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“TAWACIN”: A POLISH JOURNAL OF AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE

In 1985 three members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement (Polski Ruch Przyjaciół Indian, PRPI), Wiesław Karnabal, Marek Maciołek and Marek Nowocień, founded a magazine entitled “Tawacin” (a Sioux word meaning “will”, “wisdom,” or “cognition”).¹ Over the twenty-five years of its existence, it has changed substantially in terms of the subjects it has covered, the authors who have contributed their articles, its prevailing outlook on American Indian identity, as well as its layout. What started out as a modest, photocopied issue targeted at a group of friends and acquaintances from the Movement transformed into a widely read and highly acclaimed journal. Moreover, being the oldest existing and most popular Polish magazine devoted to American Indian studies, “Tawacin” has served not only as a source of knowledge, but also as a forum for discussion for many American Indian studies experts in Poland.

The aims of “Tawacin” are outlined by the executive editor, Marek Maciołek, on the magazine’s web page:

The aim of the magazine is to acquaint the reader with the real image of contemporary American Indians in both North and South America. That is why we allow American Indians to contribute to our magazine. In each volume, we publish articles about the various aspects of indigenous cultures, history and spirituality. We devote quite a lot of space to contemporaneity, discussing difficult issues and ones rather un-

¹ M. Maciołek, “Tawacin”, date of access: 28 Jan. 2010, <http://www.tipi.pl/>.

spoken of until recently. We also post travelogues from Indian America which often prove to be a painful confrontation of fixed ideas with reality.²

The statement is true when taking into account the present volumes of "Tawacin" (although one is tempted to dispute the existence of one "real image" of American Indians); however, it took the editors many years to bring the magazine to its current form. This article aims to assess critically its development.

The ways in which "Tawacin" has evolved are severalfold. Firstly, in the beginning it focused on these aspects of American Indian cultures which were of interest to the members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement; therefore, one could find articles on American Indian material culture and spirituality, as well as American Indian poems and stories. What is more, the editors also published information strictly related to PRPI, for instance, the dates of their meetings. With time, material culture and spirituality as well as Movement-related information became a minor part of the magazine. Poems would disappear completely, unlike stories which still appear on occasion. In turn, scholarly articles on American Indian literature and American Indian authors were introduced.

Secondly, in the early volumes of "Tawacin" one could find many articles concerning American Indian history, usually 19th-century history and Plains Indian wars. Little space was devoted to contemporary issues. Gradually, however, articles on such topics as American Indian casinos, or tourism began to appear. In addition, personal accounts of visits to reservations and meetings with American Indians were published, which allowed the readers to gain a closer perspective on the everyday life of American Indians.

Furthermore, in the beginning "Tawacin" focused on North American Indian (mainly Plains Indian) culture and history. Although short information notes about Latin American Indians were present already in the magazine's second volume, full-fledged articles on sociopolitical and cultural matters began to be published in 1999.

Moreover, what has also changed are the people who contribute to the magazine and the sources of reprinted materials. In the very beginning, much of the content of "Tawacin" was reprinted and translated from "Akwasasne Notes", a magazine of the Mohawk Nation, which is one of the oldest American Indian magazines published in the United States. Some stories were also reprinted from the magazine "Many Smokes". Gradually, a wider variety of journals and books became the source of reprinted and translated articles. At the same time, more and more Polish authors as well as American scholars began to contribute their own articles. This has allowed for a more diversified outlook on the various issues presented in the journal.

² Ibid. All translations from Polish in the present article are mine, ZB.

The various ways in which the magazine has evolved over the twenty-five years reflect changes in how American Indians and their identity has been perceived by the editors as well as the readers of "Tawacin". The image of American Indians that emerged from its early volumes was that of deeply spiritual, 19th-century warriors of the Plains, wearing feather bonnets and moccasins and living in harmony with the environment.

