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Paweł F. Nowakowski

Editorial

A frontier area of empires, a collision site of the tectonic plates of history – all these terms describe Central and Eastern Europe. When looking at the north, east, or south of the region, we are always able to point to a moment in history that can be named this way. It is thus a ceaseless task for our nations to reassert their own subjectivity and to create a counterbalance to the forces.

Empires that periodically rise to power try to make a permanent mark in Central Europe. When they decline or fall, traces of their former dominance remain visible. One can ignore them, but not for long. One can try to remove them, or treat them as a reminder that freedom is not something that is given once and for all. This is part of the heritage often referred to as "unwanted legacy." In the current issue of *Trimarium* we take a look at its various guises. Monuments such as Soviet tanks in Poland, architecture in the Czech Republic, urban development in Moldova are all part of the everyday life of successive generations living in these areas. These traces of the past are also present when passers-by are less likely to notice their ideological message, and when they only know about subjection to foreign empires from the stories of their parents and grandparents and the pages of textbooks.

Traces of the past very often penetrate deeply into public spaces. A monument is easier to demolish, a cemetery to relocate

or liquidate (the Soviets did this in the territories they occupied without hesitation), but removing the traces from urban architecture – edifices, elements of infrastructure – is much more difficult. The approach to these remnants is also changing. Sometimes it seems that they do not need to be bothered with, until there comes a moment when they again become an object of interest to an heir of the former empire, which is becoming more and more active in international politics. Another attitude is the desire to stamp them out completely, even at a high price and with considerable effort. Finally, there are those who recognize that there is no "unwanted legacy," and any legacy can be wanted in the sense that it represents part of the history of a place. Instead of being resentful about it, we should develop it so as to benefit from it ourselves. These do not have to be only material benefits as elements of "unwanted legacy" facilitate the story of the past and help us realize something that free citizens find difficult to imagine. Properly presented, they can serve to spark discussion about the value of freedom, which is seldom thought about when one is not denied it.

Such discussions will emerge, with varying intensity, wherever historical remnants are visible in public space. What is less visible does not become less important and is also up for discussion or dispute. Is it not an even more universal question to ask what belongs to literary heritage and how the literary canon should be formed? They bear not only the stamp of historical or social conditions, but also the stamp of current politics, which sometimes impedes proper thoughtful reflection. While the canon evokes an association with being canonical or immutable, it is, after all, a compilation of those works that are considered vital to the formation of cultural identity at a given time and in a given place. This is underscored by such currents as postmodernism, whose premise is quite the opposite of the creation of pantheistic canons. Or perhaps we are already living in a time where postmodernism, too, is becoming partly canonical, contrary to its intentions? One can get such an impression when publishing articles that analyze the issue of postmodernism, which are based on settled approaches,

thereby creating, as it were, a canonical take on the subject. There is probably no country free of such a tension between the canon and its deconstruction resulting from the fashions and methodologies of contemporaries.

Between what enters our space by force, unwanted, and what shapes our thinking about intangible heritage, there are other inextricably linked experiences. These are the histories of communities whose centuries-old presence in a certain area is interrupted by the storm of history, as well as those that live in the borderlands and pose challenges to states that are building their structural unity and identity: challenges that are sometimes difficult to meet, and there is sometimes not enough goodwill to do so.

For the first time, this year's last issue features a section on reviews of published works. We hope that it will have a permanent presence in the pages of *Trimarium* and continue to introduce international readers to what is currently being released on the publishing markets in the countries of the region. We would like there to be as many review articles as possible, and we would also like to select among them those that we will be able to share with a wide audience in English in the new publishing series *Trimarium Library*.

History

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In the Traps of the Soviets: Soviet World War II Military Burial Sites in Lithuania. The Genesis

Abstract

The myth of the *Great Patriotic War* (1941–1945) lost its power and significance in Lithuania shortly after the restoration of the country's independence in 1990. The concept of the *Great Patriotic War* was hastily abandoned, with part of the Soviet monuments meant to promote this myth being dismantled and *Victory Day* (May 9) no longer being celebrated. However, the Soviet military cemeteries remained. Being behind the horizons of the great Lithuanian narratives, they did not attract much attention until the 21st century, when the neighbouring state began taking an interest in them and using them for their benefit. They started getting suspicious looks from Lithuanians after the beginning of the Russian invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. Then, the cemeteries began to be seen as relics of the Soviet occupation regime and exposed as instruments of Russia's current soft power. So they are not the past. These are places that have not lost their ideological charge and potential, spreading stories that are inconsistent with national Lithuanian narratives, masking the occupation, and suggesting that we remember the *liberation*.

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The publication looks back at the origins of the *Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemeteries* and the main moments of their formation, first and foremost perceiving them from the perspectives of politics of memory and using appropriate research instruments. These sites have little in common with the original burial sites and were essentially created as propaganda tools in keeping with best practices in memorial design. In addition to being burial sites, they were constructed to spread the myth of the *Great Patriotic War* and other great Soviet narratives. The work examines what makes these places so special and convenient, and what meanings and narratives they were created to convey.

Keywords

Great Patriotic War; Soviet World War II military burial sites in Lithuania; Soviet propaganda; remembrance policy; Lithuania.

At one time, the myth of the *Great Patriotic War* was mandatory in Lithuania, as it was throughout the entire Soviet Union. And as was characteristic of such creations and Soviet propaganda in general – it had to be believed unconditionally. The situation changed quickly and significantly after Lithuania regained its independence in 1990. Acts of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania abandoned the concept of the *Great Patriotic War* as early as 1991. In 1990–1993, part of the monuments disappeared as well, with ones to commemorate the *Victory*, the *liberating* army and the Soviet partisans being dismantled. Looking at it today, the myth of the *Great Patriotic War* is in dissonance with the great Lithuanian narrative. The myth told/tells about the victory in the war and the liberation of Lithuania from the German fascists, while the Lithuanian perspective associates the official end of World War II not with victory or the end of evil, but with the beginning of something no less cruel and painful – the Soviet occupation. It is the fight of the Lithuanian partisans against the Soviets in 1944–1953 that is the great Lithuanian narrative, which begins with the *liberation*/occupation and is fundamentally incompatible with the myth of the *Great Patriotic War*. While for one narrative the

central focus is *victory*, for the other it is *occupation*; thus, *liberation* is *occupation* and the *liberators* are the *occupants*.

However, not all manifestations of the *Great Patriotic War* disappeared from the Lithuanian landscape in 1990–1993. Soviet military cemeteries became the exception. Called *Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemeteries* by the Soviets, in independent Lithuania (at least in the context of the cultural heritage protection system) they eventually began to be called *Soviet World War II military burial sites*. It was the bodies – a distinctive component of these places – that helped them survive. However, they did not become refuges of tranquillity. For one group, which we can conditionally call agents of the Russian Federation, they became a place of action around 2000. Reconstruction of these sites was started, the essential subtext of which was the desire to preserve the myth of the *Great Patriotic War*, adapting to the new circumstances and further consolidating it in the Lithuanian landscape. This intervention lasted at least a decade before it was blocked by Lithuanian institutions (for more details, see: *Arlauskaitė-Zakšauskienė et al.*, 2016). When the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in 2022, they again became a place of action, only this time it was the pro-Lithuanian side that was on the giving end. Soviet symbols and monuments representing Soviet soldiers began to be removed from these sites. In order to better understand these processes that took place in independent Lithuania in the 21st century, one must look for the reasons in the very nature of these places, going back to the years of their appearance and development in the Soviet era – bearing in mind that what was created then remained essentially unchanged until 2000 or 2022. These places are viewed through the prism of sites of memory (in the sense of the concept popularised by Pierre Nora), deconstructing their network, their features compared to other monuments, and their mechanisms of creating significance and meanings. The sources used are presented and critical comments about them are published in the text itself.

Secondary burial sites

Let's start with the statement that the *Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemeteries* (hereinafter – *GPWCs*) were not only cemeteries, but

also memorials – or perhaps even memorials before cemeteries. The history of their development, the material form given, the functioning in the Soviet propaganda system and other factors point precisely to this nature of these places. The Soviet soldiers who died were already buried once. They were usually buried wherever circumstances allowed – in the fields, in the woods, at the approaches of railway stations, in backyards, in local cemeteries, or in the squares of cities and towns. There were cases when the bodies were simply thrown into one large pit dug on the outskirts of a village (Žardinskas & Rusevičius, 2011–2016). Such were the realities of wartime. In Soviet-occupied Lithuania, secondary burial sites for these soldiers began to be established in 1945. Their appearance was fuelled by two reasons. The first was utilitarian. The issue of optimising the number of graveyards and their maintenance had to be resolved, and this was done by consolidating several, a dozen or more graveyards into one. The second was ideological. The myth of the *Great Patriotic War* that emerged during World War II had not faded away – it had undergone transformations and was not always received with equal enthusiasm by the blacksmiths forging the Soviet ideology and propaganda in Moscow, but it continued to take root and established itself as one of the main memories of Soviet society. Manifestations of this myth were needed, and not only ones spoken or written down in words or performed in ceremonies, but also ones that were materially expressed in the landscape. *Victory* and *GPWC* memorials were created for this purpose. The former relied solely on the idea, while the latter needed the bodies of the dead.

The secondary burial places were no longer created spontaneously, but in keeping with the best traditions of memorial construction. They were usually built at the primary military burial sites, choosing the ones that were the most suitable for memorial practices in terms of location. Remains from the other "inauspicious" graveyards were moved to the newly revamped ones. Here are a few cases to form a more general picture of the process. Remains were transported to the memorial that was built in Ginkūnai, on the outskirts of the city of Šiauliai (c. 1946) from 12 surrounding areas, while remains from six surrounding villages were moved to the memorial in Meškuičiai town square, which was built in 1946 (Urbonavičiūtė,

2013). In the case of Ginkūnai, the farthest place that the remains were brought in from was 16 kilometres away. Bodies were brought to the memorial in Jonava from places 5–16 kilometres away. The main relocation process lasted until 1956. Thus, a new formation appeared in Lithuania – secondary burial places, or GPWCS. The reburial of remains and the changes in the network of sites continued later as well – throughout the entire Soviet era – but the scale was much more modest. It was no longer a general campaign, but individual and local administration initiatives. So around 1956, the most definitive full stop was placed in the history of these sites – at least in the part that had to do with the bodies and the location of the sites. What was above the ground had another story and dates of its own.

How many bodies were appropriate for one site? There was no standard. A GPWC could have had anywhere from four bodies to 5,000.[1] Perhaps only a few trends are discernible. Pilots and border guards – that is, representatives of rarer types of troops or soldiers who were killed in more special circumstances – were buried in the smallest graveyards in terms of the number of remains. Examples of this are the cemetery on Polocko Street in the city of Vilnius (where four people are buried), the cemetery in Galiniai Village in the district of Lazdijai (five), and the cemeteries in the villages of Voverynė and Šiliuškiai in Rokiškis District (12)[2]. These distinctions were probably enough for the sites to remain intact. Moving from the minimum to the maximum, the largest number of bodies were concentrated in the Aukštieji Šančiai Cemetery in the city of Kaunas (5,056) and the Antakalnis Cemetery in the city of Vilnius (where

1 How many bodies are lying underground in a particular place, who do they belong to, and what were the circumstances of their death? Due to confusion in the sources or a lack of them altogether, the answers to these questions are often a mystery. As a result, statistics are presented here by combining information from the different available sources, indicating discrepancies wherever possible (with a slash between the different numbers), or relying on existing gravestone inscriptions, while acknowledging the unreliability of this source.

2 Relevant information here and elsewhere is provided on the basis of the *Tarybinių karių kapinės. Sovietų kareivių kapavietės Lietuvos Respublikoje* ("Soviet Military Cemeteries. Graveyards of Soviet Soldiers in the Republic of Lithuania") database (now defunct, data checked in 2016), the *Register of Cultural Property*, and the *certificates of historical and cultural monuments of the USSR*. In other cases, the specific sources are cited.

the number increased from 2,906 to 3,460 to 3,573), as well as in the cities in the southern and south-western parts of Lithuania bordering with historical Prussia – Alytus, Kalvarija, Kybartai, Kudirkos Naumiestis, Marijampolė and Vilkaviškis (1,900–2,900 at each burial site). These concentrations were conditioned by historical realities (major battles were fought there and many soldiers died) rather than propagandistic hype (artificial exaggeration). Bodies were gathered here, but only from the territory of the same city and its immediate surroundings. On the other hand, there were different practices with the remains of Soviet partisans – in 1954–1955, their bodies were brought to Vilnius's Antakalnis Cemetery not only from Vilnius, but also from the districts of Alytus, Švenčionys and Trakai (Girininkienė, 2000, p. 24; also see Zizas, 2014, pp. 533–534). Vilnius and Alytus are 85 kilometres apart.

Inclusion of bodies

The physical bodies of the dead were a fundamental component of the *GPWCs*. However, symbolic bodies were also "moved" to the secondary burial sites. Names of people whose remains were not found or did not survive appeared on tombstones and the lists of the buried. This might have been a soldier who died in the area of the cemetery, or a more distinguished person who died further away ("more distinguished" in this case meant military rank or real or alleged heroic military merits). Thus, the *GPWC* was not only a cemetery, but also a cenotaph. However, physical and symbolic bodies tended not to be decoupled at these sites – they were treated the same, as everyone else there. The bringing in of bodies at different times (for example, in 1970, bodies were moved from one graveyard to another in Panevėžys, and then in Alytus in the early 1970s), the fact that bodies of different people – not just soldiers and not just those who were killed during World War II – were brought to the sites, distortion (both up and down) of the number of bodies for ideological reasons, and the lack of distinction between physical and symbolic bodies all make the *GPWCs* a complicated subject when it comes to the number of those buried or their origin. Precision is an uphill battle. One site, three sources, three different sets of statistics: The 1956 inventory

file of the Joniškis cemetery states that 29 persons were buried there (of whom 18 were soldiers who died in 1944 and 11 were soldiers and *istrebki* who died after the war); a certificate of historical and cultural monuments drawn up in the 1980s talks about 59 people who died (43 soldiers who were killed in 1943 and 1944, 12 soldiers and *istrebki* who were killed in the post-war period and four soldiers who were killed in 1941); meanwhile, judging by the existing inscriptions on the tombstones, there should be 65 (46 soldiers who were killed in 1944, 10 soldiers and *istrebki* who were killed in the post-war period, and nine soldiers who were killed in 1941). It should be kept in mind that in 1944–1945, the Soviet re-occupation of Lithuania took place, and with it, the fight of the Lithuanian partisans against the Soviets began. So any mentions of soldiers, *istrebki*[3] and other persons who died after 1944 and were buried in a GPWC usually refer to those who died in this Lithuanian war of resistance against the Soviets, or, as it is now customary to say in Lithuania – *the war after the war*.

The GPWCs were a specific type of memorial, the distinctive feature of which was the bodies. It was the bodies that gave them weight. They were needed here as a fact, as an emotion, as a mass. However, at these sites, the bodies themselves, in a certain sense and to a certain extent, lost their individuality and became depersonalised – they were simply needed as "building material" for the memorials. A resource for propaganda – such was their fate in the memorials. (It should be emphasised that this is being viewed from the perspectives of politics of memory and collective memory, though when it comes to individual and family memories, these bodies are treated differently – individually, in a personalised and intimate manner.) In order to understand the logic behind the redistribution of the remains (perhaps not even logic, but just more frequent coincidences), more detailed studies are needed. However, it can be seen from several cases that the decisions were not only influenced by utilitarian matters (distances, capacity). The bodies were moved due to the greater significance of the site or the creation of additional meanings

3 "Stribai", *lit.* (as Russian: *истребители* / istrebiteli) is a term that was colloquially used for members of the "destruction battalions" (Russian: *Истребительный батальон*) – paramilitary units that existed in 1944–1955 to fight against anti-Soviet partisans and others who opposed the Soviet government.

for it. In 1945, the bodies of those killed near Klaipėda and in Courland were brought to Kartena in order to create a new site. The long journey from Courland was necessary because the remains were special – those of soldiers of the 16th Lithuanian Division. This division of the Red Army was formed on a national basis, and a considerable part of it was made up of Lithuanians or persons originating from Lithuania. This was part of the Soviet propaganda game, which was supposed to bear witness to the contribution of Lithuanians to the common struggle of the *fraternal* Soviet nations against the German fascists and to show how Lithuanians *supported* (defended) the Soviet government. This motif was used during the war, and even more actively after the war ended. Bodies were also moved for Soviet anniversaries. In 1954, to mark the 10th anniversary of the liberation of Vilnius, and in 1955, to mark the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Lithuanian SSR, the remains of Soviet partisans were ceremoniously brought to the Vilnius and Kaunas memorials. The site, its significance in terms of propaganda, and the ceremonies themselves came before the peace of the dead. Bodies were also buried in *GPWCs* in an effort to veil their identities and submerge them in the mass of other bodies and other meanings. These were the remains of those who died in the post-war period and other remains that were not always politically convenient, which we will talk about later.

The bodies in the *GPWCs* were not a fact, but a labile statistic – their number could be pushed up or down not by changing the physical quantity of the bodies themselves, but based on what the propaganda required. One reburial after another, indifference, the monopoly on memory and the land hid everything (for more details, see: *Arlauskaitė-Zakšauskienė et al.*, 2016, pp. 20–54). Below are a few cases. The history of the military burial sites in Keturvalakiai and Gižai (Vilkaviškis District) is a muddy one: In 1944, 40 Soviet soldiers were buried in Keturvalakiai, with their names mentioned in the documents; after the war, the bodies were moved to Gižai, but only a quarter of them are mentioned on the memorial plaques there (Žardinskas & Rusevičius, 2016). The reverse case: When cleaning up a secondary burial site in Druskininkai in 1962, approximately 20 fewer bodies were found than should have been

(Valentukevičius, 2007). For propaganda purposes, it was enough to declare that a *soldier of the Soviet Union* was lying there. It was about categories, not individuals. Bodies did not need names, and names did not need bodies. The name only gained value if it was a *hero of the Soviet Union* or – less frequently – a hero of the creation of socialism and the Soviet system, such as a *revolutionary*. This was a separate category and a separate cult, which was distinguished by an individual monument or mention at the military burial sites and in their descriptions. Of course, the individuals were not forgotten. Relatives searched for their loved ones and placed flowers at their graves and next to their names. And local media presented heroic stories of soldiers that taught a lesson. Nevertheless, the memorials, with their identical monuments, inscriptions in the same fonts, and superabundance of names remained indifferently cold.

