografia. XIX wieku*, x, 1–2 (Kraków, 1885).

<sup>20</sup> Cesare Cuttica, 'To Use or Not to Use... The Intellectual Historian and the Isms: A Survey and a Proposal', *Études Épistémè*, xxiii (2013), <http://journals.openedition.org/episteme/268> [Accessed: 8 June 2020].

invasions of aliens. If all the countries were capable of prevailing on a par with one another, the Homeland would have been a void word”.<sup>21</sup> The same periodical described the commentaries appearing in the *Postępek* magazine published by the democrats as an “awkward and exaggerated imitation of French pamphlets”.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, these arguments were frequently aimed against the threat related to contamination of the Polish speech by loanwords from other languages. Let us point out that any such narrative should be treated as an intentional argument, rather than ascertained fact: after all, the Polish conservative discourse drew its inspiration from foreign authors to no lesser extent.<sup>23</sup>

To refute such accusations, the democratic, as well as early socialist circles, basically applied a twofold strategy. First, they tried to find grounds for the aptness of their postulates in historical terms – for instance, through references to the primary, democratic institutions of early Slavdom, or by pointing to the fact that ideas close to democracy were elaborated in Polish political imagination much earlier on. This tendency is perceptible, for example, in the correspondence that forms a remnant of the eventually unfulfilled project to write a dictionary of socio-political terms which would have provided their explanations from a democratic viewpoint. In his instructions regarding the dictionary, Wiktor Heltman encouraged Jan Nepomucen Janowski as follows: “Make yourself a set of several dozen words, and explain each of them with a definition, or with a description or example. Say what things were like in our country, what they are like, and should be like; in order to give it a colour that would be, to a possible extent, national, do quote the opinions of our writers, particularly the early ones, such as [Andrzej Frycz] Modrzewski, [Łukasz] Górnicki, [Piotr] Skarga, [Stanisław] Orzechowski, and the like”<sup>24</sup> (elsewhere, this author advised that Stanisław Staszic, Hugo Kołłątaj, and Stanisław Konarski be cited).

Furthermore, this goal could be met through rendering radical postulates with the use of religious metaphors, which was meant to

<sup>21</sup> *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, i, 9 (3 June 1834), 144.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 11 (20 June 1834), 161.

<sup>23</sup> To give an example, the Polish Counter-Enlightenment willingly used devotional literature as well as translations (translated works were published with introductions by Polish authors, though); see Martyna Deszczyńska, *Polskie kontroświecenie* (Warszawa, 2011), 43.

<sup>24</sup> Biblioteka Jagiellońska (hereinafter: BJ), 3685 iii, A letter by Wiktor Heltman to Jan Nepomucen Janowski, 10 Feb. 1839, 24.

make them easier to absorb and conceive. Lucjan Siemieński thus expressed this intention, in one of his letters: “I have always felt the need to convert democratic concepts into religious ones: first, because they are less prone to petty subtilisations; second, the religious form is, always and everywhere, the hardest to demolish”.<sup>25</sup> What is more, representatives of radical milieus repeatedly expressed their conviction that political contents represented with the use of a religious language would be more comprehensible to the common people. This trend gained strength especially after the failure of democratic canvassing in Polish lands in the 1840s.<sup>26</sup>

Both strategies of entrenchment of new ideas or concepts or transformation of existing words into concepts were inseparable in a number of cases. This is visible, for example, with the notion of *lud* (‘commons’, ‘populace’, ‘the people’), which was key in the Great Emigration discourse: at the verge of the nineteenth century, the word did not have a clear political meaning.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, as early as in the course of the November Insurrection voices appeared summoning the common people to mobilise, thus bringing about a ‘social revolution’<sup>28</sup> (interestingly, not a ‘people’s revolution’). In any case, before 1831, *lud* had been – in the specific Polish context – primarily a treasure trove of folk tales, legends and traditions; only rarely this underspecified community was treated as a political entity.<sup>29</sup> It was only in the emigration discourse that the notion of *lud* gained a real multiplicity of meanings; several verbal clusters were coined with its use. It was then that Polish for the first time absorbed a vision of a ‘People’s Poland’ [*Polska Ludowa*, the name mostly associated with post-war communist Poland], in complete opposition to the fallen nobility-dominated Poland.<sup>30</sup> The change, therefore, consisted in politicisation and multiplication of

<sup>25</sup> Biblioteka Narodowa, 2058, A letter by Lucjan Siemieński to Seweryn Goszczyński, 10 June 1842[?], 54.

