

The life and actions of Louis Wolowski (1810-1876) (Description for the general public)

Louis Wolowski was born in 1810 in Warsaw. He belonged to the Piotr Wysocki conspiracy, has been arrested by the Russians and sent to prison a few weeks before the November Uprising. In 1831 he became the secretary of the Polish diplomatic mission in Paris. After the defeat of the insurrection he stayed in France and obtained in 1834 the French citizenship. In the same year he was registered as a lawyer in Paris. He became famous by the Seine especially as an economist. Wolowski was the author of several dozen books and essays, also an innumerable amount of articles. He wrote, among other things, about the free trade, the right to work, the issuing banks, paper money or bimetal money. He had many famous polemics – among others with Louis Blanc and Michel Chevalier – in most of the cases in defence of a liberal vision of the economy. The French public also got to know him as the originator, creator and first manager of *Crédit Foncier de France*, the first bank offering mortgages for the agriculture (the bank still exists). Wolowski acted in the same time in favour of Poland – as a deputy in the parliament and an important figure in the French political life. The famous parliamentary debate of the 15th of May 1848 came from his initiative. He kept an intensive contact with Hotel Lambert and prince Czartoryski. He was a republican, therefore he lost after 1851 his parliamentary mandate and, in 1854, his position in *Crédit Foncier*. After the fall of Napoleon III, the new, III Republic offered him in 1876 the title of irremovable member of the Senate. He died few months later.

The name Wolowski appears in French monographies alongside such names as Jean-Baptiste Say, Frédéric Bastiat, Adolphe Blanqui or Michel Chevalier. At the same time he is completely forgotten by the Polish historiography. There is not a single scientific text, not to mention a biography. He is certainly better known among the French historians, however out of three French biographies written until now, two were published in the XIX century, and the third one – the academic dissertation of Patrice Markiewicz *Louis Wolowski. Un intellectuel et un représentant du libéralisme en France au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris X – Nanterre, 1994) remains unpublished.

The main objective of my project is to fill that gap in the Polish and French historiography. I want to complete the history of the Polish and French economic, social and political ideas and the history of the Polish and French liberalism. I would also like to remind to the Polish readers the figure of one of the few emigrants, who really succeeded in France, and thereby, to add an important part to the history of the Polish Great Emigration.

The first stage of my project will consist of a query in the Polish and Ukrainian archives. I would like to find there some information concerning the Jewish (frankist) ancestors of Wolowski, information about his activity in Warsaw in the years 1827-1831, and at least a part of the documents concerning his emigrational activity. The second stage will consist of a deep query in the French archives and libraries. I would like to find the papers of Wolowski, his collaborators, correspondents, friends and foes; the police and administrative papers concerning Wolowski. I would like to get his letters or the letters mentioning him. In the libraries, especially the French National Library, I shall find not only all his published texts (including the leaflets, the proclamations to the voters and so on), but also some of the manuscripts.

I shall conduct my last important query in the Polish Library of Paris. I would like to examine there the resources connected with Hotel Lambert (especially with prince Czartoryski and Władysław Zamoyski – Wolowski's friend).

In the third stage of my project, I shall elaborate all the collected sources. I will make an attempt to place Wolowski's biography at a wider French and emigrational background.

Finally, in the fourth and last stage, I would like to write and publish a complete biography of Louis Wolowski.