Location – all for the sake of the memorial

The transformation from primary burial sites to secondary ones significantly changed them. The sites became less dependent on historical circumstances and came closer to what might be called an ideal memorial site. First of all, they changed their locale, and from sites in fields, forests and villages became the sites of cities and towns. If we were to say that there were 176 *GPWCs* in Lithuania during the Soviet era (the situation in 1973)[4], then 88 of them (approximately 50 per cent) were in cities or their outskirts, 68 (38 per cent) were in towns, 19 (11 per cent) were in villages, and one was in a forest. This ties in with another obvious trend – erecting them in national, regional and district centres, in gathering places and places of interest. The locale of the secondary sites was perfectly aligned with the administrative/territorial division of Lithuania. In 1949, there were 41 counties in Lithuania, and all (100 per cent) of the county centres

4 Data are based on the *Lietuvos SSR kultūros paminklų sąrašas* ("List of Cultural Monuments of the Lithuanian SSR"). The real number of *GPWCs* does not completely line up with these data. Not all *GPWCs* had heritage status (which was a prerequisite for being included in this list), so there were actually a bit more of them than are presented in this list. However, of all the possible sources, this should be considered the most accurate, causing the least doubts and confusion.

(the central settlements of the counties) had GPWCs. Or, looking at it from another angle, there were 54 cities, of which 49 (91 per cent) had graveyards. With the introduction of a new administrative division in 1950, 92 districts appeared in Lithuania, where 82 (89 per cent) of the district centres had their own military burial sites, while six districts either had these sites outside of the central settlement or were themselves adjacent to large cities and, at the same time, large memorials of the *Great Patriotic War*, leaving maybe only three districts (Daugai, Simnas and Veisieji) without a GPWC. The secondary burial sites concentrated the bodies from the primary ones, and this significantly reduced the number of Soviet military cemeteries in Lithuania to no more than 200 sites. However, this number was completely sufficient to cover all of Lithuania through the administrative points and the territories included in them. A territorial and propaganda network was formed from the chaotically scattered graveyards. The process of establishing secondary sites and its results should be treated as concentration and optimisation for the sake of even greater impact. For memorial practices, it is not only their accessibility and availability that is important – the aura of celebration is as well. These sites are not intended for daily visits, but for celebrating and holding ceremonies, so being in the places of memorial practices is also meant to lift the public to a different dimension and create different emotions than we encounter in everyday life. In general, only then does the practice or place begin to function as a memorial. Therefore, the memorial site had to balance between being too frequent, so as not to become an everyday sight and dissolve in everyday life, and being too rare, so as not to make it difficult to attract the masses.

Another feature was that the secondary burial sites were concentrated in the most representative or aesthetically attractive areas of the settlements – in the squares of cities and towns, often next to monuments dedicated to Lithuanian statehood. In the latter case, this means monuments that were erected while Lithuania was still independent (before 1940), which, ideologically speaking, were completely unacceptable to the Soviet occupation authorities and therefore were for the most part destroyed. It did not take long for Soviet monuments and burials of Soviet soldiers to take their place: In Alytus, *Angel of Freedom*, a monument that was built in

1929 to commemorate the first decade of independence of the state of Lithuania and had a bas-relief depicting the Lithuanian fight against the "Red Dragon", was demolished in 1951 (Soviet soldiers began to be buried in its pedestal in 1944), while the monument in Biržai (which soldiers began to be buried around in 1945) was taken down in 1946 and the one in Kurkliai was dismantled 1952. The monument that stood in Meškuičiai was reconstructed around 1946 into a Soviet memorial, with the Freedom sculpture replaced by a Soviet star, and the inscriptions glorifying the independence of Lithuania as well as the symbols of Lithuanian statehood replaced by inscriptions in Lithuanian and Russian reading "Eternal glory to the heroes / 1941–1945". The monument in Joniškis was also reconstructed, only to be torn down in 1961. In 1944, soldiers began to be buried in Kudirkos Naumiestis next to the monument to Vincas Kudirka, the author of the Lithuanian national anthem and a national hero; soon after, an obelisk with a star was erected there. Even though there were initiatives to demolish it in 1945–1948, the monument was not destroyed. The monument in Plokščiai to honour Lithuanian volunteers and the 20-year anniversary of independence was not demolished either – it was left to stand on the other side of the *GPWC* fence (Nukentėję paminklai, 1994; Kurkliai, 2023; Treideris). Secondary burial sites were also created at the foot of churches (11 such cases were identified). The historical peculiarities of Lithuanian urban planning led to the fact that churches were the main shapers of the spaces of cities and towns or their integral components, so this was the vicinity that had to be accommodated. The grounds of former estates that were distinguished by beautiful manor houses and parks were also suitable (seven such cases have been identified).

Already existing local cemeteries that appeared even before the beginning of the war were also considered suitable for secondary burial sites. Approximately 30 such cases can be singled out. Compared to the squares of cities and towns, these territories were less restricted by already existing structures (buildings, street networks, etc.) or burdened with urban functions, so it was possible to create larger and more capacious complexes. This is precisely the practice that was used in Lithuania's major cities. In 1945, the square in Vilnius named after the Polish novelist Eliza Orzeszkowa and

the Šiauliai Market Square were turned into military cemeteries, with the former being named Ivan Chernyakhovsky Square and the latter – Victory Square. During the second reburial in Vilnius (circa 1951), the remains were moved from the square to the memorial being formed in Antakalnis Cemetery (Girininkienė, 2000, p. 24), leaving only the body of Red Army General Ivan Chernyakhovsky in the square named after him. This is how the concept of the square itself was fundamentally changed from a *GPWC* site to a place for glorification of the *Victory*. Hence, the status of the square was restored. In the case of Šiauliai, the remains were left to lie in the square. However, it did not become a place for the accumulation of bodies, as was typical of secondary burial sites. The bodies found in the district of Šiauliai were sent to nearby Ginkūniai, where two graveyards were formed (1945–1947). The situation in the city of Panevėžys was likely similar – in 1946, remains were moved from Berčiūnai to the more distant Smilgiai (15 km away, even though Panevėžys was closer, just 8 km away), and then in 1950 from Velžys to Raguva (19 km and 6 km away, respectively). The secondary burial site in the city itself appeared later, in 1953, after establishing it on the grounds of the Eastern Orthodox cemetery in the central part of Panevėžys and moving the remains to it from two other graveyards within the city limits. Why were suburbs and neighbouring towns chosen for reburial instead of city centres? Why were they farther away? The reason was probably the limited area and capacity of the cities. The cemetery in Šiauliai, which was wedged between the church and the streets, was 0.14 ha in size (53 burial plots), while the graveyard in Panevėžys, which was bordered by cemeteries and city blocks, was 0.19 ha (579/870 burial plots). Unlike in Šiauliai and Panevėžys, which had one *GPWC* each, a different practice was applied in Alytus and Marijampolė, where several such sites were formed at once, distributing the masses of the remains. In Vilnius and Kaunas, memorials were established outside of the city centres, in cemeteries, and they became the largest in Lithuania in terms of territory and the number of people buried there – today, the memorial in Vilnius's Antakalnis Cemetery occupies about 1.2 ha, while the one in Kaunas's Aukštieji Šančiai Cemetery takes up 1.46 ha. And their development continued throughout the Soviet era, right

up to the 1980s. For example, one of the reconstructions in Kaunas took place in 1983–1985, during which two squares connected by a "parade" path were formed with sculptural accents, and the area of the entire memorial was visually expanded accordingly (Migonytė; Girininkienė, 2000, p. 24).

Taking over squares in city or town centres and burial in cemeteries were two different practices. In one case, the historically developed urban situation was exploited – what had been created before the Soviets and was already common or simply adapted as memorial spaces. In the other, there were attempts to establish new spaces in the hope that they would take root as memorials. However, both of them had a common goal – to turn them into memorial sites.

Best of the themes

The epic of the *Great Patriotic War* could have various thematic expressions and accents. Yet as with any other politicised memory, the most favourable ones tended to be selected and developed. The government had a monopoly on this memory.[5] The official image of the *Great Patriotic War* was not a constant, and varied according to the politics in Moscow (Riley, 2012; Tumarkin, 1994; Zilberman, 2012). In general, the blacksmiths of Soviet ideology always made sure it was possible to easily change interpretations and accents when needed, and perhaps this was one of the reasons for avoiding official fixed and clearly formulated interpretations. Such directives could become testimonies to how what was stated and declared yesterday could be reversed (discrepancies between what was said yesterday and what was said today could cause doubts about the infallibility and decisions of the government, but when there were not any clear testimonies from yesterday, then the government seemed never to be mistaken and always right). Nevertheless, some expressions allow us to grasp the thematic contours or clusters of the myth of the *Great Patriotic War*. For example, the *List of Cultural Monuments of the Lithuanian*

5 Variations of this memory that deviate from the main narrative or more peculiar manifestations of it can be found, but this is beyond the scope of this study.

SSR that was published in 1973. To be included on this register of cultural property, a monument had to meet the norms of memory and ideology – then they were in the compendium of values that were basically officially recognised. The list included 381 sites related to the theme of the *Great Patriotic War* (see Table 1). Their selection (what was selected in general, how many were selected, what significance was given), naming (which concepts were chosen, what was emphasised) and description (in the list, each site is described in a few words) become exaggerations, omissions or distortions, behind which a more general picture can be made out and an implicit map of images and memories of the *Great Patriotic War* can be formed (presented in Table 2)[6].

In the case of our topic, it is important that most heritage and memorial sites could embody only one or two themes, so individual episodes from the epic of the *Great Patriotic War*. However, it was different with the *GPWCs* – the bodies of soldiers allowed for the immediate and simultaneous escalation of several themes:

- heroism,
- *the Victory*,
- *the liberators*,
- the treachery and cruelty of the enemy,
- the contribution of Lithuanians.

The broad thematic spectrum (the variety of convenient themes that were embodied and disseminated) and, at the same time, their concentration all in one, made this site the best of all existing or possible, historical/authentic or newly created manifestations of the memory of the *Great Patriotic War*. As for the other sites, some of them were too rare – one could go through life without ever visiting them or experiencing their effects. Some of them were too narrow thematically – conveying the desired meanings and the scale of the war was difficult with them, and when the politics of memory (the

6 The *Lietuvos SSR kultūros paminklų sąrašas* was not exhaustive. Even after 1973, new objects were added to it while others were deleted. However, the thematic field of the *Great Patriotic War* itself did not seem to change at that time, and remained as such right up until 1990. This stability can be explained by the fact that Brezhnev's treatment of the *Great Patriotic War* had already been established and was no longer revised by subsequent leaders of the USSR.

aspects or accents of the image of war) changed, they could lose their significance altogether. Secondary military burial sites did not have these flaws. The optimality of their network was already discussed and praised. And the array of themes concentrated in them was basically capable of conveying the necessary image of the *Great Patriotic War*. It was difficult for them to integrate the theme of civilian casualties, but separate networks and memorials of places where Soviet *citizens* were killed were created for this purpose. It was also convenient that this array made it possible to stifle themes that were no longer relevant and raise new ones that were needed without causing any damage to the site itself – it always remained significant. This protected it from fluctuations in politics of memory. The *Victory* memorials were perhaps the only other ones that had this advantage.

The "Red Corner"

The first and largest wave of burials subsided in 1956. However, the bodies continued to travel to the selected locations. And these were not only the bodies of soldiers and not only those who died during World War II. Around 1954, the transfer of the remains of the so-called Soviet partisans to *GPWCs* became more intense. For example, the remains of partisan squad commander Kazimieras Štaras and partisan Stasys Vilčinskas were moved to the *GPWC* in Anykščiai, while the remains of 103 partisans were moved to the one in Vilnius and of 30 partisans – to the one in Kaunas. In 1955, with the realisation that there were not many Lithuanians in the Kaunas *GPWC* and it was therefore "not visible that the Lithuanian people fought against the occupants", Lithuanian Soviet activists were included on the list of those buried there, although their remains were not found (Zizas, 2014, p. 534). From the 1960s to the 1990s, Soviet soldiers who died under various circumstances and who no longer belonged to the generations that could have participated in World War II were buried in the *GPWCs* (in Ginkūnai, Kalvarijos, Širvintos, etc.). This could have been members of the crew that was tragically killed in 1977, victims of the 1979–1989 Afghanistan War, or someone else. Veterans of the *Great Patriotic War* who died after 1945 were also buried (in Prienai). Just a few of these types of different bodies next to the hundreds

that were there were enough to enrich the place with new aspects. Those different bodies had their own stories[7]:

- not only World War II, but also:
- (1) the 1918–1920 war with the Bolsheviks,
- (2) the 1941 June Uprising,
- (3) the 1944–1953 Lithuanian Partisan War,
- (4) the 1945–1990 cult of veterans of the *Great Patriotic War*,
- (5) the 1945–1990 cult of the Soviet Union military;
- not only soldiers of the armed forces of the USSR, but also:
- (1) Soviet activists/collaborators (Komsomol members, communists, officials) / 1941–1953,
- (2) Soviet partisans / 1941–1944,
- (3) members of forces that fought against Lithuanian partisans / 1944–1953;
- not only soldiers of the armed forces of the USSR who died in battle during World War II, but also:
- (1) war veterans who died of natural causes / 1945–1990,
- (2) soldiers killed in military actions and accidents / 1945–1990.

In its actual content, the *GPWC* became a more complex entity than the place name implies (in this case, the actual content refers to the supposed remains buried at the site or attributed to it). The bodies of soldiers are not the only ones lying there, and they are not the only prerequisites for creating the significance and meanings of the site. People who died after the war in the vortices of the subsequent Lithuanian partisan war (1945–1953) – Soviet soldiers, *istrebki*, Soviet activists/collaborators, members of their families – were also buried in at least 36 of the 176 sites (17 per cent).[8] In one place, there could have

7 The groups are distinguished and named from the current perspective of independent Lithuania, based on today's assessments and concepts. The 1918–1920 war with Bolsheviks, the 1941 June Uprising and the 1944–1953 Lithuanian Partisan War are the stories of Lithuanian resistance to the Bolsheviks and the Soviets.

8 Here and elsewhere, the numbers are determined based on the inscriptions on the *GPWC* memorial plaques (or more precisely, the photographs thereof in the *Soviet Military Cemeteries* and *Register of Cultural Property* databases). These inscriptions appeared in various periods, both during the Soviet years and during the reconstructions that took place after 1990. Such inscriptions are not a reliable source, but one might expect that they still reflect the general proportions.

been some 10 such bodies/surnames (in Joniškis), while in another there could have been 70–100 (in Biržai). However, their number in specific cemeteries seems to have never exceeded 15 per cent of all those buried. This theme and the remains associated with it also formed separate self-contained complexes. In Vilnius, approximately 190 Soviet soldiers who were killed between 1942 and 1962 "in the course of official duties" are buried in one part of the Antakalnis Cemetery. Meanwhile, "48 members of Karolis Požela's anti-fascist underground organisation and 24 Soviet activists who died in the fight against the German occupants and bourgeois nationalists in 1942–1949" (this is the inscription on the main monument) are buried on a separate plot in the Panevėžys cemetery, and in Šeduva, 33 people are buried in a separate memorial, of whom two were killed in 1919, 17 were killed in 1941, and 12 were killed in 1945–1953. It is noteworthy that unlike in the case of the *GPWCs*, the Soviets avoided escalating or highlighting these sites. For example, not a single one of them was given the status of a *cultural monument*. This was only conferred upon about eight places associated with the death of Soviet activists in the post-war years, but not with their burials (as per: *Lietuvos SSR kultūros paminklų sąrašas, 1973*). They were related to the deaths of individuals or small groups, had abstract inscriptions or descriptions, and did not reflect the scale of the phenomenon or form a denser or more coherent network of such sites. There was a tendency for the nature of "the people's" post-war struggles to be shaped by them (inscriptions and locale), obscuring the role of the state structures. The post-war struggles were a tricky but necessary theme, or rather – one that was inevitable or hard to keep quiet. In any case, there was a need for places that commemorated the theme, through which the necessary explanations could be given and individual memories could be ousted or distorted. The *GPWCs* became a convenient space for fitting in this theme – the bodies/themes were simultaneously both there and not, as if they had drowned among the bodies of hundreds of soldiers.

In at least 22 *GPWCs* (13 per cent), Soviet partisans were buried alongside soldiers or at least mentioned on the memorial plaques of the cemeteries. There were usually only a few burials. Higher concentrations of partisans' remains/surnames were only formed in Rūdiškės (21 people, or 21 per cent of all those buried), Cirkliškis

(28/42 people or 6/13 per cent), and the memorials in Vilnius and Kaunas. The Soviet partisan together with the Soviet soldier – the most important characters of the *Great Patriotic War* became heroes. When forming the secondary burial sites, the bodies of prominent partisans were viewed as significant components of memory, with the remains of partisans/*heroes of the Soviet Union* Juozas Aleksonis, Hubertas Borisa and Alfonsas Čeponis being moved to the Kaunas GPWC, and those of partisan Icikas Meskupas (nom de guerre: Adomas) and member of the underground/*hero of the Soviet Union* Juozas Vitas – to the Vilnius GPWC. Monuments glorifying the partisans were erected in the cities: To partisan Marija Melnikaitė in Druskininkai in 1952; again to Melnikaitė in Zarasai in 1955; to Meskupas in Ukmergė in 1976; to Vitas in Alytus in 1977; and “to Soviet partisans and members of the underground” in Vilnius in 1983. Historical places associated with the partisans were memorialised and recognised as heritage sites – memorial stones were erected, memorial plaques were hung, and they were declared *cultural monuments*. In the 1970s, a campaign to preserve partisan dugouts began, with three such complexes in the forests of Rūdiškės, Rūdninkai and Antanai being restored in 1973–1975. Despite the fact that the remains/surnames of partisans in the GPWCs were significantly fewer in number than those of soldiers, for some time these sites were called by the double name of *Soviet Great Patriotic War military and partisan cemeteries* (In: Типовые проекты памятников, 1947).