<sup>26</sup> Łuczakówna, Wiktor Heltman, 240.

<sup>27</sup> Samuel Bogumił Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*, i, Part 2 (Warszawa, 1808), 1303–4.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, in Adam Gurowski and Maurycy Mochnacki, ‘Czemu masy nie powstają?’ *Nowa Polska*, xli (14 Feb. 1831).

<sup>29</sup> See Andrzej Zieliński, *Naród i narodowość w polskiej literaturze i publicystyce lat 1815–1831* (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> The term was probably first used in texts of the Communes of Polish People: *Lud Polski Gromada Grudziąż. Komisja Przygotowawcza do Obywatela Vincent. Lud polski w emigracji 1835–1846*, ed. by Zenon Świętosławski (Jersey, 1854), 116–18.

the semantic scope of the concept, which was caused by extensive reflections about the nation, history, and the expected uprising. After all, *lud* is an example of a concept that in the specified time period became a political ('hot') one and subsequently was 'de-politicised' ('cooler'), re-establishing itself as an empty ('cold') notion – mobilising nobody and no more triggering any disputes – if not a 'corrupt' one.<sup>31</sup>

#### IV

#### 'ISMS', THE HERALDS OF A POLITICAL MODERNISATION

As has been said, the appearance of '-isms' in the Polish language provided a strong impulse that accelerated the conceptual change in the discourse of the Great Emigration. These concepts perforce influenced the entire conceptual constellation and modified the semantic fields of the other related concepts and ideas. The Polish context is characterised in this respect by a certain peculiarity, since – unlike several other European countries – the numerous '-isms' appeared there at once in their respective positive semantic contexts. A telling example is the concept of socialism, which became part of Polish as early as 1834 – initially as an idea without an adequate word to name it. Inspired by the term coined in 1831 by Pierre Leroux in order to express the (by-then-lacking) antonym of egoism,<sup>32</sup> Adam Gurowski made an effort to name the idea, in his essay published by the magazine *Przyszłość* (1834). Attempting to adapt the term *sociabilité*, he tried to apply to this end the familiarly sounding formulations such as *towarzyskość* and *socjalność* [both renderable as 'sociability'].<sup>33</sup> A proclamation issued in the same year in the circle of the separatists from the London Assembly [*Ogół Londyński*] had it that the followers of Stanisław Worcell, who inspired the split, were "neither liberals nor democrats", and declared their striving for "equalisation of everybody, in wealth terms".<sup>34</sup> According to Józef Żmigrodzki,

<sup>31</sup> Tomasz Szkudlarek, 'Puste, płynne, zepsute i wieloznaczne', in Ernesto Laclau, *Rozum populistyczny*, transl. into Polish T. Szkudlarek et al., ed. by T. Szkudlarek (Wrocław, 2009), XV.

<sup>32</sup> Vincent Peillon, *Liberté, égalité, fraternité: sur le républicanisme français* (Paris, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> *Przyszłość*, 1 (1834), 18.

<sup>34</sup> 'Odezwa Gminy Londyńskiej Emigrantów Polskich do emigracji polskiej', in *Geneza Ludu Polskiego w Anglii. Materiały źródłowe*, ed. by Peter Brock (London, 1962), 200–29.

the word 'socialism' appeared in a proclamation of Polish *Carbonari*, issued on 1 December 1834 in Paris.<sup>35</sup> All these examples indicate that the year 1834 can be regarded as the beginning of the functioning of the concept of socialism in Polish political discourse, even though the naming of the idea it referred to – initially vaguely conceived and underdetermined – came across essential difficulties.

Just a year later, the concept became an important category in the political discourse of the Communes of the Polish People [*Gromady Ludu Polskiego*]. Members of this organisation, basing on an asymmetrical pair of concepts coined a few years earlier by Leroux, endeavoured to find a Polish equivalent for the term opposite to egoism. Initially, they would use the phrase 'comparison of social conditions', possibly borrowed from Marc-René de Voyer d'Argenson, one of the chief leaders of the Société des droits de l'homme, whose members, earlier on, were the Communes' chief ideologists.<sup>36</sup> Substantially, an apparent reference to 'socialism' (without using the word, let me point out once again) appeared in the first sentence of the organisation's manifesto, which claimed that Poland had collapsed owing to egoism.<sup>37</sup> This marked exact transplantation into the Polish soil of the logic used by Leroux, which instantly inspired an alteration of the concept of 'egoism' by embedding it in the context of historical and political considerations. Interestingly, in the course of its further development, the term 'socialism' became semantically associated with 'democracy', though it never became a fully autonomous idea in the emigration discourse, and never was it used as a label of political self-identification (no circle or milieu that would have referred to itself as 'socialist' was ever formed within the Great Emigration). The example of socialism shows how a concept may appear and function in the language for some time without an established word to stand for it.