The early volumes of "Tawacin" are evidence to the fact that this image was present among many members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement. With time, the editors started to present a more complex perspective of American Indians: as members of contemporary society in both North and South America, who are preoccupied with contemporary problems rather than their romantic past. This evolution was well summarized by Marek Hyjek, member of PRPI and contributor of many articles published in "Tawacin", who in his letter on the occasion of the magazine's 20th anniversary, stated: "My vision of American Indians has changed with each volume of 'Tawacin'. I may state, without exaggeration, that this magazine has led me to a more mature perspective on indigenous Americans: from a fascination with a 'chief' wearing a feather bonnet, to seeing a man of flesh and bones, with his virtues and vices. Being a reader of "Tawacin", it is impossible to stick to colorful stereotypes".³

A closer look at the development of the magazine will allow us to analyze the changes that have occurred in the perception of American Indians among American Indian studies experts and hobbyists in Poland.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE POLISH AMERICAN INDIAN FRIENDS MOVEMENT

As mentioned above, the magazine was first aimed at members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement. In fact, up until 1992, the subtitle of the magazine which appeared on the cover was "Przegląd Polskiego Ruchu Przyjaciół Indian" (A Review of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement). This was reflected in the magazine in several ways. To begin with, "Tawacin" devoted much of its space to issues pertaining to the traditional culture of American Indians; therefore, one could find many articles on material culture, especially Plains Indians culture, for instance Aleksander Rutkowski's article about the decorative art of the Blackfeet Indians, entitled *Sztuka dekoracyjna Czarnych Stóp* (Decorative Art of the Blackfeet).⁴ Moreover, what appeared in

³ M. Hyjek, *Trochę sentymentalizmu nie zaszkodzi* (Being Sentimental Does No Harm), "Tawacin", no. 3(71) (2005), p. 8.

⁴ A. Rutkowski, *Sztuka dekoracyjna Czarnych Stóp* (Blackfeet Decorative Art), "Tawacin", no. 4 (1986), n.p.

each volume were descriptions, drawings, pictures as well as “do it yourself” instructions on how to make moccasins, beaded ornaments, bows and arrows,⁵ Plains Indians bags, rosettes, drums, shields, decorated feathers, or leggings.⁵ Beginning with the 1992 Spring volume, one could also find recipes for different American Indian dishes, such as baked batatas (Arawak for sweet potatoes⁶), Cherokee beans, baked cucumbers, or even squirrels.⁷

Members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement not only displayed a keen interest in the material culture of American Indians, but they also practiced it themselves. The organization held, and still holds yearly summer gatherings, which are usually weekly events, where participants dress in American Indian attire, sing American Indian songs, play American Indian music and games, live in teepees, and smoke pipes. Pictures, descriptions and personal accounts of the events constituted a large part of the early volumes of “Tawacin”.

In addition, the editors of “Tawacin” published descriptions and letters from different European organizations, especially from Germany or Russia, which were similar in their aims and interests to PRPI and with which members of the Movement cooperated. Moreover, personal communication between the members and accounts of some of their smaller events could also be found.

Another aspect of American Indian culture that was of interest to members of PRPI was spirituality. Thus, there were many articles concerning American Indian spirituality, for instance *Hako – Pauniska ceremonia umacniania więzi życia* (Hako: A Pawnee ceremony of uniting life relations), written by Sasza L. Cyryłowski; a translated part of Paula Gunn Allen’s book entitled *Shaman’s Drum* (1988), which talks about the mysticism of American Indians; the Mohawk Creation Story, written by Tom Porter; or an essay describing the birth of peyotism and the development of the movement.⁸ One could also find many

⁵ Niedźwiedz, M., *Rozetki* (Rosettes), “Tawacin”, no. 1(18) (1992), pp. 24-25; *Mokasyny* (Moccasins), “Tawacin”, no. 3(20) (1992), pp. 42-43; *Legginy Indian Równin* (Plains Indian Leggings), “Tawacin”, no. 2(22) (1993), pp. 31-33.; *Pancerzyki na szyję* (Breast Plates), “Tawacin”, no. 1(25) (1994), p. 44; *Luk* (Bow), “Tawacin”, no. 1 (1985), n.p.; *Torby Indian Równin* (Plains Indian Bags), “Tawacin”, no. 17 (1991), pp. 20-23; M. Niedźwiedz, *Zrób to sam: Tarcza do tańca* (Do It Yourself: Dance Shield), “Tawacin”, no. 1(29) (1995), p. 21; *Bębny* (Drums), “Tawacin”, no. 2(19) (1992), pp. 44-45; M. Niedźwiedz, *Ozdabianie piór* (Decorating Feathers), “Tawacin”, no. 2(30) (1995), pp. 34-35.