The GPWCs became a haven for other bodies and themes. We have highlighted only a few cases. They made this place more than just a historical site honouring the *Great Patriotic War*. At these sites, the bodies of people who died at different times and under different circumstances became intertwined into one idea raised above history, which testified to the immortality of the revolutionary thought (i.e. another great Soviet narrative and propaganda staple) and to the victory of the Soviet system. It was a Soviet “red corner”[9] in the landscape – the materialisation of specific histories

9 The “red corner” was the name given to the place at institutions, organisations and companies that was equipped to provide Sovietisation information and propaganda.

and "universal" Soviet cosmogonic myths through bodies and the shapes and inscriptions of the memorials.

Fabrication as the norm

If we were to rely on the image of the past created through the GPWCs and other Soviet memorial sites, it should have seemed that Lithuanian Soviet partisans played a significant role in the *Great Patriotic War*. They were emphasised because there were subtexts. This character was supposed to testify to the involvement of Lithuanians in the *common struggle of the Soviet people as a whole*, but more importantly, the actions of the Soviet partisans in the territory occupied by the Nazis was supposed to demonstrate that this territory belonged and continued to belong to the Soviets – that their institutions continued to operate there and Lithuanians participated enthusiastically in all of these activities. In other words, this is how the Soviet occupation and dependence on the Soviets were established. However, the facts testify that Lithuanians made up 7 per cent of all the people concentrated in the partisan hideout in Rūdninkai Forest (a place made legendary by Soviet propaganda), and, respectively, 36 per cent throughout Lithuania (Zizas, 2004, pp. 142–144; Zizas, 2014, pp. 545–546).

Another theme. The facts testify that not all of the deaths of Soviet soldiers in Lithuania were heroic, because they died not only while fighting on the battlefields, but also in prison camps. This fact was not concealed, because it revealed just how blood-thirsty the enemy was – entries in the memorials claimed tens of thousands or murdered soldiers. This suited Soviet propaganda. There were at least nine such places on the list of *cultural monuments*. However, this theme is exhibited in a more reserved manner than the GPWC sites. Graveyards of prisoners of war were not registered very scrupulously – at least nine such sites were not included on the lists of *cultural monuments* (according to the *Soviet Military Cemeteries* database), and several places where prisoners of war were also buried were collectively called the burial sites of Soviet *citizens*, without mentioning the soldiers lying there (three such cases have been identified). The monuments erected in them did not have the pomp quality of military burial sites – they looked rather modest. And what was written

on those monuments was not entirely in line with the truth – the emphasis was on murder (with the typical phrases being "killed by the Nazi occupants", "tortured by German fascists"), even though the prisoners also died from diseases and starvation. For example, an eyewitness said that at Soviet prisoner-of-war camp No 133 in Alytus, 14,500 prisoners died of starvation, 2,000 died of an epidemic, and 500 were shot from August 1941 to February 1942 (Dieckmann, Toleikis & Zizas, 2005).

The genocide of the Jews and the sites where they were killed and buried were also used to demonise the enemy. Propaganda benefited from denationalising Jews and converting them into *Soviet citizens*. Lithuania was littered with burial sites of *Soviet citizens* killed by the Nazi occupants and their henchmen (an estimated 119 in all). This renaming helped to argue that the target of the mass killings was Soviet society as a whole, rather than a specific population group. At the same time, it also made it possible to create an illusion that society had come close to the Soviet ideal of a nationless state. Mentioning or not mentioning the number of dead also had subtexts. Terrifying figures were almost always cited at places connected with the deaths of *citizens* and prisoners of war, but never at the burial sites of Soviet soldiers. In one case, there was probably a need to emphasise the shocking brutality, while in the other – to keep silent about the enormous losses. The history of the bombing of the pioneer camp in Palanga and the place that commemorates it were also to testify to just how blood-thirsty the enemy was. The event was turned into a myth, with one incoming shell or bomb turned into a bombing, and one victim – the famous 1941 tragedy (*Balikienė*, 2008). Emotions were also supposed to be heightened by "Mum! Where are you?", a poem by Salomėja Nėris, a poet who was lauded by the Soviets, as well as *Pioneer*, an expressive sculpture that was erected at the scene of the event. In this context, a wartime practice should be remembered: In 1942, Soviet propagandists were required to "give the workers a fuller picture of all the horrors of the terrible mockery and abuse that our brothers experience from the fascist degenerates in the temporarily occupied regions of our country, and develop in the people a feeling of burning hatred for the fascist thugs and readiness to mercilessly take revenge on them"

(cited according to: Назаров, 2009, p. 129). The desire to expose the treachery and brutality of the former enemy (which was often presented by the Soviets as an eternal and current enemy, only now existing in the form of *Western capitalists* and NATO) and to incite hatred for them did not fade in all the years of the existence of the Soviet Union.

We could go on and on with this list of cases illustrating the flaws in the narrative of the *Great Patriotic War*. We are dealing with the phenomenon of *fabricating heritage* that David Lowenthal has described. Heritage provides us with an actualised history construct adapted to the needs of the present. In updating history, it has to be fabricated, but such a history acquires a distinctive value or quality – consolidating society by providing it with value and other vectors (Lowenthal, 1998, pp. 5–24). The *GPWCS* existed according to the law that, having emerged from the needs of Soviet propaganda, they embodied and disseminated images and values useful to the Soviets.

Conclusions

By their nature, the *GPWCS* were secondary burial sites that were created by the occupying power in Lithuania without adhering to historical conditionality (for example, the authentic location), and that were designed according to the best practices of memorial construction. First, at least in the case of Soviet Lithuania, a network of them was formed that was optimal from a propaganda and utilitarian point of view, both in terms of the number of sites, their distribution throughout the territory, and the selection of specific spaces for them. Second, they were constructed from bodies, moving them and distributing them as needed. By reburying one body or another, the desired meanings were created, for example – demonstrating the involvement of Lithuanians in the war for the Soviet *Motherland*. When the bodies that were needed were not available, they could be replaced by inscriptions on memorial plaques. Concrete and earth hid inaccuracies and embellishments.

Although the sites were titled as *military cemeteries*, thematically they were much more capacious. Few other memorials or

monuments could encompass such a wide variety of themes of the myth of the *Great Patriotic War* while simultaneously talking about the heroism of Soviet soldiers, the *liberation* of individual nations or the contribution of its members to the *fraternal* struggle, and inciting the cult of *Victory*. In addition, they could be manifestations not only of the *Great Patriotic War*, but also of revolutionary struggles and the achievements of the Soviet system in general, thus embodying other grand narratives of Soviet propaganda. They were useful both for exalting such themes and for consigning them to oblivion, when a topic that had lost its relevance could be "lost" in this knot of themes and meanings without changing the material expression of the memorial itself. These sites were not subject to history – they created history in the form of narratives that were favourable to the regime and ideologically correct.

All this made and make the GPWCs perfect propaganda tools that were used by the Soviets at the relevant time, and now suit the needs of Putin's Russia, which revived the myth of the *Great Patriotic War*.

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Table 1. **Representation of the *Great Patriotic War* in the Lithuanian SSR through cultural heritage: Thematic and statistical aspects.**
Prepared on the basis of the 1973 lists of historical monuments and art monuments ((Lietuvos **TSR** kultūros paminklų sąrašas. Vilnius: Pergalė, 1973, p. 5–94, 441–82 [*List of Cultural Monuments of the Lithuanian SSR*]. Vilnius: Pergalė, 1973, pp. 5–94, 441–823).

THEME	**Number of sites**		**Accents in the description of the site**
	Total	**Of which of national significance (percentage of total number)**	
SOLDIERS OF THE SOVIET UNION:			
burial site	176	2 (1)	• buried: *Heroes of the Soviet Union* (33), border guards (2), pilots (1)
place of death	9	-	• buried: Soviet border guards and soldiers who died in 1941 (5), *Heroes of the Soviet Union* (3), pilots (1)
battle site	3	3 (100)	• fought: 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division of the Red Army (3)
total:	188	5 (3)	
SOVIET *CITIZENS*:			
burial site	114	3 (3)	• circumstances of death: killed during the *Nazi occupation* or as victims of the Nazi occupants (113), victims of the *Nazi occupants* and the *bourgeois nationalists* (1); • victim mentioned: V. Grybas (1)
place of death	5	2 (40)	• Soviet *citizens*: *Soviet citizens* (2), *Jewish intelligentsia* (1), *people* (1); • circumstances of death: killed *during the Nazi occupation* or as victims of the *Nazi occupants* (5)
total:	119	5 (4)	

SOVIET *CITIZENS* – EXCEPTIONAL CASES:			
villages burned and massacred by the *Nazi occupants*	6	1 (17)	• killed at the hands of: the *Nazi occupants* (5), the *Nazi occupants* and the *bourgeois nationalists* (1)
pioneer camp bombed by the *Nazi occupants*	1	-	• time and circumstances of the event: 1941
total:	7	1 (14)	
SOVIET PARTISANS:			
underground sites, dug-outs, headquarters	20	13 (65)	• partisans mentioned: H. Borisa (2), J. Vitas (1)
place of death	7	4 (57)	• partisans mentioned: J. Aleksonis (1), A. Čeponis (1), M. Melnikaitė (1), I. Meskupas-Adomas (1), other partisans (2)
burial place	6	1 (17)	• partisans mentioned: M. Melnikaitė (1), I. Meskupas-Adomas (1)
total:	33	18 (55)	
SOVIET ACTIVISTS:			
place of death	16	-	• Soviet activists: *who died for Soviet rule* (7), *Soviet activists* (3), *Komsomol members* (2), *Soviet citizens* (2), *fighters for Soviet rule* (1), *party and soviet workers* (1); • time and circumstances of death: not given (9), 1941 (4), killed by the *Nazis* (1), killed during the *Nazi occupation* (1), killed during the *Nazi occupation* and post-war years (1); • killed at the hands of: not given (14), the *Nazis* (1), the *Nazi occupants* (1)

burial place	5	-	• Soviet activists: *Soviet activists* (1), *who died for Soviet rule* (1), *Komsomol members* (1), *Soviet activists* and *Komsomol members* (1), *soviet workers* (1); • time and circumstances of death: 1941 (2) 1918-1919, 1941 (1), 1941-1949 (1), during the *Nazi occupation* (1); • killed at the hands of: not given (3), the *Nazi occupants* (1), the *bourgeois nationalists* (1)
place of detention	2	2 (100)	• Soviet activists: *participants in the revolutionary movement* (all sites)
total:	23	2 (9)	
CULT OF WAR HEROES:			
Marija Melnikaitė – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	5	1 (100) 1 (50) 1 (100) -	• birthplace (1); • place of torture and death (2); • burial place (1); • monument (1)
Hubertas Borisa – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	4	- 1 (50) -	• birthplace (1); • underground site (2); • burial place (1)
Icikas Meskupas--Adomas – partisan	2	1 (100) -	• place of death (1); • burial place (1)
Juozas Vitas – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	3	1 (100) 1 (100) -	• birthplace (1); • underground site (1); • burial place (1)
Juozas Aleksonis – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	2	1 (100) -	• place of death (1); • burial place (1)

Alfonsas Čeponis – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	2	1 (100) -	• place of death (1); • burial place (1)
Ivan Chernyakhovsky – general, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	1	1 (100)	• burial place (1)
Tomas Tamulevičius – partisan, *Hero of the Soviet Union*	1	-	• burial place (1)
total:	20	10 (50)	
SOVIET PRISONERS OF WAR:			
burial place	7	-	
place of death	2	1 (50)	
total:	9	1 (11)	
MONUMENTS:			
Victory	3	2 (67)	
To the Liberators	1	-	
To the Heroes	1	-	• mentioned: partisan M. Melnikaitė (1)
total:	5	2 (40)	
TOTAL:	**381**	**35 (9)**	

Notes and explanations:

1. What today is understood as cultural heritage was called *cultural monuments* in the Soviet Union (or later – *historical and cultural monuments*). They were divided into monuments of archaeology, architecture, history and art. The theme of the *Great Patriotic War* is represented through two of them – monuments of history and art. According to their significance, cultural monuments are divided into monuments of national and local significance, with monuments of national significance considered more significant, respectively.
2. The list and table includes the scenes of events (where something actually happened) and event memory sites (memorials dedicated to events, but not standing at the scene of the event).
3. Some sites belong to several thematic groups (for example, one place related to the death of a particular Soviet partisan is listed under both the Soviet Partisan and the War Hero Cult thematic groups). **As a result, the total number of all sites/cultural monuments (381) does not match the sum of the numbers of the thematic groups (if, instead of specific sites, we were to count their thematic expressions, then the number would be 404).**
4. Notes on specific thematic groups. (1) The places of death of Soviet *citizens* and prisoners of war (as they are named in the (see: Lietuvos TSR kultūros paminklų sąrašas. Vilnius: Pergalė, 1973, p. 5–94, 441–82) [*List of Cultural Monuments of the Lithuanian SSR*] are often also their burial places. In the table, they are listed according to the names given in the list. (2) In the case of the death and burial places of Soviet activists, there are not always enough data to distinguish between events that occurred during the *Great Patriotic War* and after the war. As a result, the number of sites presented may be inaccurate. (3) In 1973, memorial monuments also stood at many scenes of events. The monument group in the table only includes sites where there were monuments not related to specific war events and scenes of specific events.

Table 2. Representation of the *Great Patriotic War* in the Lithuanian SSR through cultural heritage: Images.

Images/suggestion and tools for their creation	**Themes invoked**	**Image resolution/construction**
EXAGGERATION		
The *Great Patriotic War* **is also a Lithuanian war** – hyperbolisation of the role of Lithuanians in the war	Soviet partisans from Lithuania	• the list (see Table 1) contains 16 sites associated with specific Soviet partisans (giving their names and surnames) – in all cases (100 per cent), these are individuals from Lithuania; • nine of these sites (56 per cent) were granted the higher status of a monument of national significance; in comparison, only 4 per cent of the sites associated with Soviet citizens who had been murdered and 3 per cent of the sites associated with Soviet soldiers hold this status; • of all the characters of the *Great Patriotic War*, only Soviet partisans (a specific person) were allocated more than one site, thus creating something of a story about their *feats*; the memory of them is "expanded" by adding to the list not only places related to the struggle, but also places related to life, for example, hometowns. The leader is Marija Melnikaitė (born: Marija Melnik), who has five sites dedicated to her.
	16th Lithuanian Rifle Division of the Red Army	• the list includes three Red Army battle sites – all of them (100 per cent) are related to the 16th Division; • all of these sites (100 per cent) were granted the status of a monument of national significance; in comparison, only 1 per cent of the other sites associated with soldiers of the Soviet Union (burials, places of death) hold this status.

Soviet public authorities operated in Lithuania during the *Great Patriotic War* (Nazi occupation) – hyperbolisation of the spread of Soviet activists and partisan institutions	Underground sites of Lithuanian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Soviet partisans	• according to the descriptions presented in the list, the respective places are identified with the territorial/administrative units of Lithuania (cities, counties) or the territorial squads of the Soviet partisans – a territorial image is also created next to the site/point; • a relatively large number of such sites (20) were included on the list, creating the image that they covered Lithuania "administratively"; • 13 of these sites (65 per cent) were granted the status of a monument of national significance.
The *Great Patriotic War* **is a war of heroes** – hyperbolisation of the role of heroes in war	Soldiers of the Soviet Union – *Heroes of the Soviet Union*	• the only time Soviet soldiers are personified (their names and surnames are given) is if they had been given the title of *Hero of the Soviet Union*; all other soldiers remain nameless.
	Soviet partisans – *Heroes of the Soviet Union*	• of all the characters of the *Great Patriotic War*, only Soviet partisans (a specific person) and *Heroes of the Soviet Union* from Lithuania were allocated more than one site; almost all of the partisans mentioned on the list (6 out of 7) had the title of *Hero of the Soviet Union*; • of the 12 sites associated with partisans/*Heroes of the Soviet Union*, 8 (67 per cent) were granted the status of a monument of national significance.

The *Nazi* occupants were treacherous and brutal criminals – demonisation of the enemy	1941 treacherous intervention – the death of Soviet border guards	• the list includes 9 sites associated with the deaths of Soviet soldiers, of which 5 (56 per cent) are related to 1941 events – mostly the death of border guards; the rest are related to *Heroes of the Soviet Union* (3 sites) and pilots (1). The theme of treacherous attacks is emphasised no less than the feats of the heroes themselves; • the scene of the pioneer camp in Palanga that was bombed by the *Nazi* occupants in 1941 belongs to the group of special sites.
	mass atrocities – killing of civilians	• on the list, 119 sites are dedicated to this theme – this is one of the largest groups, with just slightly fewer sites than those marking the burial and death of Soviet soldiers (185); • the description of the specific site often included the number of victims buried there – the massiveness was emphasised with shocking numbers. Such detail was unusual for the descriptions of other sites; • the victims are collectively referred to as *Soviet citizens* – emphasis on the dependence of the territory and population.
	mass atrocities – the killing of prisoners of war	• the list includes 9 sites related to this theme; • the description of the specific site often included the number of victims buried here – the massiveness was emphasised with shocking numbers. Such detail was unusual for the descriptions of other sites.
	special victims – talents and member of the intelligentsia who were killed	• the only case where a specific victim was singled out from the mass of Soviet *citizens* was the sculptor Vincas Grybas; all others were left unnamed; • in another case, it is detailed that the victims were members of the *Jewish intelligentsia.*
	cases of exceptional cruelty – the burning and massacre of villages	• the list includes 6 sites related to this theme.

SILENCING/LEVELLING		
The *Great Patriotic War* **is a war of heroes** – the Soviet soldiers who did not die "nobly" are ignored	Soviet prisoners of war	• nine sites are described as being related to the death of Soviet prisoners of war – even though there were more sites like this in Lithuania, they were not included on the list (at least 9 other such sites can be found) or were included while concealing their connections with prisoners of war (given as the burial places of Soviet *citizens* who were killed, 3 cases); • in all 9 cases, the prisoners were recorded as killed, even though some of them died under other circumstances, such as from disease or starvation.
The *Great Patriotic War* **is a war of heroes** – downplaying Soviet military losses	Border guards who died in 1941	• the descriptions of 4 sites indicate that they are related to the death of Soviet border guards in 1941 – even though there were more places like this in Lithuania, they were not included on the list (at least 5 more such sites can be found).
	Soviet soldiers	• the descriptions of sites related to Soviet *citizens* and prisoners of war usually indicate the number of dead, but in the case of Soviet military burial sites, these numbers were not given.
The *Great Patriotic War* **is also a war against the Soviet system** – abstraction of the circumstances of the death of Soviet activists	Soviet activists	• the list includes 23 sites related to the death and suffering of Soviet activists (places of imprisonment, death, burial) that are associated with the *Great Patriotic War* or abstract circumstances ("Died for Soviet rule", etc.); • their descriptions do not clearly indicate the time of death, with pre-war, wartime and post-war merged into one era (11 cases do not give any precise circumstances in general or give broader chronological frames (for example, "1941–1949")); • the killer is not clearly specified – *Nazis*, *bourgeois nationalists* and others are merged into a single entity (17 cases).