The dynamism of changeability of the concept of 'democracy', which in the earlier decades functioned in Polish political discourse primarily to denote one of the possible political-system forms (a 'people's-authority [*ludowladny*] government'), was entirely different. In the Great Emigration discourse, it subsequently assumed other meanings and,

<sup>35</sup> Jerzy Żmigrodzki, *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie (1832–1862)*, i, A (1832–1835) (London, 1983), 390.

<sup>36</sup> Lidia Ciołkosz and Adam Ciołkosz, *Zarys dziejów socjalizmu polskiego*, i (London, 1966), 57.

<sup>37</sup> *Lud polski w emigracji 1835–1846*, ed. by Zenon Świętoślowski (Jersey, 1854), 3.

with time, grew fully hermetic and ideologised, evolving toward a ‘democratism’. No less interestingly, as opposed to socialism, the term functioned – throughout the existence of organised democratic émigré milieus – as a category of identification, which was a significant political novelty. With the formation of the Polish Democratic Society [*Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie*, hereinafter TDP], the adjective ‘democratic’ appeared in a party’s or faction’s name for the first time ever in Europe.<sup>38</sup> It was not without a reason that the name aroused resistance among those who treated such an overt declaration of sympathy for a defined political camp as an unnecessary surplus or superfluous radicalism (hence the scornful descriptions such as ‘registry’ or ‘patented’ democrats).<sup>39</sup> Adam Lewak once noted that the main ideologists of TDP formed an almost separate subculture, for they willingly emphasised their uniqueness and “propagated exclusivity not only in their publications but also in their attire: modest blouses, long hair and beards”.<sup>40</sup>

So, it was already in the 1830s that democracy ceased to signify a form of government, becoming one of the political identifications instead. And it was in this period that democracy started functioning as a complementation of the comprehensive proposition of a systemic order (not only concerning the political power but also to the social structure) within the phrase ‘democratic Poland’.<sup>41</sup> In the subsequent years, the concept of democracy detached itself from one specific political organisation (i.e. TDP), and became used to describe all the people and groups sharing a defined way of thinking. As early as 1843, Jan Alcyato noted that democracy is a full-fledged political movement which in the emigration circles gained a ‘political-and-literary’ dimension whilst at home it held ‘the most prominent position’ as “it had its very element at hand ... the element of the people [*lud*]”.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Sławomir Kalembka, *Wielka Emigracja. Polskie wychodźstwo polityczne w latach 1831–1862* (Warszawa, 1971), 114.

<sup>39</sup> Józef Alfons Potrykowski, for example, uses such descriptions repeatedly in his memoirs; see *id.*, *Tulactwo Polaków we Francji: dziennik emigranta*, Part 1, ed. by Anna Owsieńska (Kraków, 1974).

<sup>40</sup> Adam Lewak, ‘Czasy Wielkiej Emigracji’, in *Polska, jej dzieje i kultura*, iii (Kraków, 1930), 222.

<sup>41</sup> The latter word was used (in capital letters) as part of a verbal cluster in a prospect of the *Postęp* magazine (6 May 1834).

<sup>42</sup> Jan Alcyato, ‘Główny żywioł demokracji’, in *Kilka rad ku oswobodzeniu Polski* (Paris, 1843), 50–2.

In the following years, the concept in question gained additional meanings; this is visible, for instance, in the fact that democracy was gradually defined not only as a positive proposition but also in opposition to certain defined groups or phenomena – for instance, against the nobility as an ‘institution’. As Jan Nepomucen Janowski wrote in 1844, “[being a democrat], not only am I an anti-royalist, anti-dinasticist, anti-Czartoryskiite; not only an anti-aristocrat, anti-obscurantist, anti-Jesuit: what I also am is an anti-*juste milieu*, and an experienced friend of all the implacable foes of yours”.<sup>43</sup> It was then that the concept of democracy as a process appeared: discussions went on about ‘democratisation of the commons’ or even ‘rendering the politics democratised’. All these semantic shifts prepared the foundation for an ideologisation of the concept whose potential was fulfilled after the experiences of the Spring of Nations.