⁶ Cf. *Batatas, not potatoes*, date of access: 12 Feb. 2010, <http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/html/botanytextbooks/economicbotany/Ipomoea/index.html>.

⁷ Monika, *Indiańska kuchnia, czyli smakołyki grubej Moniki: Pieczone ogórki, pieczone bataty, fasola po czerokesku* (American Indian Cuisine – Fat Monica’s Tidbits: Roasted Cucumber, Baked Batatas, Cherokee-Style Beans), “Tawacin”, no. 3(20) (1992), pp. 40-41; Monika, *Indiańska kuchnia, czyli smakołyki grubej Moniki: Wiewiórki* (American Indian Cuisine – Fat Monica’s Tidbits: Squirrel), “Tawacin”, no. 1(21) (1993), pp. 46-47.

⁸ S. L. Cyryłowski, *Hako – Pauniska ceremonia umacniania więzi życia* (Hako: A Pawnee ceremony of uniting life relations), “Tawacin”, no. 4(32) (1995), pp. 21-27; P. Gunn Allen, *Mistyryzm Indian amerykańskich* (American Indian Mysticism), trans. M. Maciołek, “Tawacin”, no. 1(18) (1992), pp. 8-12; T. Porter, *Historia Stworzenia* (Mohawk Creation Story), trans. A. Domińska, “Tawacin”, no. 2(19) (1992), pp. 6-8; M. Nowocień, *Narodziny współczesnego peyotyzmu* (The Birth of Modern Peyotism), “Tawacin”, no. 7 (1988), n.p.

poems written by Native American authors, such as Carol Snow, William Oandasan, Peter Blue Cloud, Joseph Bruchac, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Barney Bush.⁹ Traditional American Indian stories, which were often translated and reprinted from "Many Smokes" and "Akwesasne Notes" were also published. Examples of such stories include: Joseph Bruchac's *Biały Łoś* (Polish translation of *White Moose*), Tom Porter's *Love Story po Irokesku* (Polish translation of *Iroquois Love Story*), or Leslie Marmon Silko's *Humaweepi – Kapłan Wojownik* (Polish translation of *Humaweepi, the Warrior Priest*).¹⁰

Gradually, spirituality stopped being a major part of the magazine; however, it was not abandoned completely. What did change, was the way in which it was written about. Namely, the editors introduced anthropological articles on the spirituality of different tribes, such as Marcin Kopkowski's *Indiański Ying-Yang* (American Indian Ying-Yang), which is an analysis of Jon Crocker's works about the perception of humanity by the Bororo Indians from Brazil.¹¹ Moreover, despite the fact that poems disappeared completely and stories were published rarely, articles on American Indian literature as well as American Indian authors and artists began to appear. Examples of these include Józef Jaskulski's article entitled *Od Unkasa do Tańczącej Chmury* (From Unkas to Dancing Cloud),¹² which presents the American Indian as "the Other" in American epic stories, or Marek Nowocień's essay on Floyd Westerman, a Sioux Santee singer and actor.¹³

Members of PRPI were also dedicated to helping American Indians. The manner in which they did so was twofold. Firstly, they were committed to raising awareness about the history and current problems of American Indians, thus, they organized different educational events, such as lessons for school-children, or exhibitions in local community centers. Secondly, they engaged in more direct forms of support, for instance the organization of protests and