The residents of the Soviet Union are a single (*having solved the national question*) Soviet people – ignoring the ethnic differences in the population of the Soviet Union	civilians – victims of war	• the list contains 119 sites where the majority are Holocaust sites (related to the killing and burial of Jews) – in their descriptions, this circumstance is omitted, replacing the word *Jews* with the concept of a *Soviet citizen* (only in one case is it mentioned that the victims were Jews).

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Tanks on Monuments, Monument Tanks. On Trench Art and "Gratitude Memorials"[1]

Abstract

The purpose of this outline was to introduce the topic of using armored weapons elements in the erection of monuments. The text discusses the issue of "monuments of gratitude" to the Red Army, which often drew on the motif of the tank monument, using a tank of the liberator of a particular locality. Monuments to the brotherhood of arms between the Red Army and the People's Polish Army are also discussed. Two unique works that were not created by state order and were not propaganda manifestations are discussed next: the monument in Kasina Wielka and the now demolished one in Zyndranowa. In Kasina Wielka, a local artist designed a monument commemorating Polish soldiers who fell in September 1939. The work uses the turret of a Vickers tank, a real rarity since not a single Vickers

1 I would like to thank Mr. Piotr Lulek for his time and providing a range of information about the monument to the 24th Cavalry Regiment in Kasina Wielka, and Ms. Monika Homa, Inspector for Culture, Sports and Cooperation with NGOs from the Mszana Dolna Municipality Office, for providing information about the entry of the memorial to the 24th Cavalry Regiment into the register of monuments.

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tank taking part in the operations of the 1939 campaign has survived to this day. Moreover, it shows the grassroots initiative of citizens who wanted to commemorate the clashes in Kasina Wielka. The second monument was erected in Zyndranowa to commemorate the casualties of the 1944 Dukla operation. Importantly, it was again a grassroots initiative. The text discusses the stages of its creation, along with the actions taken by the authorities to dismantle it. The article is supplemented by a table listing "monuments of gratitude" that used elements of World War II military equipment.

Keywords

trench art, monuments, "monuments of gratitude", Red Army, armored weapons, tanks, World War II

After 1945 in Central and Eastern Europe, the communist powers, which were forcibly imposed on societies by the Red Army, made numerous efforts to legitimize their presence. The propaganda machine used all the media available at the time. The erection of monuments in memory of the liberation of a city, of armed clashes, and the deaths of Red Army soldiers had a particularly strong impact on the public's imagination. These actions were part of a broader policy of lying about the past, creating an "only right" picture of World War II, on top of building myths both relating to the roots of the Polish People's Republic and a "Polish-Soviet alliance". The glorification of the Red Army's military successes was used to improve the image of the USSR. Reigning over space, the communists wanted to capture the imagination, and to engrave themselves in the consciousness of societies. This included monuments to Joseph Stalin and so-called "monuments of gratitude" to the Red Army, as well as necropolises of Soviet soldiers. By locating military cemeteries in city centers, the old architectural layout was deliberately demolished but, above all, new "sacred" sites were created that were so important to the ceremonialism of communist power. It was near monuments or necropolises that party rallies, anniversary speeches, etc. could be

held (cf. more extensively in Czarnecka, 2015; also cf. Gabowitsch, 2021). This phenomenon did not apply only to Poland. It was even typical of countries that fell within the orbit of the USSR's influence.

The monuments that had such a strong impact on the imagination were relatively inexpensive in post-war realities, as used military equipment or airplanes were utilized in this way (for the use of airplane parts to create monuments in Western Europe, see Winterton's remarks, 2022; cf. Wielgus, 2002; Matuchniak-Krasuska, 2015; Domański, 2015; Radwan, 2006; Wikipedia, Pomnik Lotników Alianckich w Dębinie Zakrzowskiej) and above all, armored vehicles: tanks, self-propelled guns (cf. List of tank monuments: Wikipedia, *Czołg-pomnik*; *Gdzie w Polsce sa jako pomniki T-34?*; *Były sobie czołgi*) and cannons were often used in the creation of new memorials (Matuchniak-Mystkowska, 2023; Domański, 2015; cf. also Matuchniak-Krasuska, 2015; Ożóg, 2014; Cembrzyńska, 2017). These monuments can also be considered in terms of trench art in the broadest sense (adopting the definition of N. Saunders 2003, regarding trench art cf. publications by Kimball, 2004, Marcacci, 2014; Warin, 2009; Warrin, 2011; Molon, Fusine, 2018).

Tank monuments evoke some reflection. In addition, they are symbolic forms behind which, in addition to historical aspects, there are also political systems and various (changing) ideologies (Ferenc, Domański, 2015, 9; cf. also Matuchniak-Krasuska, 2015; cf. Kattago, 2015). In various European countries you can encounter tank monuments, for example, in Normandy or Italy including the famous Memorial to the 4th "Skorpion" Armored Regiment in the so-called Gorge (Łapiński, 2019; Łydka, 2023; *The Memorial To the 4th "Skorpion" Armoured Regiment*; *Pomnik Pułku 4 Pancernego "Skorpion"*). However, they perform different functions than those erected after 1945 in Poland, where the propaganda was so important. One can even speak of a kind of symbolic violence associated with the glorification of the military actions of the Red Army.

Dominika Czarnecka characterizes the forms of "gratitude monuments"

> In addition to the most popular obelisks, a separate category consisted of monuments, the creation of which used ready-made war props (tanks,

> cannons, aircraft) […] . The use of military artifacts emulated Soviet models. Sometimes props of this kind were placed in the surroundings of a constructed monument as an accessory; then they were only components of the commemoration, e.g. in Grudziądz, Głogów (Czarnecka, 2015, p. 110).

Tanks often drove themselves onto pedestals. Then, engines and, of course, arms were disassembled. Worn-out Soviet armored weapons found a second monumental life, so to speak. This practice was used throughout Central and Eastern Europe, such as in the Eastern Bloc sector of Berlin (Davis, 2016; Gabowitsch, 2021; Grzesiuk-Olszewska, 1995; cf. comments on the use of photos and drawings of monuments commemorating World War II in textbooks used during the Soviet era when young people were supposed to recognize in which foreign capitals these monuments to glory and victory were located, among them a tank on a pedestal – this exercise comes from a 1958 work Gabowitsch, 2023). The monuments of gratitude were intended to legitimize the Red Army's presence in Poland after the war ended, and they also distorted history. This was served by a nationwide campaign to erect monuments, initiated by the head of the USSR Military Mission, Gen. Siergiej Szatiłow, who proposed the creation of a special government commission to build monuments, which was met with a response from the then prime minister (Czarnecka, 2015, p. 92; Czarnecka, 2013 b; also cf. Czarnecka, 2013 a; Golon, 1996).

As shown in Dominika Czarnecka's erudite research on "monuments of gratitude", tanks were erected either as stand-alone monuments,[2] or they accompanied more complex spatial forms. They were erected near or on the site of the graves of Red Army soldiers. The association of makeshift military cemeteries with "monuments of gratitude" was very characteristic: the respect with which graves are surrounded in our culture was also an important propaganda element. Subsequently, as the bodies were usually exhumed and moved to newly established military cemeteries, the "monuments of gratitude" generally remained in their original places. According

2 See the list of tank monuments and monuments using World War II weapons elements in Table 1.

to another scenario, the monument itself was built, and then, to emphasize its importance, the remains of soldiers were moved from other locations to the vicinity of the monument (Czarnecka, 2015). In order to emphasize the importance and overtones of the cemeteries of Soviet soldiers, elements of weapons – tanks or cannons – were additionally placed around them or at the cemetery wall or gates, the best evidence of which is the cemetery in Wrocław, where two cannons stand at the main entrance, and the side gates are decorated with a total of four T-34 tanks. The same was done by placing tanks in the military cemeteries of the 1st Polish Army (see tank in the cemetery in Siekierki. Migdalski, 2013). Mentioning monuments related to the 1st Polish Army, it is worth referring to the tank monument that was set up at the mausoleum of the fallen in Studzianki. Both 94 plaques with the names of the fallen and a T-34 tank situated on a high pedestal, which houses a crypt with the ashes of the fallen, were incorporated into the memorial's foundation. The monument was unveiled on August 16, 1964 on the 20th anniversary of the battle (Leszkowicz, 2022; Zielak, 1979; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986). As Mirosław Golon emphasizes:

> In addition to the most popular obelisks, it is possible to distinguish – in formal terms – two more basic groups of monuments of gratitude. The first group are objects in the construction of which authentic war props were used and monuments were created by placing cannons (e.g., in Krzeczów in Sieradz province), airplanes or most often – tanks (e.g., in Czarnków and Ostrołęka) on appropriate pedestals (Golon, 1996, p. 614).

Monuments of gratitude in the form of featureless tanks were erected, for example, in connection with the liberation of individual cities by the Red Army (Czarnecka, 2015). In addition, the myth-making element was important: the liberator tank (the first to enter a given city). Reaching for such clear and conspicuous symbols as armored weapons or artillery (cf., for example, the monument in the village of Chlebowo – the ZiS-3 cannon unveiled in 1981, made by young people from the Polish Tourist Society in Szczecin together with the Gryfino municipality to commemorate the 2nd Lusitanian Artillery

Division of the Polish Army in Ciechanowski, 2018) further enhanced the propaganda overtones of the monuments.

"Monuments of gratitude" to the Red Army also commemorated the "brotherhood" of arms with the Polish Army, hence many times the tank monuments glorified both fallen Soviet and Polish soldiers. A separate mention should be made of monuments commemorating the deeds of Polish soldiers. Such as in the case of Studzianki or Mirosławiec where a tank was placed on a pedestal to commemorate the 1st T. Kościuszko Division, the 2nd H. Dąbrowski Division, the Warsaw Heroes of Westerplatte Armored Brigade, and the 4th Heavy Tank Regiment in connection with the battles for the liberation of Mirosławiec on 10/11 February 1945 (Matuchniak-Krasuska, 2015; also cf. Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986; Leszkowicz, 2022; *Pomnik – Czołg. Mirosławiec*), while at the military base in Choszczno there are cannons on a monument commemorating a Polish military unit and French prisoners of war from Oflag II B Arnswalde POW camp (Matuchniak-Krasuska, 2015). The IS-2 tank, which has been located in Krakow's Nowa Huta from 1969 in the Osiedle Górali neighborhood, commemorates the Battle of Budziszyn. This vehicle was on the equipment of the 2nd Polish Army (Panek, 2016; Urbaniec, 2016). The IS-2 tank set up in Pruszków commemorated the soldiers of the Polish Army: a unit of the 1st Armored Heroes of Westerplatte Brigade. (Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986; https://fotopolska.eu/Pomnik-czolg-Pruszkow; Leszkowicz, 2022). Standing by the Narew River, the T-34 tank monument erected to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Polish People's Republic was unveiled in 1974 to glorify the heroes killed in the fight against German fascism (Nowogród – tank monument; "Tank on the Narew River" monument). On the other hand, a T-34/85 tank set up in Sanok in 1982 glorified soldiers of the People's Polish Army (LWP) who fought against the Polish underground and OUN units. It was unveiled in connection with the 39th anniversary of the Battle of Lenino (*Sanok. Czołg jako pomnik*; see also discussion regarding plans to remove the monument: *Radziecki czołg z cokołu nad Sanem zostanie usunięty*, 2022). Meanwhile, the IS-2 tank monument in Lębork was erected in 1968 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Polish Army (*Czołg IS-2 w Lęborku*, 2019).

When characterizing tank monuments, it is necessary to mention a monument that has caused a particularly heated discussion in society. By erecting a T-34 vehicle, the order of such an important place of public memory as Westerplatte was shattered. In 1962, the communist authorities decided to remove the Cpt. Dąbrowski Cross and put a T-34 tank in its place, a decision that understandably aroused great criticism, but the cross happily survived because the driver taking it away did not take it to the landfill but to the rectory in Nowy Port where it was hidden (cf. more extensively: Zołnierczuk, Rykała, 2017; Radecka, 2017; Zajączkowski, 2015; Leszkowicz, 2022).

In addition to the propaganda dimension, the tank monuments also served a very different function. This can be traced in the example of monuments from Częstochowa or Dębica. In Częstochowa there was a monument with a T-34 tank, which stood in the Tysiąclecie district, and the whole installation was complemented by a plaque with the dates of the liberation of the city and the setting of the monument: 16 January 1945-1975, although the tank had been there since July 1974 (Hyszko, 2016; Sobkowski, 2016; Czarnecka, 2013 a). In addition to the propaganda dimension, there was an aspect important for the local community, especially for children, who could play around or on the site at a time when the TV series *Four Tank-Men and a Dog* [*Czterej pancerni i pies*] was highly popular. This monument disappeared by virtue of a Resolution of the Częstochowa City Council on September 12, 1991 (Hyszko, 2016). A tank-monument in Dębica served a similar function, and the local population even nicknamed it "Rudy" referring the popular TV series, not bothered by the fact that the series featured a T-34 tank and not an IS-2, which is now in the Regional Museum (cf. *Lokalne Symbole Kultury Dębickiej – „Rudy 102"*, 2016; *Dębica. Czołg IS-2 w Ogródku Jordanowskim*; the vehicle also appears on the postcard as the "Rudy" Tank).

Dominika Czarnecka's in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of "gratitude monuments" revealed 476 of these created in the People's Republic of Poland, of which 38 used armored weapons, aircraft or other military equipment. The list can be supplemented with a tank monument in Neple, a tank monument in Wiśniew, and a monument in Zyndranowa. Of these sites, it is worth highlighting the example of Baligród where the artifact was subsequently replaced

by the military themselves. The monument deserves attention because it was originally a T-70 tank, which was replaced in l975 by a T-34 model, while the original "monument" turned out to be an extremely rare specimen hence it was moved to Poznań to the Armored Weapons Museum of the Land Forces Training Center (*Baligród (podkarpackie) – pomnik wyzwolicielom (T-34)*; *Baligrodzki czołg*, 2022; Trzeszczyńska, 2016; Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 4; Leszkowicz, 2022). Near the tank in Baligród there was a monument to Gen. Karol "Walter" Świerczewski, who was killed at Jabłonki. An obelisk was erected there in honor of "Walter". The first monument was replaced in 1962 by another one, by Franciszek Strynkiewicz. It showed a bas-relief of Świerczewski's head with the Piast eagle, as Tomasz Leszkowicz mentions, "made of armored sheet metal" (Leszkowicz, 2022, p. 353).

It is also worth recalling the history of tanks from Borne Sulimowo. Nowadays (since 2010) there has been a T-34/85 memorial tank there, which, however, comes from the collection of the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw. Originally, there was a copy representing an earlier version, equipped with a 76mm cannon, which was taken along by the Russian army withdrawing from Poland. A similar fate befell a vehicle like this located in Kłomino, formerly Gródek, where, like in Sulimowo, the Russians were stationed. In both cases, the fact that they were loaded by rail (on April 2, 1992) when they left for the Polish border was noted in the relevant documentation (Wełnic, 2021).

"Monuments of gratitude" were blatantly hammered into consciousness and were particularly hated by the public, as evidenced by attempts to destroy them while they were still in existence in the People's Republic of Poland. Communist-built monuments created from military equipment were often removed after 1990. Some were destroyed, given away for scrap to be melted down, or sold to private entrepreneurs or individuals (such as the tank in Hajnówka cf. Czarnecka, 2013a and Table 1; Czarnecka, 2015). For these reasons, the removal of monuments should be considered as part of decomunization. The process of eliminating them in Poland was much more peaceful than in Estonia. There, the greatest emotions were aroused by the removal of a monument of gratitude called the Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn or the Monument to the Liberator Fighter,

most often referred to as the Bronze Soldier, which caused loud Russian protests that resulted in one death and 44 injured (cf. article by D. Czarnecka, *"Ostatnie starcie Estończyków z żołnierzem Armii Radzieckiej" – czyli o kulisach sporu wokół Pomnika Wyzwolicieli Tallina 1991-2007*; Czarnecka, 2013 a; also cf. Kattago, 2009; Kattago, 2015; cf. Gabowitsch, 2021; Ochman, 2010).

The removal of monument tanks or plans to relocate them have repeatedly sparked debate between local authorities and the Institute of National Rememberance (IPN). In Drawsko Pomorskie, T-34 tanks were repainted with NATO colors, and the discussion was about the interpretation of the law on the prohibition of the propagation of communism. It was even proposed to transfer the tanks to the museum in Kołobrzeg or Podborsko, which, however, the local authorities did not want to agree to (Radomski, 2021; also cf. Ochman, 2010; Kałużna, 2018; Kałużna, 2015; Różycki, 2016; Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 90). Protests by residents in Wołomin arose over a plan to move a T-34 memorial tank to the high school in Urle where a military museum was planned to open, and the tank was even repainted pink as part of the protest (Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 448). In addition to the removal of monuments as vestiges of the former system, it is also worth mentioning an exceptional situation when a T-34 tank monument from near Pisz was stolen, and found at a scrap yard in Pruszków (cf. *Czołg-pomnik ukradli i przewieźli kilkaset km!*).

It should be mentioned that in Poland, former monuments using armored weapons, elements related to artillery or other military objects were not, as Joanna Kałużna points out,

> subject of art installations. The situation was different in Prague, resulting in the famous Pink Tank, permanently housed in the Museum of Military Art in Lešany, but occasionally transported to the Czech capital, for example, on the 20th anniversary of the departure of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia (Kałużna, 2018, p. 159; cf. Gabowitsch, 2021).