Interestingly, a similar process is observable for a somewhat earlier period in the German discourse where the concept of *Demokratismus*, taken in a positive sense, had at times been opposed to liberalism.<sup>44</sup> It is possible that the concept of ‘democratism’ (exactly as an ‘-ism’) was introduced into the Polish language by Jan Kanty Podolecki – which, *nota bene*, shows that not all of the important semantic shifts of Polish political concepts were transferred from, or inspired by, the French language and culture. ‘Democratism’ was first used in Polish probably in 1846, in a Podolecki’s letter sent from Austrian Galicia to *Demokrata Polski* periodical. Soon, however, once Podolecki and Stanisław Worcell joined the TDP’s Central Section [*Centralizacja*], the concept became one of the key categories in the organisation’s discourse.

It seems, after all, that Worcell’s contribution to the further conceptualisation of the idea caused that ‘democratism’ finally shared the semantic field with socialism, as a superior idea concerning the latter.<sup>45</sup> One author dissected ‘democratism’ and remarked: “Therefore, democratism, as far as the religious aspect is concerned, is called freedom of conscience. In civilian terms, it is personal freedom.

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<sup>43</sup> Jan Nepomucen Janowski, *Merum nomen sine re, czyli król de facto. Świstek polityczny* (Paris, 1844), 4.

<sup>44</sup> Jörn Leonhard, ‘Another “Sonderweg”? The Historical Semantics of “Democracy” in Germany’, in Jussi Kurunmäki, Jeppe Nevers, and Henk te Velde (eds), *Democracy in Modern Europe: A Conceptual History* (New York–Oxford 2018), 74–5.

<sup>45</sup> Bolesław Limanowski, *Stanisław Worcell. Życiorys* (Warszawa, 1948), 307–8.

In social terms, it is socialism". He added, "Democratism is the totality; the freedom of conscience, personal freedom and social freedom are all details of this totality. Democratism is an activist, socialism is the action. Democratism is an entirety, while socialism is a part of this whole".<sup>46</sup> This example demonstrates the extent to which manipulation of a suffix may influence the change of a given concept which had been prone to ideologisation anyway (as has been remarked). Interestingly, though, in contrast to socialism, democratism (unlike democracy) never became a label of any of the modern Polish political movements. It seems that its career as a complemented and hermetic ideology in the Great Emigration discourse was short-lived. For instance, Janowski wrote in his later notes (datable ca 1866) that democracy is much more than a party: it is a new faith, a moral faith (note: no more a 'political' one).<sup>47</sup>

The concept of communism had a different development trajectory. The moment in which the term entered the Polish language is not easy to grasp. Jacques Grandjonc believes that it only happened after 1846,<sup>48</sup> which does not sound too convincing. Henryk Kamiński remarked in his memoirs that already in the 1830s the members of the Association of Polish People [*Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego*] were considered communists.<sup>49</sup> This author spoke moreover of his resistance against transferral of the principles of communism to the Polish soil in his *Prawdy żywotne* [The Vital Truths], published in 1844.<sup>50</sup> What is important is that the numerous examples of the use of this concept in Polish indicate that it was used primarily as a weapon against political opponents. Zygmunt Krasiński was one of those who excelled in statements of this sort; in one of his letters dealing with the Cracow revolt of 1846, he remarked: "It is not by means

<sup>46</sup> [Jan Kanty Podolecki], 'O socjalizmie', in *id.*, *Wybór pism*, ed. by Andrzej Grodek (Warszawa, 1955), 164.

<sup>47</sup> BJ, 3659, 1a, Notes and miscellaneous *pro memoria* excerpts, 16; the original text reads: "La démocratie n'est pas un parti; c'est une foi morale, c'est une foi nouvelle".

<sup>48</sup> Jacques Grandjonc, *Communisme: origine et développement international de la terminologie communautaire prémarxiste des utopistes aux néo-babouvistes, 1785–1842* (Trier, 1989), 25–6.

<sup>49</sup> [Henryk Kamiński], *Pamiętniki i wizerunki*, with an introduction by Witold Kula, prepared for print based on manuscripts and with notes by Irmina Słowińska (Wrocław, 1951), 6–7.