⁹ P. Blue Cloud, *Kojocie, kojocie powiedz mi, proszę* (Coyote, Coyote, Please Tell Me), "Tawacin", no. 2 (1986), n.p.; J. Bruchac, *Invokacje* (Invocations), "Tawacin", no. 7 (1988), n.p.; B. Bush, *Chłopiec październikowy*, trans. M. Maciołek, "Tawacin", no. 3(23) (1993), pp. 26-27; C. Snow, *Przemiany*, "Tawacin", no. 10 (1989), n.p.; C. Snow, *Bicie bębna*, "Tawacin", no. 10 (1989), n.p.; L. M. Silko, *Opowieść z Niedźwiedziej Krainy* (Stories from Bear Country), "Tawacin", no. 2 (1986), n.p.; L. M. Silko, *Konie w Dolinie Store* (Horses at Valley Store), "Tawacin", no. 2 (1986), n.p.; L. M. *Kanion Slim Man* (Love Poem and Slim Man Canyon), "Tawacin", no. 2 (1986), n.p.; W. Oandasan, *Strofy z Okrągłej Doliny* (Round Valley Songs), trans. M. Maciołek, "Tawacin", no. 3(20) (1992), pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ J. Bruchac, *Biały Łoś* (White Moose), "Tawacin", no. 11, (1990), pp. 25-29; T. Porter, *Love Story po irokesku* (Iroquois Love Story), trans. M. Maciołek, no. 2(19) (1992), pp. 18-20; L. M. Silko, *Humaweepi – Kapłan wojownik* (Humaweepi, the Warrior Priest), trans. M. Maciołek, "Tawacin", no. 3(20) (1992) pp. 10-13.

¹¹ Kopkowski, M., *Indiański Ying-Yang* (American Indian Ying-Yang), "Tawacin", no. 3(79) (2007), pp. 40-46.

¹² J. Jaskulski, *Od Unkasa do Tańczącej Chmury* (From Unkas to Dancing Cloud), "Tawacin", no. 2(86) (2009), pp. 44-49.

¹³ M. Nowocień, *Floyd Westerman*, "Tawacin", no. 4(80) (2007), pp. 49-52.

sending letters of support to free Leonard Peltier.¹⁴ All these events were either advertised, or described in “Tawacin”. In fact, in the magazine’s first volume, a thank you letter from the editors of “Akwesasne Notes” to the members of the Movement was posted. The letter expressed gratefulness in the name of the Mohawk Nation for supporting Native Americans. It was addressed to “the people of the Movement, traditional people, and all those who through their actions support life on this planet”.¹⁵

Gradually, however, the editors of “Tawacin” resigned from content strictly related to the Movement. Furthermore, they became critical of some of PRPI’s activities. In the preface to issue 10 of the magazine in 1989, the editors pointed to the organizational weakness of PRPI and to the lack of support of concrete actions by its members. They accused them of superficiality in their interests in American Indian culture and focusing on fun and play only.¹⁶ Almost a decade later, one of the editors wrote:

I look at the direction in which the Polish Indian movement is moving with anxiety, as what is starting to dominate in it is fun and play and imitating American Indians. That is why our annual meetings have become so popular lately (it is enough to look at how we are seen by journalists, who write reports from the meetings, and the titles!). It is because we have more and more teepees and traditional clothing, but we have not organized even one scholarly session, which has disturbed the former balance in discovering American Indian cultures (in the winter we meet at a lecture, in the summer we meet in the woods).¹⁷

In 1990, the editors of “Tawacin” formed a parallel organization called the Polish American Indian Friends Association (Polskie Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Indian) and “Tawacin” became its official publication. Moreover, in 1992 it became published as a quarterly by the publishing house Tipi and the subtitle of the magazine changed from “Przegląd Polskiego Ruchu Przyjaciół Indian” (A Review of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement) to “Pismo Przyjaciół Indian” (American Indian Friends Magazine). In the preface to the Spring 1992 issue the editors stated that what prompted them to set up the new

¹⁴ Leonard Peltier – a participant in the American Indian Movement; he went to assist the Oglala Lakota people on the Pine Ridge Reservation during the Siege at Wounded Knee, in the mid-70s, where a tragic shoot-out occurred on June 26, 1975. Accused of the murder of two agents of the FBI, Peltier fled to Canada believing he would never receive a fair trial in the United States. On February 6, 1976, Peltier was apprehended (*Leonard Peltier Defense Committee*, date of access: 20 Jan. 2010, <http://www.leonardpeltier.net/theman.htm>).