In this context, a very notable case is set by attempts to give a different face to former tank monuments, for example, by repainting a tank in the Czech Republic in Prague pink as a symbol of freedom (Jarysz, 2015). This monument is one of the most recognizable works based

on old armored weapons, and is the work of David Černý, who was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts at the time. On the night of April 27-28, 1991, in the run-up to Victory Day, he repainted a tank that was a memorial to Soviet armored crews, the *Památnik sovetskych tankistu*, pink. Tank No. 23 (*Tank čislo 23*) to this day arouses enormous debate. This IS-2m tank took part in the battle for Prague, then from July 29, 1945 until the spring of 1991 it was a monument of gratitude for the liberation of Prague. It stood on a pedestal at what was then called the Soviet Tank-men' Square, and understandably, it aroused debate after the Velvet Revolution on what to do with the vehicle. After repainting it pink, the artist was arrested and the paint was washed off, but on May 12, a group of parliamentarians repainted the vehicle again. Soon the monument ceased to have the status of a national cultural monument and was transferred to the Kbely military museum and later to the military-technical museum in Lešany. However, this was not the end of the discussion about the fate of the vehicle, as representatives of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic also took part in the international debate. In 2001, there was even a project by Černý to erect a new monument. It was supposed to be placed in exactly the same place and be a tank dug into the ground. Although the project was accepted by the local authorities, it aroused protests from both the Russian ambassador and the then pro-Russian prime minister of the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, on August 21, 2008, on the 40th anniversary of the intervention of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, another installation was placed there – again painted pink. The odyssey of the pink tank continued. On 20 June 2011, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the pink tank was placed on a barge on the Vltava River near the Charles Bridge (Tatarenko, 2019; Davis, 2016).

When discussing the use of elements of armored weapons and military equipment to create monuments, two such object should be mentioned: the first commemorates the soldiers of the 24th Cavalry Regiment and their skirmish in September 1939. It is located in Kasina Wielka in the hamlet of Mogiła and the other is a no longer existing monument in Zyndranowa. Both of these unique works were created not by the Polish state or Soviet Russia. Each time it was a local initiative. The monument from Kasina Wielka commemorates not the

liberation, but the battle fought during the September 1939 campaign. It also deserves recognition because during its construction, parts of a Vickers tank were used, and not, as in a significant number of monuments, various versions of Soviet vehicles such as: T-34, IS-2, ISU-122, and SU-76.

The monument in Kasina Wielka by its form significantly differs from the tanks of the "monuments of gratitude" to the Red Army (regarding the history of the monument cf. *Kasina Wielka. Pomnik żołnierzy 24. Pułku Ułanów*[3] and Lulek, 2012). The creations designed to promote the brotherhood of arms and the only right vision of the past were largely similar: a pedestal/post on which there was usually a T-34. The creators, architects of these works, are usually anonymous (cf. Czarnecka, 2015, for more details). In the case of the Kasina Wielka monument, the case is quite different. It has a well-thought-out artistic form, and its creator was the artist Stanisław Dobrowolski (1927-2013). Born in the village of Słomka, he was educated at the art school in Zakopane and at the Faculty of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. In his home area, he bought a farm in Kasina Wielka and set up his workshop there. His work, especially the monument to the cavalrymen, was widely acclaimed. He was awarded the Medal of the Protector of National Sites, the Memorial Medal of the 24th Cavalry Regiment and the Medal for Merit to the Municipality of Mszana Dolna (*Dobrowolski Stanisław – artysta rzeźbiarz i malarz*).

The clashes known as the Battle of Jordanów, part of which was the battle at Kasina Wielka on September 4, were an important event in the history of the Polish Armed Forces and especially the 10th Brigade commanded by Colonel Maczek (cf. memoirs: Maczek, 1990; Skibiński, 1960; Wojciechowski, 2020). The description of the monument itself emphasizes that it commemorates soldiers killed on September 4, 1939. Polish Vickers tanks and tankettes took part in the clashes (*Kasina Wielka. Pomnik żołnierzy 24. Pułku Ułanów*; regarding the history of the tank's design cf. Jońca, 2014; Korbal, 2019). In the course of the fighting, two Vickers tanks and several tankettes were lost near Kasina (cf. Sadowski, 2019 a; Sadowski,

3 A full list of pages accessed is provided in the bibliography.

2019 b; *Kasina Wielka – 4 Września 1939 roku*, 2022; Korbal, 2019). One of the tanks got stuck in a creek during the retreat, and as it could not move any further it was abandoned (Okoński, 2019). Local people then used its parts, with local blacksmiths forging plough blades from them (information obtained from Mr. Piotr Lulek; also cf. references to the adaptation of Vickers' parts during the construction of its replica. Jocen, 2014).

The sculptor Stanisław Dobrowolski proposed to commemorate the Polish soldiers by erecting a monument in the hamlet of Mogiła. This idea was born in the 1980s, because the local authorities planned to locate a landfill in this place, which aroused widespread indignation among the residents. In order to block these plans, Dobrowolski proposed the construction of a monument (information obtained from Mr. Piotr Lulek). Initially, there was a simple wooden cross (cf. the photo in the publication *650 lat dziejów Kasiny Wielkiej*) at which the population gathered for commemorative Holy Masses on 4 September. To this day, residents gather during patriotic ceremonies in honor of the fallen soldiers in defense of the Homeland (Application for entry in the register of immovable monuments of 21.09.2022). The monument in 1989 was located in a clearing known as Mogiła and bore the inscription "To the fallen in 1939. Honor and Glory". The farmers and their sons helped erect an obelisk cross on the battlefield of the 24th Cavalry Regiment, in honor of those who fell here (cf. document No. DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3). The next step was the erection of a monument made of a tank tower. Two years later it replaced the wooden cross (cf. document No. DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3), and the opening ceremony was held on September 22, 1991 (cf. Application for entry in the register of immovable monuments dated 21.09.2022).

Stanisław Dobrowolski found the turret of a Vickers that was stuck in a bend in the Kasina River (*Kasina Wielka. Pomnik żołnierzy 24. Pułku Ułanów*; *Vickers E z Kasiny Wielkiej – śladem niezwykłego pancernego artefaktu*). It served as a well casing at one of the farms (cf. document DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3; *Vickers E z Kasiny Wielkiej – śladem niezwykłego pancernego artefaktu*). From the point of view of the history of technology, this turret is a real rarity for it has retained much of its original equipment – elements of the yoke, 47 mm cannon retarder and the yoke of a 7.92 mm 30 machine

gun (cf. Document DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3; *Vickers E z Kasiny Wielkiej – śladem niezwykłego pancernego artefaktu*; also cf. Okoński, 2019; Korbal, 2019); original elements of the turret were copied during the restoration and used to complete the emerging replica of the Vickers tank (cf. the interview with Lt. Col. Tomasz Ogrodniczuk). Among other technical reasons, this monument is highly valuable. After all, very few mementos of Polish tanks participating in the September campaign have survived to this day. When constructing the monument to the 24th Cavalry Regiment, the artist planned to cut patterns into the steel tower. This was possible thanks to the favor of the director of the INCO Abrasive Articles Plant, who not only provided the necessary equipment, but also qualified workers who, having the patterns and templates prepared by Stanisław Dobrowolski at their disposal, performed the work by cutting out the openwork floral and figural decoration: the representation of an eagle in a crown, as well as the image of Christ's head in a crown of thorns (information obtained from Mr. Piotr Lulek; cf. document no. DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3). The monument was created thanks to the wide involvement of local residents. The plot for the monument was donated by the Skwarczek family from the Horniki hamlet and the work involved members of the Association for the Development and Renewal of the Village of Kasina Wielka and the Kasina Wielka Farmers' Club (*650 lat dziejów Kasiny Wielkiej*).

The monument in honor of the soldiers of the 24th Cavalry Regiment was entered in the register of immovable monuments by the provincial conservator of monuments in Krakow by a decision dated June 14, 2023 (cf. document no. DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3). A sandstone block monument, bearing an inscription listing the fallen soldiers of the 24th Cavalry Regiment, was located near the Vickers tower: Cpt. Hempel Zdzisław, Lt. Eng. Gasztołd-Bukraba, Zygmunt, Rozycki Antoni, Rymarczuk Józef, Targoński Leon, Kotwica Jan, Górniak Jan, Skrzypek Józef, Wychowiak Bolesław (cf. document no. DNS-I.5140.16.2022.MN.RK.3; regarding the fallen soldiers cf. Pawłowski, 1993; Pawłowski, 1998). The monument underwent restoration in 2021, carried out by the Armored Weapons Museum in Poznań (Application for entry in the register of immovable monuments dated 21.09.2022; *Wieża polskiego czołgu zostanie odnowiona*).

Another monument unique in the country was erected in Zyndranowa. As with the Kasina monument, it did not represent the state's historical-propaganda policy. As stressed by A. Kroh (2016, p. 150): " … The monument, erected in the years 1976-76 in Zyndranowa at private expense, out of the need of the heart, by a group of people full of the sincerest intentions, is an absolute rarity." Its additional purpose was to commemorate the Lemkos who fell during the Battle of the Dukla Pass.[4] The monument in Zyndranowa is inextricably linked to the Lemko museum. Plans for the establishment of this facility were undertaken in 1968, and the main office was to be located in Bartne and Zyndranowa would be its branch office (Gocz, 2017; Gocz, 2018; Drozd, 2013 a; Drozd, 2023 b; Kroh, 1985; Kroh, 2018; Wielocha, 2018; Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002; Szumielewicz, 2000, from chapter IV). The plan was not supported by the state authorities. Teodor/Fedor Gocz placed the Chamber of Memorabilia of Lemko Culture on his farm in 1968 (in addition, the name Regional Museum of Lemko Culture was in use, in Drozd, 2023 a; Drozd, 2023 b; Szumielewicz, 2000; Huk, 2016; Gocz, 2018; Wielocha, 2018). Under the pretext of concern for the artifacts, the Ministry of the Interior authorities intended to seize and confiscate the collection (cf. more extensively the findings based on archives from the Institute of National Remembrance with an edition of selected documents. Huk, 2016; Wielocha, 2018).

In the course of collecting memorabilia documenting Lemko culture, exhibits related to the 1944 Battle of the Dukla Pass appeared. Their accumulation made the Museum Council rename it as the Museum of Lemko Culture and War Memory in 1974 (Drozd, 2023 a; Drozd, 2023 b; Czubaj-Kuźmin, 2011; Szumielewicz, 2000; Kroh, 2016; cf. *Sprawozdanie porucznika Stanisława Demianiuka z Departamentu Społeczno-Administracyjnego MSW w Warszawie z ustaleń na temat*

4 The battle for the Dukla Pass, the Dukla-Prešov operation, ended with horrific losses. According to the assumptions of the Red Army, it was supposed to break the German resistance in 5-6 days, moving 10 km a day. The fighting lasted almost 3 months, causing an enormity of losses and destruction – cf. the mention of the exhibition documenting the battle in Buczek-Kowalik, Buczek, 2017; also cf. information on the official plans of the People's Polish Army to promote the vision of the Dukla-Prešov operation in Leszkowicz, 2022.

Izby Pamiątek w Zyndranowej przeprowadzonych w dniach 13-14 lipca 1972 containing information about Huk's militaria collection, 2016, document 2, 136). Collecting souvenirs, material testimonies collected from the field of the Battle of the Dukla Pass, the idea of constructing a monument to honor the fallen Soviet and Czechoslovak soldiers arose (Bata, 2002 cf. photo of the first as mentioned by the author of the *ad hoc* commemoration that was constructed in 1973 based on materials collected from the battlefield; Drozd, 2023 a; Czubaj-Kuźmin, 2011). Małgorzata Szumielewicz emphasizes that the initiative to build the monument came from veterans of the Duka Pass clashes, who, when visiting the museum, pointed out the collection of battlefield memorabilia (Szumielewicz, 2000; cf. Gocz, 2017; Gocz, 2018).

In 1974, a decision was made to erect a monument to commemorate the Soviet and Czechoslovak soldiers fallen in the Battle of the Dukla Pass (Drozd, 2023 a). As Roman Drozd emphasizes:

> A decision was also made to build a monument commemorating Soviet and Czechoslovak soldiers killed in the Battle of the Dukla Pass, which was part of the new name of the site. The nearby woods contained many remnants of the fierce battle. Among the items found were helmets, shells, artillery and mortar shells, bullets, destroyed parts of armaments, including tanks, but also, most horrifying of all, the remains of fallen soldiers. The construction of the monument seemed natural and necessary (Drozd, 2023 a, p. 235).

Work on the construction began in 1974, and was completed in October 1976. What is noteworthy, the ashes of four soldiers were placed under the monument (Drozd, 2023 a; Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002). In an interview with A. Kroh, Teodor/Fedor Gocz simply and emphatically expressed his motivation to build the monument:

> In the fall of 44 I was a fifteen-year-old boy. I saw them with my own eyes and I will not forget them until the day I die. I carried stretchers with the wounded. Maybe they looted and raped elsewhere, I don't know (sic! W.S.)[5], but here, they fought and died. I remember fighters who

5 Cf. a short description of the size of the crimes against civilian population by the Red Army during the "liberation"; Czarnecka, 2015.

> were not much older than myself. They were terribly afraid, but they pushed forward because they believed in what they were doing. They left their bones here. This should be commemorated. Great politics is one thing, Stalin, Bierut; to me it was about soldiers. They deserved this monument (Kroh, 2016, p. 151).

Importantly, local authorities were invited to the unveiling of the monument, as well as representatives from Czechoslovakia and the USSR, the management of the Military Museum in Svidnik, and the Museum of the Brotherhood of Arms in Dukla, the purpose of which was to give the ceremony an international status (Drozd, 2023 b; Kroh, 2016; Bata, 2002). It was also planned to send an invitation to the Polish–Soviet Friendship Society for the opening ceremony, but the letter itself was not sent because the state authorities began the process of fighting the monument (Bata, 2002).

Veterans from both Poland and the USSR, Czechoslovakia and the local Polish–Soviet Friendship Society were involved in the work on the monument. Former soldiers from Slovakia donated granite plaques with inscriptions in Russian, Polish and Slovak (Kroh, 1985; Kroh, 2016; Kroh, 2018; also cf. information on the making of the plaques by the museum in Svidnik. Bata, 2002). Only the damaged plaques remain to this day (Kroh, 1985; Kroh, 2016; Kroh, 2018; cf. photo of plaque from blown-up monument Gocz, 2018; Bata, 2002). What the monument looked like can be reconstructed based on surviving photos or a painting by Teodor Kuziak, *Pomnik Żołnierzy Armii Radzieckiej w Zyndranowej* [*Monument to Soviet Army Soldiers in Zyndranowa*] from 1983 (Kroh, 1985; Kroh, 2016; Kroh, 2018; Bata, 2002).

The monument was to be unveiled on October 6, 1976, on the anniversary of the liberation of Zyndranowa (Kroh, 2016; Drozd, 2023 a; Czubaj-Kuźmin, 2011; Szumielewicz, 2000; Bata, 2002). As in a statement by Teodor/Fedor Gocz quoted by Sylwia Czubaj-Kuźmin:

> The monument was erected by Lemkos from Zyndranowa because their countrymen were killed in the Red Army … The monument was about 1.5m x 2m … it had the shape of a pedestal, topped with a five-pointed star made of mortar shell casings. It was made of stones, helmets and shell casings found on the battlefield of the Dukla Pass (Czubaj-Kuźmin, 2011, p. 165; Szumielewicz, 2000; Kroh, 2016; Brej, 2018).

A barrel ran across the monument to which a star was attached (Kroh, 2016; cf. more extensively photos documenting the construction of the monument. Gocz, 2018). The monument was the work of Lemko soldiers who participated in the Dukla operation: Józef Madzik from Bartne, a Polish Army sapper, Teodor Kuziak, a former Red Army soldier, with the cooperation of former partisans – Paweł Jurkowski and Petro Kohut from Zyndranowa (Szumielewicz, 2000; cf. Kroh, 2016).

The monument was decorated with inscriptions on plaques in Polish, Slovak and Russian: "Eternal glory to the fallen heroes of October 6, 1944-1945. Lemkos 1975" (Kroh, 2016; Drozd, 2023 a, p. 235). The obelisk was decorated not only with a five-pointed star but also with five disarmed mortar shells. The same shells were also embedded in the monument itself (Drozd, 2023 a; Gocz, 2018; Szumielewicz, 2000). As Roman Drozd points out, the authorities reacted strongly. This was also influenced by the appearance of a Czechoslovak television journalist from Košice (Szumielewicz, 2000). The head of the City and Municipality of Dukla ordered the demolition of the monument on October 4 because it did not have the relevant permits, which was only a ploy as the monument was located on private land and no relevant permits were needed for its construction (Drozd, 2023 a; Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002). The next document already made it clear who was to carry out its demolition: the Bieszczady Brigade of Border Protection Forces from Przemyśl. The reasoning was also changed – this time the reason was not permits, but danger posed by the monument, due to the placement of shells and grenades. This charge was serious, and it could have been extended to illegal possession of weapons by Gocz (Drozd, 2023 a; cf. Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002). A special military commission headed by sappers ruled, according to a previously formulated thesis by the authorities, that the monument posed a danger because it contained 100 pieces of unexploded ammunition: mortar shells, artillery shells, and F1 grenades (Kroh, 2016; Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002). Gocz's explanation that all the embedded shells were disarmed, had no fuses, and were hollow inside (Kroh, 2016; Bata, 2002) did not help.

It should be noted that a delegation from the Regional Museum in Krosno came to check whether the Zyndranowa facility was operating in accordance with regulations. Further, the Building Department of Krosno ruled that the monument was not integrated into the landscape, and did not constitute a whole with the

surroundings (Kroh, 2016; Szumielewicz, 2000). Artur Bata cites documents in his book on the history of the Zyndranowa monument:

> Protocol for the evaluation of the artistic and architectural value of the monument in Zyndranowa, dated October 5, 1976, states that: the Artistic Commission of the Department of Culture and Art of the Provincial Office, dated October 5, 1976 [...] , concluded that the completed monument intended to symbolize Polish-Soviet friendship did not meet the requirements due to low artistic criteria in artistic terms and architecture. The composition of the monument and the materials used are a conglomeration of random elements and formally do not constitute an artistic statement. The monument does not merge with its surroundings and interferes with the perception of the landscape. Situated on the same property, the object made of stone and military elements is also of no artistic value. The commission is proposing to dismantle the aforementioned objects (Bata, 2002, p. 16).

There were also objections from one of the officers regarding the inscription. He believed that the word "sława" does not appear in Polish and should be replaced with "chwała" (Kroh, 2016; Czubaj-Kuźmin, 2011; Szumielewicz, 2000). On October 5, 1976, a day before the scheduled opening, the People's Militia fenced off the area where the monument was located, and attention to unexploded ordnance sign was erected. Teodor/Fedor Gocz was banned from entering the fenced-off area (Kroh, 2016; Szumielewicz, 2000; cf. photo of monument with attention to "unexploded munitions" sign, Kroh, 2016; Bata, 2002).