<sup>50</sup> [H. Kamiński], *O prawdach żywotnych narodu polskiego* (Brussels, 1844), 111.

of a slaughter that people can achieve a political paradise; it is not demagoguery that can establish a harmony. It is impossible to leap over the days-of-the-week in one's way from a Monday to the Sunday... I should advise to preserve the Cracow communist in a glass jar and in spirit".<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that an eccentric example of the use of the concept of communism in a positive sense is some utterances of Ludwik Mierosławski. It is characteristic that he attached quite untypical meanings to the concept, as by indicating, for instance, that in the Polish context communism was, simply, the enfranchisement of peasants.<sup>52</sup> This makes me approach his rhetorical gestures in this area in terms of attempted self-aggrandisement through a controversial concept, rather than in terms of striving for giving the concept a new meaning. The substratum for this political moment was provided by the trauma caused by the defeat of the Spring of Nations. It was then that Ludwik Królikowski, a Polish émigré from 1840, involved in the activities of the French Icarian movement, declared himself a communist. Let us remark that the intervention occurred not in the Polish language but was expressed in French. Another essential thing in this context is that Królikowski performed this provocative gesture in the time of a particular intensification of the anti-communist discourse in France.<sup>53</sup> Thereby, by means of his 1850 'I am a communist!' declaration,<sup>54</sup> he took a radical, or even desperate attempt to change the state of affairs. How he explained his communism is meaningful. As was customary of the political discourse of the time, he endeavoured to refer the abstract and incomprehensible category to something that could be easier to absorb to figure out; this is why he regarded a genuine Christian, Christ's disciple as a communist, along with an honest republican, and so forth. He also remarked that any opponent of communism opposes spontaneity,<sup>55</sup> which Królikowski recommended in the middle of the century as a remedy against the

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted after Grzegorz Kucharczyk, *Polska myśl polityczna po roku 1939* (Dębogóra, 2009), 131.

<sup>52</sup> Marian Żychowski, *Ludwik Mierosławski 1814–1878* (Warszawa, 1963), 267–8.

<sup>53</sup> François Fourn, '1849–1851: l'anticommunisme en France. Le Spectre rouge de 1852', in Sylvie Aprile et al. (eds), *Comment meurt une république: autour du 2 décembre 1851* (Grâne, 2004), 135–51.

<sup>54</sup> *Le Populaire de 1841: journal de reorganisation sociale et politique*, 130 (27 Dec. 1850), 68.

<sup>55</sup> *Système de fraternité*, 6 (1851), 181.

crisis of political representation. Finally, however, his gesture did not yield the expected result, whilst communism ceased to be a form of political identification for long decades; even half a century later, representatives of the Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania [*Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy*, SDKPiL] described themselves as ‘social democrats’.

The above three examples illustrate different ways of the changeability of concepts ended with the meaningful suffix ‘-ism’. Only ‘democratism’ among them appeared to be a dead-end: for a few years, it was an important ideological category within Polish democracy. Yet, very soon, in the fifties, it was almost completely disintegrated, appearing only marginally in the later political discourse. In a word, a new turn to ‘democracy’ occurred, whereas democracy did not become an autonomous ideology but rather a part of the broader political ideologies such as ‘social democracy’ or ‘liberal democracy’.

Different durability had the other two concepts: after all, socialism and communism became the labels of mass-scale political movements in the twentieth century. In the period concerned, however, both terms were conceptualised in a completely different fashion by exponents of post-November radicalism. ‘Socialism’ first appeared without an adequate word with which it was possible to express it; hence the initial efforts to find a name for the new concept. As opposite, however, to democracy and democratism, this concept was never applied in Polish radical circles as a political label used in order to determine one’s own worldview. As for ‘communism’, it was rooted in Polish political imagination as a purely negative category. In fact, apart from the aforesaid ‘Królikowski’s moment’, this prevalent meaning was not altered or modified in the nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

## V

### FIGHTING CONCEPTS, OR, FIGHT FOR CONCEPTS?

All the above examples share one trait – their re-conceptualisations were connected (as has been pointed out) to the changeability of words; yet, the discursive struggle went on primarily around the definitions.

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<sup>56</sup> Edward Abramowski made attempts to reestablish a positive meaning of ‘communism’; see Kamil Piskała, ‘Praktykowanie utopii. Edward Abramowski i powracające “widmo komunizmu”’, *Hybris*, 25 (2014), 66–92.

Communism understood as a slaughter is something different than communism approached as genuine Christianity. However, it seems that the number of concepts and ideas whose changeability mechanism would consist in extending their definitions under the influence of political demands is somewhat limited. Apparently, more frequent are semantic shifts related to a change in the context – for instance, when the fight for a concept is primarily about the possibility of owning and appropriating them, not necessarily with an implied alteration in the meaning. The concept of representation is a good example: usually considered in the post-November emigration's discourse as a 'Representation of the Nation', the term was often used by emigration publicists, while the considerations around it would neglect its definition.