¹⁵ Kareniaktate, *Do Naszych Przyjaciół: Polskiego Ruchu Przyjaciół Indian – Akcji Solidarności i Wsparcia Tubylczych Amerykanów* (To Our Friends Members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement – The Solidarity and Support Action for Indigenous Americans), trans. M. Maciołek, “Tawacin”, no. 1 (1985), n.p.

¹⁶ Redakcja, *Jak to z nami jest* (About Us), “Tawacin”, no. 10 (1989), n.p.

¹⁷ Redaktor, *Jak to z nami jest* (About Us), “Tawacin”, no. 1(41) (1998), p. 2.

organization was the fact that for many years they were unable to launch "Tawacin" as an official magazine of PRPI. In addition, they wanted it to reach people from outside the Movement.¹⁸ Nonetheless, up until 2005, a column entitled *Dwie strony PRPI* (Two pages of the Movement) appeared in "Tawacin", which may be seen as an appreciation of the Movement's members' contribution to the magazine and a proof that they still constitute a large part of its readers.

PAST AND PRESENT

Regardless of the editors' cooperation and preoccupation with the Polish American Indian Friends Movement, an issue that has always been extensively presented in "Tawacin" is American Indian history. Beginning with an article in issue 4 of the magazine – *Poznajmy historię: Ustawa Dawesa*,¹⁹ numerous historical essays appeared. An extremely prolific contributor of such essays was Aleksander Sudak, an acclaimed Polish historian dealing with American Indians, who has cooperated with the magazine since 1995 and has published some of his own, but mainly translated essays of American scholars, for instance Wiley Sword's *Wojna o Stary Północny Zachód, 1790-1795* (Polish translation of *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle For The Old Northwest, 1790-1795*), Brigham D. Madsen's *Najazdy Szoszonów i Bannoków na Oregońskim Szlaku 1859-1863* (Polish translation of *Shoshoni-Bannock Marauders on the Oregon Trail, 1859-1863*), or his own article entitled *Tecumseh: Mit i Rzeczywistość* (Tecumseh: Myth and Reality).²⁰

Some space was also devoted to 20th-century history as well as the current political struggles of American Indians, for instance the protest against the Navajo-Hopi Indian Land Settlement Act of 1974 that was to relocate 18,000 Indians.²¹ One could also read a speech by Phillip Deere, a Muskogee/Creek Elder who was active in the Native American movement and took part in National Native Rights activities,²² or information on the problems of the Cree

¹⁸ Redakcja, *Jak to z nami jest* (About Us), "Tawacin", no. 1(18) (1992), p. 2.

¹⁹ M. Nowocień, *Poznajmy historię: Ustawa Dawesa* (Let's Learn about History: The Dawes Act), "Tawacin", no. 4 (1986), n.p.

²⁰ W. Sword, *Wojna o Stary Północny Zachód, 1790-1795* (President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle For The Old Northwest, 1790-1795), trans. A. Sudak, "Tawacin", no. 3(31) (1995), pp. 8-17; B. D. Madsen, *Najazdy Szoszonów i Bannoków na Oregońskim Szlaku 1859-1863* (Shoshoni-Bannock Marauders on the Oregon Trail, 1859-1863), trans. A. Sudak, "Tawacin", no. 4(32) (1995), pp. 12-20; A. Sudak, *Tecumseh: Mit i rzeczywistość* (Tecumseh: Myth and Reality), "Tawacin", no. 3(23) (1993), pp. 17-21.

²¹ M. Nowocień, *Z kraju Indian: Ameryka Północna* (News from Indian Country: North America), "Tawacin", no. 3 (1986), n.p.

²² P. Deere, *Przemówienie* (Speech), trans. M. Nowocień, "Tawacin" no. 2 (1986), n.p.

nation in Quebec in protecting their habitat.²³ Apart from that, not many articles pertaining to contemporary American Indian matters were published, discussing, for instance their socioeconomic problems, questions of ethnic identity, or maintaining native culture and language. Gradually, however, they became the magazine's major part. Therefore, today one can find many essays on American Indian athletes, sports mascots, casinos, or tourism. Examples of such articles include: Bruce E. Johansen's *Indiańskie kasyna* (American Indian Casinos),²⁴ which analyzes the consequences of gambling for American Indians, Ewa Czekalewska's *Nie będę przeproszał, że urodziłem się Indianinem* (I Won't Apologize for Being Born Indian),²⁵ which talks about the identity of American Indians living in Quebec, or Waldemar Kuligowski's *Indianin w sieci* (American Indians on the Web),²⁶ which describes how American Indians create their images on the Internet.