The authorities, in order to prevent the public opening, decided to demolish the monument. It was blown up by sappers from Dębica on December 1, 1976. The explosion was so powerful that it damaged the Gocz family's house and the plating of the museum buildings (cf. the description of the actions taken by Mr. Gocz after the monument was blown up contained in the Security Office report *18 XI 1977 Plan działań operacyjnych w sprawie operacyjnej krypt. "Pomnik" dotyczącej Teodora Gocza, działacza społecznego z Podkarpacia, sporządzony w Sekcji II Wydziału III KWMO w Krośnie* in Słabig, 2016; Kryciński, 2021; also cf. memories of neighbors of the Gocz family describing the blowing up of the monument in Bata, 2002). In addition to

destroying the monument, the authorities confiscated militaria from the museum's collection (Drozd, 2023 a; Drozd, 2023, b; Kaczyński, 2018; cf. photos documenting the blown-up monument, Gocz, 2018). The authorities also began judicial harassment of Gocz by charging him with penalties for allegedly misappropriating concrete barriers that were used to build the monument (Drozd, 2023 a; Wielocha, 2018; Bata, 2002). The author and originator of the monument explained the authorities' action by nationality considerations and the state's policy towards the Lemko population. Arguably, the citizens' initiative itself also contributed to this, after all, it was the communist government that was supposed to have a monopoly on historical policy and the commemoration of the past (Drozd, 2023 a; Szumielewicz, 2000). Roman Drozd points out another reason:

> In fact, the monument discredited both the local and central authorities. Thirty years after the Battle of the Dukla Pass, the unburied remains of soldiers could still be found on the battlefield. This meant that the authorities had not done everything possible to inspect the site thoroughly and to bury the remains with dignity (Drozd, 2023 a, p. 237).

There was also the aspect of security, not demining the area, and international overtones because the Museum Council tried to invite guests from the USSR and Czechoslovakia. With this, some researchers also explain the use of as much as 24 kg of TNT to destroy the monument so as to obliterate traces of the burial of the soldiers (Drozd, 2023 a; Kroh, 2016; Brej, 2018). There have even been unsubstantiated allegations that the monument was dedicated to the OUN as well (Gocz, 2017; Gocz, 2018).

These actions were counterproductive; instead of obliterating traces of the site, they made it famous both within the country and abroad (Bata, 2002). For these reasons, the Security Office in Krosno took measures to prevent too much publicity for the museum in connection with the destruction of the monument, and a special operational plan was formulated with the code name "Monument" (Drozd, 2023 a; Drozd, 2023 b; *18 XI 1977 Plan działań operacyjnych w sprawie operacyjnej krypt. "Pomnik" dotyczącej Teodora Gocza, działacza społecznego z Podkarpacia, sporządzony w Sekcji II Wydziału III KWMO w Krośnie* in Słabig, 2016).

The Security Office efforts can be inscribed in a broader trend of actions taken to liquidate the museum itself, which was salt in the eyes of the authorities because it not only documented the Battle of the Dukla Pass but, above all, reminded of the misfortune of the Lemko population displaced as part of the "Vistula" action (Drozd, 2023a). Hence the projects to dislocate the collection (a plan since the 1970s) to museums in Rzeszów and Łańcut (Drozd, 2023 a; Drozd, 2023b). "We can assume that the central authorities treated the museum as a lesser evil. Unlike the local authorities, who were inclined to liquidate it, as its existence only created problems for them. However, the functioning and protection of the museum may have been aided by the fact that Mr Gocz was a secret collaborator of the Security Office, with the alias Pietrek" (Drozd, 2023b, p. 17; this collaboration, according to Gocz, was a way to protect his facility from liquidation cf. Drozd, 2023 a). Gocz, noted, as the creator of the museum, that it was more difficult for the authorities to liquidate a facility that had an exhibition commemorating the Battle of the Dukla Pass (Drozd, 2023a; Wielocha, 2018).

The history of the unique monument in Zyndranowa did not end with the memorable year of 1976 (cf. more extensively the documents overturning the decisions of the communist Poland's prosecutor's office on the Bata monument, 2002). After the political transformation, a delegation of sappers from Military Unit 2265 from Dębica came to the Gocz family to apologize for the destruction of the monument. As the officers stressed, they had no influence on the political decision of the authorities. The head of the museum, understanding the situation in which the soldiers were, stated that the monument should be rebuilt, which was done with the help of the Polish Army. Implementation of this 1990s' declaration came to wait until 2004 when an obelisk was unveiled on October 5, located on the site of the monument destroyed in 1976 (Bata, 2002).

The event was unprecedented: in the post-1989 era, a monument was erected to commemorate the Red Army. This second monument at the museum has an inscription in three languages: "Eternal Memory to Fallen Heroes in the Carpathians 1944-1945 Dukla-Svidník-Zyndranowa 2004". Again, in creating the monument, elements of armaments were used: soldiers' helmets, bullet fragments, and

a piece of track from a T-34 tank was embedded in front of the monument (Kroh, 2016; Bata, 2002; cf. photos of the monument from its unveiling and dedication ceremony in Gocz, 2018). A ceremony to unveil the monument was held on October 5, 2004 (Brej, 2018). The monument was erected thanks to the initiative of the Army commander, Lieutenant-General Edward Pietrzak and the mayor of the Dukla municipality, Marek Górak, with activists from the Council of the Zyndranowa Museum Society (Brej, 2018; Bata, 2002).

It is worth noting that there is another monument/grave commemorating the fallen tankmen of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in Zyndranowa. It is a memorial site for four soldiers. Fragments of a tank were placed on a commemorative obelisk (*Zyndranowa. Leśna mogiła czołgistów; Zyndranowa – mogiła czołgistów czechosłowackich*).

The monuments erected in Zyndranowa commemorating the Dukla operation remain in the shadow of the elaborate installation consisting of entire vehicles that can be viewed in the so-called Valley of Death on the Slovakian side. Traversing the aforementioned valley, one can see T-34/85 tanks placed on mountainsides and around village buildings. The installation is meant to produce a sense of dynamism. The most famous part of the outdoor exhibit in the Valley of Death is a monument showing the ramming of a German tank by a Soviet vehicle. The monument commemorates the Dukla Operation and the battles around Svidník fought from September 8, 1944 to October 28, 1944. The monument was unveiled in 1959 to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the operation. It shows a German PzKpfw IV tank being crashed into by a Soviet T-34/85 tank. This arrangement of vehicles is meant to reflect the extremely difficult combat conditions and fierce clashes in the Valley of Death on October 25–27, 1944 (Document No. VHÚ-37-49/2023; Šteiner, 2020; Kadlec, Lichner, Mihálik, Turza, Purdek, 2009).

St. John's Cathedral in Warsaw is the most famous of the monuments built on the basis of tank fragments found in Poland. A fragment of a track was embedded in the wall, bearing an erroneous plaque stating that it was a fragment of a Goliath tank that damaged part of the cathedral (in fact, a part of another vehicle known as the Borgward B IV was embedded, *Katedra w ogniu*; *Gąsienica niemieckiego czołgu na murze katedry św. Jana w Warszawie*).

In the above review of monuments created using fragments of armored weapons, it would be appropriate to draw attention to issues that go beyond the bosom of the above sketch. The idea was to use pieces of military equipment decorating the necropolises. Thus, the cemetery of Red Army soldiers in Bielsko-Biała 9 Cybinka can be recalled (https://www.bielsko24.eu/cmentarz-zolnierzy-radzieckich/), decorated with a cannon placed on a pedestal (Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 536), the cemetery in Kalisz (also cf. discussion regarding the removal of cannons from the cemetery, Kubiak, 2017), the cemetery in Rabka Zdrój (cf. discussion regarding plans to remove cannons from the cemetery. Bafia, 2022), and the cemetery in Wolsztyn with two 76 mm ZiS cannons (Krawczyk, 2021), on top of the cemetery of soldiers of the Second Polish Army in Zgorzelec (Burdosz, 2015). In Łososina Górna, the monument to the Legionnaires was decorated with two cannons, which are not only of Soviet manufacture but were also used during World War II (*Łososina Górna. Eksploratorzy. Forum Zbuntowanych Poszukiwaczy*; *Łososina Górna i jej atrakcje*). In addition, examples of armored weapons displays in open-air weapons exhibitions deserve separate attention. Such projects were carried out in the People's Republic of Poland under the then historical policy of the People's Polish Army (Sahaj, 2018; Simiński, 2013; Migdalski, 2013; Zielak, 1979; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986; Leszkowicz, 2022).

There are numerous monuments created on the basis of military equipment used during the First and Second World Wars in Poland. These include "monuments of gratitude" from the communist era, as well as the shrines and crosses so present in the landscape of the Krakow-Czestochowa Jurassic Highlands, which were created from so-called "shrapnel glasses" from World War I (Szymborski, 2022). A special armored trail has even been marked out in the Morawica municipality in the footsteps of the shrines created from the remnants of the armored battle of World War II (*Szlak Pancerny*; cf. the cross in Nieradowo from a tank barrel: *Nieradowo. Krzyż przydrożny z lufy niemieckiego czołgu*; also cf. references to a unique monument located in Jaciążek: a cross made of artillery shell casings contains the ashes of Poles murdered by the Germans in the Pomiechówek camp; in Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz,

1986, 337; *Jaciążek. Krzyż przydrożny z łusek armatnich*). To summarize this brief overview of tank monuments and monuments created from parts of weapons, it should be noted that the monuments erected after 1945 played a very important propaganda role. Using a recurring motif – a tank on a pedestal – the state authorities made these monuments a recognizable part of the landscape. They were so important from the point of view of the authorities at the time that they even appeared on postcards. And so, the city of Żory issuing a postcard with a view of the city next to fragments of the market and a housing estate, showed a tank monument to the brotherhood of arms. A similar view can be seen on a postcard from Pruszków, where a tank monument commemorating the People's Polish Army was placed next to the city park, a 19th century palace and apartment buildings. Postcards were also issued with a T-34 tank from Westerplatte, or a card showing the Siekierki war cemetery and tank monument next to the Polish Army Museum. Monuments of gratitude and monuments to brotherhood played an important role in the propaganda of the time, and it should come as no surprise that after 1989 some of them were removed. However, on many occasions the city authorities or residents have made efforts to ensure that the "tank monument" remains, only efforts have been made to remove the blatant communist symbolism. The monuments from Kasina Wielka and Zyndranowa significantly deviate from the classic monuments of gratitude or brotherhood of arms. In both of these cases, the huge role of local communities that determined the creation of these works is evident. With regard to Kasina Wielka, the form was given by an artist; in Zyndranowa, it was a work built by former soldiers and those wishing to commemorate World War II events. The case of Kasina Wielka deserves special attention because it commemorates the events of the 1939 campaign, while the other monuments represent events related to the encroachment of the Red Army. For these reasons and because of the very interesting artistic form created on the basis of the tank turret, the monument commemorating the soldiers of the 24th Cavalry Regiment deserves special attention.

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2. Gdańsk-Westerplatte – two versions
3. Pruszków
4. Siekierki
5. Żory

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Table 1
List of "Monuments of Gratitude" to the Red Army Made from Military Equipment in Poland

No.	Localization:	What it commemorates (as in: Czarnecka, 2015):	Military equipment used:	Bibliography:
1	Baligród	Tank monument to "liberators", erected at soldiers' graves	Initially a T-70 tank then the T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 4; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
2	Białystok	Białystok's "liberator" tank-monument	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 17; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 60; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
3	Brzeziny	"Monument of gratitude" to the Red Army	2 T-34 tanks later transferred to the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw in 1992	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 35
4	Czarnków	Red Army soldiers' memorial tank at military cemetery	T-34 tank was restored and moved elsewhere	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 66; Konecka-Szydłowska, Kulczyńska, 2012; also cf. Grygorowicz-Kosakowska, 2012; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 341; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok

5	Częstochowa	Tank monument	T-34 tank, dismantled in 1990	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 70; Hyszko, 2016; Czarnecka, 2013 a
6	Drawsko-Pomorskie	Red Army soldiers' memorial at the location of the original temporary Soviet military cemetery	T-34 tanks flanking the pedestal as a symbol of the Red Army and Polish Army brotherhood	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 90; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
7	Dubienka	Tank commemorating crossing of the Bug river by the Red Army and Polish Army	T-34/85 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 92; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 98; Leszkowicz, 2022, 349-350; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
8	Elbląg	Tank monument – memorial to victory over fascism	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 98; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 123; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
9	Gdańsk	Tank monument to Red Army soldiers	T-34/85 tank, dismantled in 1992/93. T-34 tank announced as a memorial to the Tank-men of the Heroes of Westerplatte, replacement of an American M4A2(76) tank gifted to the USSR as part of the lend-lease program (Cf. Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 131, 133; cf. https://gdansk.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=POMNIK-CZO%C5%8	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 102; Czarnecka, 2013 b; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 131; Leszkowicz, 2022, 355

10	Gliwice	Tank monument, commemorating Soviet and Polish soldiers, as a memorial to one of the first tanks that entered the city	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 105; Czarnecka, 2013 a; Ochmański, 2011; also cf. Domański, Murzyn-Kupisz, 2021
11	Głogów	Red Army soldiers monument/victory monument	The sides of the monument were decorated with light cannons (russian 76 mm model 1927) from the battle for the city	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 108
12	Grabownica Starzeńska	Red Army memorial	A Russian cannon ZiS-3 was placed under the arch of the monument	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 125
13	Grudziądz	“Monument of gratitude” to the Red Army	A cannon was placed next to the monument	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 132
14	Hajnówka	Tank monument to Red Army soldiers and officers	T-34 tank; in 1991 sold first to a farmer then to a doctor, who placed it by the Pisz-Szczuczyn road	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 135; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 62
15	Iława	Soviet soldiers’ memorial	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 138
16	Kielce	“Monument of gratitude” to the Red Army	Initially there were two cannons (2×45 mm model 1937 53-K) at the monument, with their barrels aimed at the building of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR)	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 164

17	Kłodawa	"Monument of gratitude to the Red Army placed on a soldiers' grave	The barrel of a tank wrecked in this city on a concrete slab	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 169
18	Krzeczów	Cannon tank commemorating the Red Army	A 76 mm cannon on pedestal	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 198; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 424
19	Kunowice	Monument to Red Army soldiers, on the site of a makeshift military cemetery	Initially an ISU-122 SPG, replaced by T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 203; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
20	Lębork	Tank monument to Polish Army and Red Army soldiers	IS-2 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 213; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 439
21	Lubrza	Monument to Red Army soldiers, on the site of a makeshift Soviet military cemetery	SU-76 SPG later transferred to the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, later a 76 mm cannon, then replaced by a PT-76 light tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 225; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
22	Malbork	"Monument of gratitude"	ISU-122 SPG	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 236
23	Neple	The tank that was first to cross the Bug River commemorates the Red Army and the 1st Armored Brigade of the LWP	T-34/85 tank; according to a plaque that has not survived, it was supposed to commemorate the entry of the Red Army (https://www.dziennikwschodni.pl/biala-podlaska/wojna-o-pomnik,n,1000057771.html)	http://www.polskaniezwykla.pl/web/place/44718,neple-pomnik-czolgu.html; https://www.dziennikwschodni.pl/biala-podlaska/wojna-o-pomnik,n,1000057771.html

24	Nowa Dęba	Tank monument to Red Army	Tank, dismantled in 1990	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 258
25	Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą	Monument to Polish Army and Red Army soldiers	T-34 tank, dismantled in 1993	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 262
26	Piła	“Monument of gratitude” to the Red Army	Plane (LiM-2) adorned pedestal of monument, dismantled in late 1980s	Czarnecka, 2015, 110, Annex 455; https://gdansk.fotopolska.eu/Pila/b2271,Pomnik_Wdziecznosci.html?f=147690-foto – cf. on the Yak-1 plane location
27	Poznań	Cemetery and monument to Red Army “heroes”	4 Russian howitzers surround the site.	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 302; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 369
28	Pyrzyce	Red Army tank monument	IS-2 tank, two 76 mm 1942 (ZiS-3) 1942 cannons nearby	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 319; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
29	Różan	Tank monument to Polish and Soviet soldiers, heroes of 1939 and 1944-45	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 333; Golon, 1996; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 324; https://to.com.pl/czolg-w-rozanie-zostanie/ar/6289720 (accessed: 15.09.2023); Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
30	Skierniewice	Tank monument to Red Army soldiers	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 348; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok

31	Sławno	Tank monument to Polish and Soviet soldiers	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 351; Siedem wieków, 2016; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
32	Ścinawa	Tank monument to Red Army soldiers	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 391; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 260; Wykaz obiektów upamiętniających żołnierzy i partyzantów sowieckich na terenie Polski stan na 2009 rok
33	Świdnica	Tank monument to Red Army soldiers, Red Army cemetery	Two anti-tank canons 76 mm 1942 (ZiS-3) adorn the cemetery gate	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 396; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 502
34	Świdwin	Monument (plane and boulder) to Polish and Soviet soldiers	Initially a MiG-19 aircraft then a MiG-17 PF.	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 398
35	Trzcianka	Tank monument to Red Army and Polish Army soldiers	T-34 tank; dismantled and scrapped in the 1990s.	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 410; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 341
36	Wągrowiec	Tank monument, on the site of a makeshift military burial site	T-34 tank, removed due to renovation in the 1950s.	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 430; https://wagrowiec.naszemiasto.pl/tych-obiektow-juz-nie-ma-w-wagrowcu-miasto-caly-czas-sie/ar/c7-8000959 (Accessed on 15.09.2023)
37	Wejherowo	Victory monument (tank)	T-34/85 tank, moved to a park in 2009	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 431; Czubryt-Borkowski, Michasiewicz, 1986, 138

38	Wiśniew	Monument to the tank that first liberated Wiśniew	T-34 tank	http://www.polskaniezwykla.pl/web/place/46319,wisniew-czolg-pomnik.html#google_vignette https://warszawa.naszemiasto.pl/czolg-t-34-wrocil-do-podsiedleckiej-wsi-wisniew/ar/c8-6549731 https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,34860,1233793.html
39	Wołomin	Tank monument to Polish and Soviet soldiers	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 448
40	Zyndranowa	Monument to fallen Red Army soldiers bearing the inscription *Eternal glory to the fallen heroes 06.10.1944-1945. Lemkos 1975*	Monument constructed of helmets, shells, mortar shells	Cf. main text.
41	Żory	Monument to the brotherhood of arms	T-34 tank	Czarnecka, 2015, Annex 475; https://zory.naszemiasto.pl/zory-czolg-byl-kiedys-wizytowka-naszego-miasta-zdjecia/ar/c4-1051009

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"Thanks to the Soviet Union": Testimony of Czechoslovak Architecture from 1948–1989

Abstract

The article focuses on the radical shift in Czechoslovak culture after World War II, characterized by an ostentatious approval of the Soviet Union, which was reflected in all areas of public life. Interesting testimony of the Sovietization of Czechoslovak culture from 1948 to 1989 is provided by architecture. Initially, it is characterized by historicism, argumentatively supported by the doctrine of socialist realism, and from the late 1950s, a moderated modern style, serving the same representative function (metro, hotels, monuments).