This state of affairs might have been because the notion was initially embedded in the legal discourse: this particular category functioned both in the Constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807) and in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland (1815). Therefore, it seems that 'representation' was intuitively comprehended by the emigrants who, never setting up a parliament assembly that would have followed up the Sejm from the November Insurrection period,<sup>57</sup> could not refer the idea to anything particular. It is perhaps no less important that none of these documents introduced a political definition of nation, which caused, in a sense, that such representation was tautological as it created a nation to the extent it had its representative institutions. For quite obvious reasons, such a pattern could no more function after 1830–1. All the same, no effort was made to re-conceptualise the notion, be it through attempts at defining 'nation' legally. Hence, the individual uses of the concept rarely provide any definition of it, and more frequently are entrenched with arguments in favour of a given party's or faction's right to represent the emigration or the nation as a whole. Finally, the political struggle for this particular concept was not about defining it; instead, it consisted of attempts to appropriate it. Hence, 'representation' was a notion that could basically be absorbed by any emigration organisation or party.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Małgorzata Karpińska, 'Sejm polski na emigracji 1832–1848. Problemy i pytania badawcze', in Hubert Chudzio and Janusz Pezda (eds), *Wokół powstania listopadowego: zbiór studiów* (Kraków, 2014), 291–307.

<sup>58</sup> See my paper on the issue: Piotr Kuligowski, 'From "De Facto King" to Peasants' Communes: A Struggle for Representation in the Discourse of the Polish Great Emigration, 1832–1846/48', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, xv (2020), 97–120.

It would be hard to figure out, even if as an exercise in historical thinking, the functioning of such a mechanism concerning ideological concepts ended with the '-ism' suffix. The struggle for their possession might have only been fought in some exceptional situations, such as different Left-oriented parties fighting for the concept of socialism during a revolution or, for a change, for orthodox political niches riding atilt over their truthfulness or ideological purity. Such rhetorical gestures are observable, to an extent, in the nineteenth-century French discourse, whilst in the Polish context, it is not easy to give a good example. In turn, one can imagine a struggle for the definition of the concepts that basically evolved with their new 'possessors' (as the 'representation of the nation') or once set into a different system of meanings. However, again, it seems that such a situation would be possible in the course of a revolution, with the change of the paradigms of political thinking, or in the most niche circles. Nonetheless, a strategy was popular in the Great Emigration discourse that was somewhere halfway through the dispute over possession and the dispute about definitions, which consisted in creating specific, negatively imbued words for the needs of ongoing political struggle. What is interesting in this respect is that different factions/parties created such words in somewhat diverse ways.

In the circles close to Czartoryski, such words usually ended with the '-ism' suffix, which clearly was treated in this milieu with intuitive suspiciousness; this fact, in any case, enables one to understand the scepticism of the 'Czartoryskiites' towards the democrats and the radicals. Janusz Woronicz, an important member of this milieu, in one of his polemical works, coined *ad hoc* such 'isms' as 'tsarism', 'sultanism' (of the Holy Alliance), 'feudalism' (the strengthened version being 'feudal Germanism'), or 'false civism' (being a calque from the French *civisme*, which was usually rendered as a 'civic spirit').<sup>59</sup> As is apparent, none of these 'isms' was positively marked, some of them outright displaying a certain semantic surplus – as if the author wanted to manifest, a priori, his indisputably negative attitude towards the phenomena under description. This is particularly visible for the 'civism' thing which, quite obviously, never took root in Polish (though not italicised in the Woronicz text), nor did it win popularity in the emigration circles. It was meant to indicate a peculiar unfamiliarity,

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<sup>59</sup> Janusz Woronicz, *Rzecz o monarchii i dynastii w Polsce* (Paryż, 1839).

if not outright harmfulness, of the civic spirit which was manifested with use of democratic categories. Volume one of the periodical *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej* brings along such 'isms' charged with a negative meaning – such as 'Machiavellism', (bloody) Jacobinism, 'sofism' (in opposition to 'conviction' or 'mind', and 'royalism' (non-conformant to the Polish nationality). Liberalism, for which absolutism was the antonym, was probably the only positive instance of an 'ism' in the Chronicle.<sup>60</sup>

In the democratic and radical circles, in turn, ideological declarations were accepted with sympathy, at least among their prominent representatives, whereas any excessive attachment to the individual was programmatically rejected. For this reason, dominant in these circles was creating negatively marked words based on the surnames of those around whom a group of fanatic followers would have gathered. Even the very name of 'Hôtel Lambert' – in faith, often used and promoted by no other than the democrats as a description of a political faction – was meant to build adverse associations with the Czartoryski circle [nicknamed in Polish as the *czartoryszczyzna*] as a group based upon corrupted clientele-patronage relationships.