One of the sections of the magazine has been present since the very first issue: *Z Ziemi Indian* (News from Indian Country). It contains information on current policies, court decisions, proclamations, protests and other important events concerning American Indians, such as the proclamation of the year 1993 by the United Nations Organization as the International Year of Indigenous People of the World.²⁷ Some of the news is presented in the form of paragraph-long notices; however, other facts are given more consideration.

It is also in this section that the problems of Latin American Indians were mentioned for the first time, which took place already in the second issue of the magazine in 1986. The information concerned the problems that American Indians in Mexico and Salvador were facing at the time, as well as the meeting of Native Americans from Peru and the United States.²⁸ The section often bore a subtitle: *Ameryka Łacińska* (Latin America), *Ameryka Południowa* (South America), *Ameryka Północna* (North America), or *Informacje z obu Ameryk* (Information from Both Americas), depending on the region the presented information pertained to. However, there were few essays concerning Latin American Indians. If any, they focused on the natives' political struggles (usually their rights to land) and never touched upon broader issues of culture and identity. It was not until 1999 that such articles began to appear, which is certainly related to the fact that of this year, Mariusz Kairski, a Polish scholar

²³ P. Pastewski, *Pozwólcie nam żyć – chcemy przecież tak niewiele* (Let Us Live – We Don't Ask for Much), "Tawacin", no. 4 (1986), n.p.

²⁴ B. E. Johansen, *Indiańskie kasyna* (American Indian Casinos), "Tawacin", no. 4(84) (2008), pp. 16-20.

²⁵ E. Czekalewska, *Nie będę przeproszał, że urodziłem się Indianinem* (I Won't Apologize for Being Born Indian), "Tawacin", no. 3(71) (2005), pp. 10-18.

²⁶ W. Kuligowski, *Indianin w sieci* (American Indians on the Web), "Tawacin", no. 1(81), (2009), pp. 45-49.

²⁷ M. Maciołek, *1993 – Międzynarodowy Rok Tutejczych Ludów Świata* (1993 – The International Year of the World Indigenous People), "Tawacin", no. 1(21) (1993), p. 3.

²⁸ M. Nowocien, *Z Ziemi Indian: Ameryka Łacińska* (News from Indian Country: Latin America), "Tawacin", no. 4 (1986), n.p.

dealing with American Indians in South and Central America, joined the magazine's editorial staff. Examples of articles concerning Latin American Indians include: Pirjo Virtanen's *Tubylczy styl: Nowa przestrzeń społeczna młodych Manchineri* (Indigenous Style: A New Social Space for the Young Manchineri),²⁹ which describes the social changes among Manchineri teenagers in the Brazilian state of Acre, and Marcin Kopkowski's *Bogowie, myśliwi i powinowaci* (Gods, Hunters and Kinsmen),³⁰ which explains how the Arawete Indians from Brazil perceive humanity.

Although history has always been a major part of "Tawacin", articles concerning contemporaneity have gradually been given more and more attention. Moreover, although North American Indians were the main focus of the magazine in the early issues, with time Latin American Indians became a large part of it as well. These two changes certainly give the reader a more diverse and complete perspective of American Indians.

Contemporary events were not only described in the magazine in the form of articles, as presented above, but also in the form of personal accounts of people who had been cooperating with the magazine and who started attending various conferences concerning American Indians and traveling to American Indian reservations.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Reports from European conferences, workshops and meetings concerning American Indians published in "Tawacin" served as valuable sources of information about the political situation of American Indians, and current resolutions regarding their legal status and rights. Moreover, two authors, Jacek Piwowski and Bartosz Stranz contributed their reports from the Blackfeet reservation in the United States and Canada, giving the magazine's readers an insight into reservation life. Jacek Piwowski continued writing about his reflections of Indian America after moving to Alaska.