Keywords

Czechoslovakia, architecture, urbanism, Bolshevism, socialist realism, modernism.

1918–1945: Czechoslovakia between East and West

From his jealously guarded solitude of a lone wolf, Vladimír Holan sends to the Czech reader this poetically expressive and passionate thanksgiving

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to the Soviet Union: as proof that he is, if not in body, at least in heart and poetic sensibility, right in the midst of our hustle and bustle, general events, and enthusiasm. This is how prominent critic, notable Romanist, and professor at Charles University Václav Černý (1905–1987) began his commentary on Vladimír Holan's poetic composition *Dík Sovětskému svazu* [Thanks to the Soviet Union], published in print in the summer of 1945 immediately after the end of World War II. Černý was not concerned with the poetic qualities of the composition, its literary values, but rather highlighted the poet's value shift: *For this moment, the Scornful in the crowds – meaning Holan – believed: those one hundred and fifty verses are a fervently trembling thanksgiving to the Soviet army for its salvific arrival.* (all quotes according to Černý, 1945, pp. 25–27) In other words, the poet – a loner, hitherto avoiding literary and social bustle, stepped out of his tusculum, from the closed world of subtle artistic and intellectual problems, to celebrate the liberators with pathetic nobility.

The value shift of the eminent Czech poet is here a striking – and welcome – symbol of the value shift of the entire Czech society, or its intellectual and artistic elites. Symbolically speaking, the West is henceforth replaced by the East. Regarding Vladimír Holan, Václav Černý, as a connoisseur of Romance literatures, hastily reminded of the roots of the poet's poetry:

> The expression of sympathies, which this composition is, is of a quite distinct nature and, I would say, unidirectional: eastward, Russia. And who can blame the poet? And who will not praise him for it? While it comes from the mouth of a poet who is – whether we like it or not – a typical Westerner: trained on French models, infused with the essence of Western culture (Černý, 1945, p. 25).

These are not criticisms, because "his song to Russia would not be what it is; I mean as successful as it is, were it not for the West" (Černý, 1945, p. 26). These words are not only a reminder of the artistic sources of Holan's poetry but also a confirmation of the repeatedly mentioned fact that Czech culture, from its medieval beginnings, is a culture of the European West. Figuratively speaking, the alternation of West to East, therefore – let us emphasize for now – does not concern the

very essence of artistic culture and its firm rooting in the Western tradition, but only the external, cultural-political orientation of Czechoslovakia and its society in the situation after the end of World War II. Thus, with the passage of time, the period of the so-called Third Czechoslovak Republic (1945–1948) appears: a time when it was possible to loudly agree with socialism, as contemporary programmatic texts by Václav Černý, indeed, provide sufficient proof, and even communism, but at the same time continue to follow cultural events in contemporary France, England, Spain, the USA, or the Scandinavian countries and find in them reliable sources of artistic inspiration and creative stimuli; to see in them the springs that have nourished Czech national culture at least since the mid-19th century, when its modern foundations were being formed. Nevertheless, this post-war value shift on the West-East axis is not only extraordinary and, from the perspective of looking into the not-so-distant past, surprising, but above all, in light of the events that will come in the years 1948–1949, ominously fateful.

But first, let’s shift our focus from 1945 to the events that took place twenty to twenty-five years earlier, in the final years of World War I. Reports coming from Russia during 1917–1918 depicted a fateful drama, the course of which was not entirely clear, and its phases and stages were reconstructed by journalists and reporters from fragments of random testimonies and not always reliable news. Nonetheless, it was evident that economically backward Russia was in indescribable chaos, deepened by bloody clashes of various power groups and competing factions, among which the Russian communists, the so-called Bolsheviks, were gaining decisive influence. German and British papers quoted Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937), later the first president of independent Czechoslovakia and a summoned expert on Russian issues, who attempted to shed light on the events. Masaryk’s pessimistic view of the Russian situation, however, was still a mild assessment (see Masaryk, 1917). “From the wild mix of reports,” reported the Prague Národní listy in January 1918, “the only certainty that emerges is that the proponents of the violent Bolshevik government indeed fulfilled their threat: when they realized that the decisive majority of the elected members of the constituent assembly stood sharply against Lenin and his entire

government, they dispersed it and caused bloodshed" (Masaryk, 1918, p. 1). The experience with the Russian events of 1917–1918, mediated by Czech and foreign newspapers, provoked fear of future developments, resonating throughout Central Europe except for the radical left, which found inspiration in Soviet Russia. It also managed to establish communist states in Bavaria, Hungary, southern Slovakia with part of Subcarpathian Rus in 1919, at the cost of executions, murders, and general chaos accompanying their rise and fall. "How far must we look", asks Jan Bartoš (1893–1946) in the essay *Russia and Europe*, "to recognize the nature of the shadows emerging here, and to understand the distant strange voices speaking here?" (Bartoš, 1919) Bartoš's literary inclination towards expressionism seemed to find in the Russian events a counterpart to the excited scenes dominating contemporary expressionist theater and simultaneously a justification for a pronounced artistic stance as a reflection of a restless, chaotic era. The prevailing opinions of the Czech intelligentsia were both more straightforward and more radically rejecting of the events in Soviet Russia, evoking fear, resistance, and horror across various layers of society, across the entire left-right political spectrum.

"Russia, in relation to its enormous size and population, was culturally almost entirely sterile. Europe gave almost nothing to it, and it owed everything to Western cultures. Even today's Russian Bolshevism is just an unthoughtful orthodox copy of the German idea, it is a reflection of the aggressiveness of the German spirit" (Dušek, 1926, p. 249). Thus wrote the distinctive Czech sociologist Jan Dušek (1897–1934) in his *Sociology*, which, although not positively evaluated by contemporary sociologists, his cited assessment of Russia captured the majority opinion of the Czech intellectual elite about the eastern empire. Dušek's view of contemporary Russia was not isolated; what was troubling about his approach was the directness with which he linked natural conditions to societal life, its manifestations, and ambitions. *Bolshevism*, writes Dušek elsewhere in his book,

> is a faithful manifestation of the Russian character, a faithful reflection of Russian life, the Russian plain. Destructive vengefulness, leprous uncontrollable hatred has seized the widest layers of the Russian people,

> it is characteristic of the lowland man. Likewise, that Bolshevik messianism, that naive conceit, that Bolshevism is the most suitable means for the salvation of all humanity, excellently characterizes the psychology of the lowland man (Dušek, 1926, p. 252).

While linking the mentality of a certain populace and the geomorphology of the territory it inhabits might be judged as contentious or simplistic, the very negative portrayal of Bolshevism accurately documents the resistance to it in interwar Czechoslovakia.

In this regard, it is necessary to recall that one of the political and cultural symbols of the Czechoslovak Republic were *the Czechoslovak legions*. This was the term for volunteers grouped in France, Italy, and especially in Russia; in Eastern Europe, they initially fought against the Austro-Hungarian and German armies, later in the Russian Civil War alongside the White Army against the Red Army in an effort to restore Tsarist Russia. The fight against Russian Bolsheviks thus became an integral part of the founding myth of Czechoslovakia. And at the same time, the fear of the spread of the Bolshevik revolution, or Bolshevism outside Russia, united clericals and socialists, representatives of the political right and moderate left, tradesmen, teachers, soldiers, writers, and labor leaders. This is evidenced by contemporary newspapers and informed journalism, and the seriousness of the situation is directly proportional to the need of contemporary intellectuals to grapple with events through independently published essays and reflections.

Among the contemporary commentators on events, let us at least recall Rudolf Vrba (1860–1939), a Catholic clergyman and publicist, who had a long-standing interest in Russia. Shortly after the end of World War I, Vrba wrote:

> The Bolsheviks destroyed everything that had life. Now everything is in ruins. The Russian nation is indeed cured of Bolshevism, but at the same time completely destroyed. [...] The Russian government is in the hands of criminals and madmen [...] Ivan the Terrible was an innocent boy compared to Trotsky and Lenin. How many millions of people were murdered by the Soviet government will be discovered only when Russia is freed from this government (Vrba, 1924, p. 196).

Significantly, these words are read in a publication issued in the year of Lenin's death, long before the tragic events that were yet to come, whether we think of the famine in the early thirties or the victims of political purges, the physical elimination of Russian intellectual elites, and – in a better case – the emigration of Russian artists and scientists, which already numbered between nine hundred thousand and two million people at the time of the publication of Vrba's book.

The establishment of Stalin's unlimited power in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s and the simultaneous rise of Adolf Hitler to power in Germany (1933) forced Central European states – political representatives, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens – to henceforth choose *between Scylla and Charybdis* – between two totalitarianisms: German and Soviet. A middle position between these extremes, despite efforts for objectivity, was unthinkable, as any inclination towards one pole provoked sharp criticism from the opposite side and vice versa. For example, the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance treaty of 1935, part of the defensive pact against the rising threat of war from Nazi Germany, was sharply condemned by clerical journalism in the Czech lands. "Many papers even write about a new White Mountain", Lidové noviny (1936, p. 1) commented in July 1936, "as the only just punishment for Czechoslovakia opening the gates of Bolshevism in Central Europe by concluding a military treaty with Soviet Russia". In the same year, the agrarian *Venkov* (1936, p. 1) published a speech by Milan Rastislav Štefánik to the Russian legions from early 1919, in which he stated:

> You must remain invincible enemies of Bolshevism. Bolshevism is the negation of democracy. (…) Bolshevism buys souls for benefits and forms parties of bandits and sectarians, democracy involves everyone in benefits rightfully. Bolshevism is decay, poverty, hunger. (…) Bolshevism is an enemy of humanity and must be fought against.

Among the influential contemporary discussions on communism, or Bolshevism, it is necessary to recall texts published in the review *Přítomnost*, edited by the prominent journalist and proponent of democratic journalism in interwar Czechoslovakia, Ferdinand Peroutka (1895–1978), representing valuable responses both to the

political events in Europe, including the Soviet Union, and to the ambivalent attitudes of communist parties towards the practices of Russian Bolsheviks.

At the end of the 1930s, it was evident that verbal attacks against the Soviet Union, Bolsheviks, and Bolshevism as such, conducted in contemporary journalism, had become an integral part of Nazi propaganda, merely masking Germany's imperial interests. In Peroutka's *Přítomnost*, we read, for example, this passage: "When Hitler said last year that he reserves the right to defend against Bolshevism everywhere where he feels threatened by it, he certainly did not exclude us (i.e., Czechoslovakia) and certainly thought that he alone – at the right moment, would define what and where Bolshevism is. He just still needed that right moment…" (Peroutka, 1937, p. 436) When German propaganda during World War II portrayed the Soviet Union as the realm of evil and the war as a justified fight against Bolshevism, undoubtedly many who would have agreed with the anti-communist rhetoric before the war now at least became more attentive (see Kuklík, 2000).

The unequivocally negative connotations of terms such as *communism, Bolshevism, the Red Army*, or *the Soviet Union* lost their intensity during the war years, and the extremely negative evaluation of the Soviet Union was replaced, especially with the approach of the Eastern Front in the spring of 1945, by an extreme opposite: increasingly loud approval of the Soviet Union. After May 1945, this approval of foreign Soviet policy was associated with gratitude for liberation from Nazi Germany, although it did not mean an increase in sympathies for communism as a distinct ideology. Criticism of post-war Bolshevism, or communism, was suppressed by justified fears, because those who opposed it in the pre-war period were now placed dangerously close to German Nazis and collaborators with the Nazi regime. Indeed, many were labeled collaborators after the war, and a number of them were indeed tried and convicted. One example among many: when the exile government signed the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance treaty in Moscow in December 1943, the *Czech League against Bolshevism* was established in January 1945 in Prague by order of the Protectorate authorities; it was formed by collaborators with the Nazi regime, but

prominent representatives of Czech intelligence were also forced to join. Some refused outright, others at least avoided membership, but even those who showed clear distance from the league found themselves among the ranks of collaborators after the end of World War II. This was the case with the distinguished historian and Charles University professor Josef Šusta (1874–1945), who responded to accusations of collaboration with suicide (see Ressler, 1947, pp. 152–155).

The value shift in the perception of the Soviet Union, which took place in the mid-1940s, was recalled in his memoirs, for example, by Czechoslovak politician Rudolf Bechyně (1881–1948): "Public opinion has overcome the fear of Bolshevism and sees in the Soviet Union an irreplaceable ally in the fight and perhaps even in peace", he wrote succinctly, clearly, and of course somewhat simplistically. The naivety of the writer's assessment of the Soviet Union and the motives of local communists – like the naivety of many in that excited time – is evidenced by the fact that on the same page of the cited memoirs, he writes about the "shameful Nazi lie of the massacre in the Katyn Forest". (Bechyně, 1948, p. 138.) In any case, Bechyně's testimony is just one of many, documenting the value shift from radical rejection of everything that arose in the Russian East to a one-sidedly enthusiastic, and therefore completely uncritical, approval of the Soviet present and, above all, the future of liberated Czechoslovakia in connection with the Soviet Union.

1945–1948: The Third Republic

During the years of the Third Czechoslovak Republic (1945–1948), the image of the Soviet Union in contemporary journalism was influenced by the pro-Soviet direction established by the post-war Czechoslovak government, which was supported by all political parties within the strongly reduced political spectrum determined by the system of controlled democracy, i.e., with the dominance of the Communist Party. Yet, even in this short period, there were voices that relativized the uncritical evaluation of everything that came from the Soviet side, as recalled by novelist and journalist Edvard Valenta (1901–1978) in a statement: "[the viewer] leaves the cinema disappointed that a particular Soviet film was unsuccessful, but is infuriated

to discover that an official voice calls this film excellent and labels critics of the opposite opinion as fools...” (Valenta, 1946, p. 1) Despite the Sovietization, the Western orientation remained decisive for the culture of the Third Republic, although officially, there was talk of the inspirational nature of the culture of Slavic nations led by the Soviet Union (see Starý, 1946, p. 4). This Western orientation is sufficiently evidenced by contemporary architecture and its theoretical and journalistic reflection. Its protagonists, although they identified with the Communist Party or at least with the ideas of socialism, remained the successors of the interwar avant-garde, which has its roots in Western Europe, particularly in France. Radical leftist architect Karel Janů (1910–1995) presented the future of Czechoslovak architecture in his book *Socialist Building* (1946) in a way that, while following the Soviet model, we would adopt the typification of construction production, but the resulting artistic expression would resemble the Western European architecture of Purism and Functionalism of the 1920s and 1930s. The thorough organization of society’s life based on a unified economic plan – including construction – indeed recalled Soviet practice developed in the 1920s and 1930s, but it must be understood primarily as a search for an effective tool to overcome the consequences of World War II, even at the cost of reducing the needs of the inhabitants to the essentials. The reconstruction of infrastructure, ensuring affordable housing and basic food supplies, was much more important for the Czechoslovak Republic and its political representation in the post-war years than supporting the individual needs and interests of citizens, but a similar reduction in political and public life themes was a necessity for all European countries, including Western democracies.

The term *socialism* was ubiquitous in the post-war years; the question remains, what was meant by it. For architect Karel Storch, for example, it was associated with the need to revive cooperatives. Architect Storch, together with architects František Jech and Hanuš Majer, developed a project for the Prague housing estate *Solidarita* (realized 1947–1949), inspired by Scandinavian cooperative construction. In the magazine *Architecture of the ČSR*, he presented the issue of healthy and affordable housing through examples from Norway, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, the USA, and the New West.

Alongside them, there were also sporadic examples from the Soviet Union (see Storch, 1947). For the readers of the magazine, this overview of different approaches was certainly important and intriguing, as was the report on post-war architecture in Great Britain, prepared by prominent interwar architect Jaromír Krejcar (1895–1950), who remained in London after the communist coup in 1948 (see Krejcar, 1947). Architects Ivan Šula (1903–1977), who in the 1930s published *Floor Plans and Constructions of American Houses*, and Jarmila Lisková (*1902), who was already interested in the issue of social housing in the 1930s, turned their attention to the public greenery of the British capital (Šula-Lisková, 1947). A generation-younger architect Lubor Lacina (1920–1998) focused on contemporary Swiss architecture (see Lacina, 1947). Landscape planning, to which urban planner Vladimír Zákrejs (1880–1948) was dedicated to before World War II, significantly influenced urban practice after the war, although none of the grand plans were implemented. Among the spectrum of raised topics, the Soviet Union and its architecture certainly had a place, but it cannot be said that it was unequivocally accepted. Prominent post-war Czechoslovak architect Jiří Štursa (1910–1995), who publicly expressed his leftist views since the 1930s, wrote about Soviet architecture (Štursa, 1947, p. 174): "The process of construction raises new questions, which – I am convinced – will bring Soviet architecture into closer contact with the views of foreign architects. For many reasons, a leading role in this respect may be reserved for architecture and architects from Czechoslovakia", which can be understood as latent criticism of Soviet architecture and simultaneously as an offer to cooperate with Czechoslovak architects who could effectively respond to the problems of Soviet construction. It is one of the paradoxes that among the photographs of architectural realizations from the Soviet Union, accompanying the "Soviet" issue of the magazine *Architektura ČSR* [Architecture of the Czechoslovakia], we find the famous Rannahotell in the Estonian resort of Pärnu, designed by the protagonist of Estonian Functionalism, Olev Siinmaa (1881–1948), who received education in Germany and with his concept of the hotel complex followed Scandinavian Modernism. When it came to reporting on developments in the Soviet Union, a factual tone prevailed, as characterizes the texts of architect Karel Hannauer

(1906–1966), a representative of pre-war Functionalism, who wrote about Soviet book production in *Architektura čsr* [Architecture of the Czechoslovakia]. However, anyone interested in architecture in the post-war years was much better informed about British or French architecture, which were presented in Prague at separate exhibitions. In the summer of 1947, there was an exhibition *British Cities of Tomorrow*, showing interesting British realizations in photographs, plans, and models. The exhibition, opened by the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Sir Lancelot Keny, was accompanied by a collection of specialist and popular science literature.