Yet, another field of the battle between the émigré milieus was the naming and thinking over of novel, never-before known phenomena, such as the modern industry and its accompanying phenomena such as the workers' activity. This particular example illustrates well the influence exerted on the understanding of a thing or phenomenon by the diverse ways of naming it. Józef Feliks Zieliński called in his memoirs the 1831 workers' revolt in Lyon a 'sedition' [*rokosz*], probably deeming it the most appropriate description and making the insurrection part of a known and domesticated conceptual framework.<sup>61</sup> The name was seemingly not incidental, as many years later the events that took place in Paris between March and May 1871 were described with the same word by Teofil Dąbrowski (who also referred to a *Gmina*, rather than a *Commune*, of Paris ['commune' being the English equivalent for both]).<sup>62</sup> It is clear that these authors referred

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<sup>60</sup> *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, i, 1834, 124; yet, even there a threat related to 'monopoly-holders of liberalism' was identified.

<sup>61</sup> Józef Feliks Zieliński, *Wspomnienia z tułactwa*, ed. by Elwira Wróblewska (Warszawa, 1989), 116.

<sup>62</sup> Jerzy Wojciech Borejsza, 'Komunardzi', in *id.*, *Piękny wiek XIX* (Warszawa, 2010), 182–201.

phenomena not appearing in Polish lands and being an utter novelty for them to something they had been knowledgeable of before. How different the image of workers' activity is when described with a word like *strejk* – sounding somewhat alien and, interestingly, drawn from English ('strike').

Polish émigré authors found it difficult to name the participants of such revolts or actions. Initially, they would use the word *ouvrier*, directly transplanted from French, merely making it compliant with the grammatical rules of Polish (hence the plural *ouvrierzy*, Polished, with time, as *uwrierzy*). 1833 saw the introduction into Polish, directly from French, of the notion of 'proletariat' (in a press article penned by Michał Doboszyński).<sup>63</sup> This did not solve the problem of how to name the group, as no single adequate word was eventually domesticated; as a result, the forms such as *proletarowie*, *proleterzy*, or *proletarzy* [all short-lived neologisms; the modern form is *proletariusze*] were used in parallel. Not only the inconsistent spelling but also certain traces of uncertainty related to the meaning of the word testify to its weak stability and liquidity. Such ambivalences are primarily observable in the texts written in French by some of the émigrés and treating proletariat as synonymous to the largest and the most indigent social stratum in France – and thus, to what they described in their Polish-language texts as the *lud*. It can only be guessed that they would have used the word *people* instead, probably noticing the significant differences between the commons (primarily, the peasants) in Polish lands and the factory workers in France or England.

Finally, however, after a period of semantic search, the concept got stabilised as regards the thing signified and the word itself, as attested by the latter's later uses in Polish. Witold Piekarski, who first translated *The Communist Manifesto* into Polish, had no problem translating the word 'proletariat' and needed to add no commentary to explain his decision – as opposed to the term *bourgeois*, for which he clarified why he used the word *burżua* [a phoneticised version of the French *bourgeois*] rather than *mieszczanin*.<sup>64</sup>

The example of conceptualisation of the working class in Polish political imagination seems to have made up a threefold pattern of

<sup>63</sup> Sławomir Kalembka, *Prasa demokratyczna Wielkiej Emigracji: dzieje i główne koncepcje polityczne (1832–1863)* (Toruń, 1977), 54.

<sup>64</sup> See *Manifest Partii Komunistycznej*, transl. Witold Piekarski (Geneva, 1883), 9.

adaptation of new words. At the very beginning, it merely consists of direct borrowing of the word, generally in order to describe the given new thing. With time, the word gets 'smoothened', partly adapting to the rules of the adopting language (as in the *ouvrier* to *uwrier* transition). This stage is, however accompanied by a specific imbalance as the word begins to appear in several forms (the aforementioned *proletarowie*, *proletarzy*, *proleterzy*). It is only with time that it becomes fully stabilised in terms of spelling; later on, the new word gets anchored in the language so firmly that it loses an aftertaste of any strangeness, finally turning into an utterly domesticated category.<sup>65</sup> It is worth adding that a language is never ultimately closed shut (not before the end of history, at least), hence yet another (or more) change(s) can occur in a given word or concept. Therefore, a conjectural statement can be risked whereby 'proletariat' might have been deeper rooted and aroused less negative associations in the first half of the twentieth century compared to the present. The word's incorporation in the corpus of the Stalinist language produced an unexpected semantic turn, as a result of which the word became incompletely domesticated again.