More often than not, the people who participated in conferences and workshops concerning American Indians and wrote their accounts on the pages of the magazine were members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement (PRPI). They not only presented their outcomes, but would also give their personal, sometimes very critical opinions. For instance, Roman Bala strongly criticized the document proclaiming the years 1995-2004 by the United Nations

²⁹ P. K. Virtanen, *Tubylczy styl: Nowa przestrzeń społeczna młodych Manchineri* (Indigenous Style: A New Social Space for the Young Manchineri), "Tawacin", no. 3(79) (2007), pp. 33-39.

³⁰ M. Kopkowski, *Bogowie, myśliwi i powinowaci* (Gods, Hunters and Kinsmen), "Tawacin", no. 1(81) (2008), pp. 38-44.

as the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People during a conference in Vienna on December 9, 1994.³¹ He called the United Nations "Organizacja Niemocy Zorganizowanej" (Organized Incapacity Organization) and stated that the above mentioned document was a boilerplate which lacked concrete solutions. He added, however, that the document proves that measures are being taken to improve the situation of indigenous people. Other members of PRPI who wrote reports from European conferences were Przemysław Pastewski, who attended several Euromeetings, which were European conferences of American Indian support groups, and Wiesław Kołeczek, who wrote his account of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.³²

There was one event which was widely advertised and described in the journal, namely the Sacred Run, which took place in Europe for the first time in 1990.³³ Quite a few members of the PRPI took part in it and later published their accounts in the magazine. In 1992, Jacek Piwowski described his experience of the 1991 Sacred Run in Canada.³⁴ In fact, he stayed in the Blackfeet reservation and published his impressions of reservation life on a regular basis in a column entitled *Zapiski z Rezerwatu* (Notes from the Reservation). He would portray everyday situations, as well as special events, such as masses, or traditional celebrations. His views were often quite strong, for instance, he was appalled at the fact that teenagers in the reservation listen to rap music (even during powwows), instead of traditional American Indian music, and thus disrespect their elders.³⁵ He also criticized their use of vulgarisms. Moreover, he complained that their world consists of TV and video games – "not just that of teenagers", he added, but that of adults as well. He remarked at the end: "Luckily, the rest 10% still have brains." This is quite telling as to the preconceptions of the author about who an American Indian is and how he should act. His idea evidently did not include fans of rap music and video games. What he expected, was for all American Indians to remain traditional. In 1997 he moved to Alaska, where he continued writing his reports in a column entitled *Z przystanku na Alasce* (A Stopover in Alaska).

³¹ R. Bala, *Organizacja Niemocy Zorganizowanej* (Organized Incapacity Organization), "Tawacin", no. 1(21) (1995), pp. 34-35.

³² W. Kołeczek, *Indianin bez ziemi to Indianin bez duszy – Sprawozdanie ze Światowej Konferencji Praw Człowieka w Wiedniu, czerwiec 1993* (An American Indian without Land is an American Indian without a Soul – A Report from the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna), "Tawacin", no. 3(23) (1993), pp. 30-32.

³³ A Run that was initiated by Dennis Banks, an American Indian activist. The purpose of the Sacred Run is to "promote peace, to encourage respect for the earth and all life, and to share the rich cultural diversity of the human race". (*The Sacred Run*, date of access: 8 Mar. 2010, http://virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Traditions/English/sacred_run_05.html.)

³⁴ J. Piwowski, *Opowieść o Indiańskiej Ziemi* (A Story of Indian Country), "Tawacin", no. 1(18) (1992), p. 19.

³⁵ J. Piwowski, *Czarne Stopy i czarna muzyka* (Blackfeet and Black Music), "Tawacin", no. 3(23) (1993), pp. 44-45.

Bartek Stranz was another member of PRPI to come and live in the Blackfeet reservation in Browning, Montana and to describe his experiences in "Tawacin". In 1997 he was interviewed by Marek Maciołek. In the interview he talked about how his perception of American Indians had changed after moving to the reservation. He said that he realized that American Indians were normal people, just like the Czechs, or Russians.³⁶ His statement also suggests that upon coming to the reservation he was equipped with a set of assumptions about American Indians, which he reevaluated after meeting them in person.

In sum, reports from conferences gave the reader a valuable perspective on current issues concerning American Indian rights and policies, whereas personal accounts from reservations, gave the reader an insight into the everyday life of American Indians. On the other hand, they also provided examples of how the authors, either cling to their assumptions about American Indian identity, or reevaluated their perspective. As executive editor, Marek Maciołek, writes in the Fall issue of 2005: "I did not realize that the stereotype of an Indian will turn out to be so persistent. What is worse – so deeply ingrained in ourselves, American Indian studies experts from the Polish American Indian Friends Movement. The sole fact that we declare ourselves to be friends of the indigenous inhabitants of America and that we want to confirm the value of indigenous cultures in the contemporary world does not automatically give us the privilege to write the only rightful truth about Indians".³⁷

CONCLUSION

All in all, the evolution of "Tawacin" illustrates a shift in the perspective of American Indians among many Polish American Indian studies experts. What is more, it has also shaped the perspective of American Indians among its readers. Its early volumes focused on the so-called traditional culture as well as their history. Furthermore, it was North American Indians, and usually Plains Indians, that were the subject of the magazine's articles. In consequence, a stereotypical, romanticized image of American Indians emerged. With time, however, "Tawacin" started paying more attention to contemporaneity, as well as Latin American Indians. Hence, a more diversified and at the same time truthful image of American Indians emanated from the magazine.

Nonetheless, not all readers seem to be happy with the ways in which "Tawacin" has developed. It appears that some of the members of the Polish American Indian Friends Movement (PRPI) would like to see more of the tradi-

³⁶ B. Stranz, *Pytać aby się doskonalić* (Ask and Learn), "Tawacin", no. 1(37) (1997), pp. 14-19.

³⁷ M. Maciołek, *Jak to z nami jest: czyli 20 lat Tawacinu 1985-2005* (About Us: 20 Years of Tawacin 1985-2005), "Tawacin", no. 3(71) (2005), p. 3.

tional culture and spirituality that were present in the magazine's early volumes. On the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of "Tawacin", Ewa Stańska, a member of the Movement, writes in a letter entitled *Nasze pismo* (Our Magazine):

What I miss in today's "Tawacin" is poetry. From time to time I might find a contemporary story that carries a message, but it is not enough for me. When I look at the older volumes, I find more of what I would call spiritual teaching. Are we now afraid of a drift towards New Age? Unquestionably, the quarterly gives us valuable information about contemporary issues (laws, statistics, policies concerning indigenous minorities, etc.). Who would want to look for it on one's one... But, editors, please, apart from feeding the Mind, sometimes feed the reader's Spirit...

I learn about different historical facts that were unknown to me before with pleasure and I thank the editors for that. However, I cannot stand ethnographic ruminations, written in a hermetic language, which make me wonder whom the magazine is aimed at?³⁸

However, it is precisely these changes that have gained "Tawacin" such a wide readership and high esteem among Polish scholars.

In order to dovetail the development of the magazine and the changes in the perception of American Indian identity among its readers, let us again quote Marek Maciołek:

A surprising thing has happened to American Indians. They live among us, Westerners, they deal with everyday problems, they suffer bad weather conditions, they are exposed to the threats of international terrorism, they often live on a shoestring. To put it simply – they are no different from ourselves... [...]

Knowing all this, let's give the contemporary descendants of the warriors of the Plains a chance to be themselves. Let's not force them to put on clothes in which we like to see them. Let's try to emphasize what they were able to save from their rich heritage. These people live here and now, in the 21st century. Come and see!³⁹

* * *

Unfortunately, already after this article was submitted for publication, *Tawacin* ceased to be published. Its last volume appeared in the winter of 2009.

³⁸ E. Stańska, *Nasze pismo* (Our Magazine), "Tawacin", no. 3(71) (2005), p. 9.

³⁹ M. Maciołek, *Jak to z nami jest*, *ibid.*, p. 2.

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