## VI CONCLUSIONS

In analysing all these conceptual evolutions, it is worth to take into account yet another crucial trait of the Great Emigration discourse – namely, that its actors believed that their debates were not confined to particular questions: on the contrary, they ascribed a universal dimension to them. This aspect makes them remarkably different from, for example, the Positivists. The latter directly admitted that they made use of ideas borrowed from Western theoreticians, and sought modernisation opportunities in the development and anchoring of these ideas in the Polish imagination. Bolesław Prus pointed outright that a number of his concepts were drawn from British, German, or French thinkers, and subsequently were Polonised.<sup>66</sup> In a simplification,

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<sup>65</sup> Melvin Richter, 'Introduction: Translation, the History of Concepts and the History of Political Thought', in *Why concepts matter...*; Piotr Kuligowski, 'Ouvriers, proletarjat, czy stan czwarty? Konceptualizacje klasy robotniczej w kręgu polskiej lewicy (1832–1892)', *Praktyka Teoretyczna* xxiii, 1 (2017), 160–94.

<sup>66</sup> After Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York–Oxford, 2000), 60.

it can be stated that in the Positivist concept, universalism came from the outside whereas the emigration discourse considered itself universalistic, with no need to adopt an external perspective, instance, notion or concept. This remark, let me highlight it once again, refers to what the participants of the period's debates declared and intended, and to the justifications they provided. In practice, though (as repeatedly aforementioned), the post-November émigrés' discourse was saturated with new notions and concepts transferred, in particular, from the French context.

What is more, conceptual change mechanisms in the Great Emigration's discourse quite essentially differed also from the parallel tendencies in the Polish Enlightenment period. In the debates of that time, a conceptual change took place mainly through the appropriation of the concepts or ideas of political rivals and through their use in the new meanings.<sup>67</sup> As has been pointed out, the post-November emigration discourse applied procedures of this sort as well; more frequently, however, exponents of the individual currents would create their own types of language, to follow J.G.A. Pocock's concept.<sup>68</sup> Discernible in this respect are, mainly, a religious, historical, poetic and, less frequently, scientific or scholarly languageS. Importantly, however, concepts and ideas in the historical considerations of Prince Adam Czartoryski's followers were significantly different from those proposed in the democrats' reflections on the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The language of the Communes of the Polish People from the period of Zenon Świątosławski's hegemony is likewise recognisable, in juxtaposition with the statements made by Andrzej Towiański – although 'Christ' would have appeared in almost every single paragraph in both these authors.

To end with, let me stress that the above considerations by no means form a proposition of a comprehensive theoretical approach regarding conceptual change mechanisms. I believe that no holistic methodological proposition can be put forth in this respect without losing a broad view of such issues. These mechanisms vary significantly

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<sup>67</sup> Anna Grzeškowiak-Krwawicz, *Dyskurs polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów: pojęcia i idee* (Toruń, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> John G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago, 1989), chap. 1; *id.*, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge [UK]–New York, 2009).

depending on the particular contexts. Concepts and ideas tended to change in different ways, be it in modern England's vivid culture of pamphlets, French eighteenth-century salons, the Congress Kingdom of Poland after the January Uprising of 1863–64, or the Stalinist period of post-war communist Poland, to give some examples.<sup>69</sup> The exemplary problem with sourcing the printing paper, with which the Great Emigration's political activists repeatedly struggled, gradually lost its significance with the increasing importance of painting, music, and virtual space as means of expression. It, therefore, follows that the only possible theoretical principle in the thus-oriented research is a possibly deep contextualisation of the flows, disputes and evolutions under study. With such an approach, the produced image will be possibly complete and worth being used as a basis for further questions.

transl. Tristan Korecki

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<sup>69</sup> Balázs Trencsényi, 'Conceptual History and Political Languages: On the Central-European Adaptation of the Contextualist-Conceptualist Methodologies of Intellectual History', in Petr Roubal and Václav Veber (eds), *Prague Perspectives. Studies in Central and Eastern Europe* (Prague, 2004), 142–66.

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**Piotr Kuligowski** – 19th-century European history, political thought, history of ideas; research fellow at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences; e-mail: [pkuligowski@ihpan.edu.pl](mailto:pkuligowski@ihpan.edu.pl)