In post-war Czechoslovakia, Soviet art was primarily recalled with reference to the prominent figures of the Soviet avant-garde. For example, when architect Jiří Voženílek (1909–1986) contemplated how the concept of the linear city could be developed in post-war Czechoslovak conditions, he connected to Miljutin's Socgorod:

> Thus, during the construction of the industrial base of the Soviet Union during the first five-year plan [1929–1933], the idea of the linear city was born, incisively formulated by N. A. Miljutin in the publication Socgorod as the result of many planning attempts and studies. Miljutin's initiative plan put the relationship between work and living on a new basis without reminiscences of the traditional market-place – dwelling – workplace relation from the time of artisanal production, and we can rightly consider it the starting point of socialist settlement policy.

It should be emphasized that Nikolai Alexandrovich Miljutin (1889–1942) was one of the protagonists of the Soviet avant-garde, who lost his prominent position with the onset of Stalinization of Soviet culture in the 1930s, and his theoretical work *Socgorod* was already published in Czech translation in 1931. Voženílek thus only connected to the interest in radical transformation of the urban structure, developed by avant-garde architects in the interwar years, among which the industrial cities designed in various regions and countries for the Bata shoe company held a significant position.

The example of Jiří Voženílek demonstrates that for both architecture and urbanism, the collective term for the radical left in the culture of the interwar period was the avant-garde. It consisted

of connecting Czech and Slovak creators with Western countries and the protagonists of their artistic culture. Although the inter-war avant-garde in Czechoslovakia followed developments in the Soviet Union, the attempt to adopt Soviet *socialist realism* was far from as certain as the interpretation of the term that prevailed after 1948: in the mid-1930s, representatives of the leftist avant-garde and the communist intelligentsia in Czechoslovakia (Bedřich Václavek, Ladislav Novomeský, Karel Teige, Vítězslav Nezval, etc.) understood socialist realism broadly as a term encompassing various expressions of modern culture, including avant-garde and surrealism, and even after World War II, artists and theorists were willing to discuss the meaning of socialist realism, as evidenced by the case of the theorizing painter Otakar Mrkvička (1898–1957). Mrkvička considered Marc Chagall the "most Russian" painter, appreciated the simple folk nature of Henri Rousseau's works, and at the same time regarded socialist realism as *a mere wish*, which, according to him, was not fulfilled by the visual culture of the Stalinist epoch, which he condemned by exclaiming (Mrkvička, 1947, p. 5): "Is it possible to reach [comprehensibility] so lazily through the most banal convention?"

1948–1956: Sovietization of Architecture in Czechoslovakia

The Third Republic ended in February 1948 with the communists taking over political power in Czechoslovakia, guided by the political representation of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the political elite in Czechoslovakia quickly and ostentatiously shifted from a democratic form of socialism to Stalinism. A feature of the post-February development was radical Sovietization, manifested by harsh persecution of any, even suspected, opposition. Economic life was subject to Moscow's leadership and supervision by Soviet advisors. Russian became a compulsory foreign language taught in primary and secondary schools, and workers were taught the Russian language in evening courses. Already in a collage of texts written by state administration representatives, university teachers, writers, and working collectives, published by the Brno communist newspaper *Rovnost* on November 7, 1945, i.e., on the anniversary of the Great October Revolution in Russia, there were formulations that anticipated the future boundless,

uncritical admiration for the Land of the Soviets, as the Soviet Union was commonly referred to. Architect Bohuslav Fuchs, undoubtedly the most prominent figure of modern architecture in Moravia and Silesia in the interwar period, contributed a text that emphasized the idea that also interested him, namely, generous urban planning encompassing a broader area than a single urban unit. Compared to other writers, his enthusiasm was somewhat subdued; he merely factually stated the interest of Czechoslovak architects in developments in the Soviet Union and in the construction of residential complexes and economic complexes there (see Fuchs, 1945, p. 5). This was nothing new, as Karel Teige (1900–1951), a writer, journalist, and the most prominent theorist of the Czech avant-garde, had been urging attention to Soviet architecture since the late 1920s (see Teige, 1928, pp. 100–122). At that time, Teige had in mind exclusively avant-garde, constructivist architecture, represented, for example, by the works of Moisei Yakovlevich Ginzburg (1892–1946), both buildings and theoretical books and the magazine “Sovremennaja arkhitektura”, the first volume of which was published in 1926. He provided the Czech reader with an overview of architectural and urban planning work that had to be forgotten after 1948 because the Stalinization of public life changed the visual code of architecture from constructivism to neoclassicism. With this new doctrine, Czechoslovak architects had to ‘identify’ themselves, whether they wanted to or not.

The formal example firstly entered the Czech environment inconspicuously in the form of praise of the successes of Soviet science and culture. For instance, during the visit of Nikolai Vasilievich Tsitsin (1898–1980) to Prague in June 1945, it was recalled that Tsitsin was the director of the permanent agricultural exhibition in Moscow, later known as the Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy, about which the contemporary press wrote, “The architecture and decoration of the exhibition are the pinnacle of Soviet architectural and artistic skill.” (Cicin, 1945, p. 3) However, this was a mandatory appreciation of Soviet cultural specifics, which were not quite suitable for the Central European situation with its profoundly different cultural tradition.

The external, organizational aspect of the development of architecture and urbanism in Czechoslovakia was quickly completed in the

first years after February 1948: the subordination of the development of architecture and urbanism to the interests of the Communist Party, and the Union of Czechoslovak Visual Artists, had already integrated architects as creative artists in 1948. Simultaneously, *Stavoprojekt* was established as a unified design organization, with branches in the regions (the number of employees of this organization was around 1200). The form of architecture was given by a series of examples from Soviet urban construction beginning in the 1930s, with models provided by the exhibition Architecture of the Nations of the USSR, which took place in Prague in the spring of 1949. However, the acceptance of Stalinist architecture in Czechoslovakia was not straightforward. There were several reasons for this.

The North Bohemian mutation of the newspaper Mladá fronta brought news of a criticism of the work of architect Ivan Zholtovsky (1867–1959) made by the chairman of the architecture committee of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, architect G. A. Simonov. Simonov reproached Zholtovsky for "blindly adopting historical forms without considering whether these forms are capable of expressing the new lifestyle of Soviet cities today" (Simonov, 1948, p. 5). Czechoslovak architects surely found welcome support in such critical reactions for their own negative evaluation of Soviet architecture of recent decades, even though they never openly formulated them. The architects did not want to split from their own artistic convictions and ideas, especially when they had been internationally recognized for their creative results to date. Architect Colin Penn began his contemplation of the further development of urban planning in Great Britain with the statement: "It is a great pleasure for me to express myself to the architects and planners of Czechoslovakia, who enjoyed such a significant position in the international professional world before the war…" (Penn, 1947, p. 85) And in the same year that Penn published his text, the Czechoslovak exposition at the International Exhibition of Urbanism and Housing in Paris received the Grand Prix (see Úspěchy…, 1947). Czechoslovak architects were also pleased that the post-war development would finally fulfill their long-held desire, expressed by Julius Wein in the words: "Advancing industrialization [of construction] will eliminate from construction and interior design forms that are accidental,

playful, unique, with an individual expression, corresponding to handcrafted production", meaning the exact opposite of what was now, from the spring of 1949, demanded of Czechoslovak architects: to multiply the schemas of Stalinist architecture.

This change was brought about by the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in May 1949, where one of the main communist ideologues, Václav Kopecký, spoke about socialist realism as the doctrine to which all artistic creation in Czechoslovakia was subordinated. Kopecký then declared: "Socialist realism will create art that will overshadow all the great art of past times" (Kopecký, 1949, p. 386). This meant a 180-degree turn: a turn towards historicism, originating in Russian imperial architecture and urbanism from the era of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, or alternatively to Italian Renaissance and French Baroque, which provided influential models for Russian architecture of the 17th-18th centuries. Arbitrator of this change was Jiří Kroha, an outstanding Czech architect and urbanist, who enriched the architecture of the 1920s and 1930s with a series of original works. From a sworn avant-gardist, he became a supporter of Stalinist architecture.

> The interest that our architects showed in functionalist architecture in the Soviet Union in the first years of construction of the Soviet Union cooled almost overnight when it was abolished and the path to socialist realism was embarked upon in Soviet architectural work." The key point was that "in the Soviet Union there was a sharp rejection of avant-garde architectural work, which directly or indirectly wanted or had to impose on the Soviet people various parts and forms of the lifestyle of capitalist nations (Kroha, 1949, pp. 66–67).

A mandatory part of contemporary rhetoric was devotion to Soviet leadership: "The work of the genius teacher of all workers, Comrade J. V. Stalin", wrote architect Václav Hilský in 1951 (Hilský, 1953, p. 64), "is an inexhaustible well of lessons and advice for our work. It is like a compass that will lead us the right way to our goal". Devotion to the Soviet Union and its representatives, and enthusiasm for everything Soviet, was associated with so-called self-criticism, where creative workers themselves publicly confessed that they had been mistaken

and the Soviet Union had opened their eyes. Jiří Kroha, rightly considered a major figure in Czechoslovak avant-garde, is just such a case. Where self-criticism was not enough, radical, devastating criticism served the purpose, culminating in 1950 in a sharp critique of Karel Teige by the ideologue Ladislav Štoll (1902–1981). Štoll was followed by Antonín Černý, Jan Hlavsa, and Jiří Klen, who stated in their report (Černý–Hlavsa–Klen, 1950, p. 520):

> Karel Teige caused considerable damage to our architecture. He led a number of architects [...] down the wrong path. An example of their harmful influence can be the career of architect Jaromír Krejcar, who ended up as an enemy of the Soviet Union and after February 1948 crossed over to the camp of criminal emigration.

Add that Karel Teige ended his life by suicide on October 1, 1951...

The ideal of Stalinist architecture presented to Czechoslovak architects in the magazine *Architektura čsr* was the skyscraper on Smolensk Square from 1948–1953 by Vladimir G. Gelfreich and Mikhail A. Minkus, which now houses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation [fig. 1]. V. Kusakov, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Architecture at the Council of Ministers of the USSR, stated about this type of high-rise building that

> the construction of these buildings will be carried out based on entirely new principles, previously unknown to world architecture in urban construction," where they "will be freestanding buildings, bathed in streams of light from all sides, their architecture joyfully and boldly soaring upwards (Kusakov, 1949, p. 75).

Without specific examples, we would conclude from the description that the writer had in mind Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* with 18 skyscrapers proposed to create a new center of Paris. The floor plans of Corbusier's buildings had the shape of a Greek cross; Soviet skyscrapers differed in a more complex floor plan, but it was also symmetrically composed. And most importantly, they had one substantial difference: the mass took on a ziggurat-like character, i.e., the mass set on the base mass was slightly narrower, and this

was continued upwards. The result, therefore, did not differ from American skyscrapers, which had numerous elements of historicizing morphology in the first third of the 20th century. It is striking how the Soviet Union, with Stalinist skyscrapers, followed the American example; it sought to create a counterpart to American architecture, or the position represented by the completion of the New York City Hall, known as the Manhattan Municipal Building from 1909–1914 [fig. 2]. This "Manhattanization" of Soviet cities aimed to create a visually attractive symbol of political reality, and if it spread to the territory of Soviet satellites – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other people's democratic, or socialist countries, it would visually express political subordination to Moscow. It would fulfill a similar function to that of Greek architectural forms deep in the Asian continent during the time of Alexander the Great (4th century BC), where they declared the Hellenization of the territory. Similarly, urban-architectural forms of ancient Rome symbolically expressed for Central Europe or the British Isles the belonging of the territory to the Roman Empire.

The construction of each skyscraper is, however, specifically demanding in terms of organization and finance. The only instance of the described type of building realized in Czechoslovakia was thus the Hotel Internacional in Prague-Dejvice (1952–1956, see Stroch, 1957, pp. 465–475), the work of designers led by architect František Jeřábek [fig. 3]. The ziggurat-like composition of the central part was complemented by equally-voluminous horizontally-conceived masses on the sides. Where Soviet buildings abounded in stone elements, the Prague building had to limit itself to sgraffito. The interiors stood out for their cultivated design of doors and stair railings, complemented by artworks. Much more than the expression of a single realized building, contemporary journalistic reactions turned to the Soviet Union: the anthology Construction of Socialist Moscow (Prague 1952) featured a photograph of one of the tower-like skyscrapers on its cover, to which contemporary commentators reacted in an attempt to capture their symbolism. For instance, Zdeněk Lakomý (1914–1995), a contemporary promoter of socialist realism architecture and theory, wrote (Lakomý, 1951, p. 313):

> Soviet architects demonstrate the highest creative mastery, using the most advanced construction techniques in the world, in high-rise buildings in Moscow, where the unity of grandiose solutions for urban complexes, urban plans, and artistic design of individual buildings and their groups create magnificent symphonies expressing the greatness and beauty of socialist ideas.

This socialist utopia, however, had no chance of success in Czechoslovak reality. All the more so, socialist realism was enforced in residential complexes, and it was best suited for regions with proposed development of heavy industry – in Slovakia, it was the city of Nová Dubnica, whose construction began in 1951 according to a project by Jiří Kroha, intended to provide accommodation for workers from the armory in nearby Dubnica nad Váhom; in northwestern Bohemia, residential complexes in Horní Slavkov and Ostrov nad Ohří; in central Bohemia in Příbram; in Moravia, residential complexes in Brno, Přerov, or Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, and especially in the Ostrava region. In 1951, a proclamation was issued calling on *Visual Artists to Fight for the Construction of New Ostrava* (Výtvarní umělci do boje za vybudování Nové Ostravy), anticipating design work led by Vladimír Meduna: the new socialist city of Poruba, proposed for 150,000 inhabitants, was to rise along a long boulevard, dominated by a huge statue of Josef Vissarionovich Stalin. The composition of the districts was dictated by lessons from Soviet urbanism, which was aided by the publication of a Czech translation of a work by historian of architecture Andrei Vladimirovich Bunin (1905–1977) and Maria Grigoryevna Kruglova, published in 1940. The rich concentrated material from the history of European and American architecture was to serve as a lesson for architects and urban planners, who were not formulating one task but transforming the entire settlement structure according to a unified artistic plan. In the year of the publication's release, pivotal events occurred: the death of Josef Vissarionovich Stalin (and in Czechoslovakia the death of President Klement Gottwald) in March 1953 marked significant political changes, symbolized by the new Soviet leader Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev.

Devotion to the Soviet Union continued in the years 1954–1956, i.e., until the xx. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union critically evaluated the Stalinist era and condemned it as the so-called cult of personality. Some architects strongly agreed with Soviet and reported on this in their study trips, as was the case with prominent art historian Jaromír Neumann (1924–2001), who visited the Soviet Union as part of a delegation of the Union of Czechoslovak Visual Artists. The reporter appreciated the *strong impression* of the entire trip, repeatedly speaking of *audacity*, especially *grandiose unprecedented buildings*, meaning Stalinist skyscrapers, expressed *joyful feelings*, the buildings are according to him *breathtaking, beautiful, impressive*, but also *magnificent, joyful, encouraging*, and as for the metro, it is downright *admirable* (see Neumann, 1954, pp. 46–58) In 1957, the magazine *Architektura čsr* dedicated a separate issue to Soviet architecture [fig. 4]. D. G. Khodzhayev wrote the introductory text for this issue, in which he wrote about the avant-garde of the 1920s that "the 1920s brought as a positive aspect the freshness and audacity of ideas, creative flight, and the denial of all old dogmas", while condemning Stalinist-era historicism, noting that "imitation [of antiquity, Renaissance, and Russian Empire] in contemporary times is anachronism", and highlighted the Soviet pavilion prepared for the EXPO exhibition in 1958 in Brussels as interesting (see Chodžajev, 1957, pp. 513–516). The pavilion received the form of a large glass prism with smooth, fully glazed surfaces, with a staircase in front and a slightly convex-shaped roof, thus standing in direct contrast to the works of socialist realism of the Stalinist era. The EXPO exhibition in Brussels, attended by 52 countries, including the USA and the Soviet Union, and visited by 42 million people, was a triumph for Czechoslovakia: following the functionalist-constructivist architecture of the interwar period and applying new technical and construction procedures in the realization of the building and in the artistic component of the interiors, it was declared the best of the entire exhibition.

1969–1989: Architecture of the Normalization Period

The decade between the Brussels EXPO (1968) and the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces (1968) is considered one of the happiest for the development of artistic culture and public life in Czechoslovakia. Although the slogan *"With the Soviet Union for eternity*

and never otherwise" did not lose its significance during this time and was repeatedly reminded, the one-sided inclination of Czechoslovak society towards the East was balanced by a lively interest in developments in the West. The so-called normalization (from 1969) meant a renewed turn to the East. Normalization refers to a series of repressive measures that affected the Communist Party itself, the police, and the army; this also reflected in the dissolution of many interest and political associations, organizations, newspapers, and magazines, and generally affected public life in Czechoslovakia. If in the early fifties the Soviet Union was admired for its *gigantic constructions of communism*, as contemporary journalism wrote, now contemporary journalism more often reminded it as the arbiter of world peace. And from this stems the increased attention to the role of the Red Army in the liberation of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1945. Symbolically speaking, Holan's titular "Thanks to the Soviet Union" now acquired a new, current significance.

A spectacular expression of this gratitude to the Red Army and the then political leadership of the Soviet Union, now without the reminder of Josef Stalin, took the form of the *Ostrava Operation Memorial in Hrabyně* [fig. 5], a village west of Ostrava (see Spáčil–Kupka, 1981, pp. 441–442). The Ostrava Operation took place between March 10 and May 5, 1945, and was the largest battle on Czech territory at the end of World War II. The foundation stone for the memorial was laid on April 29, 1970, in the presence of Marshal Andrei Ivanovich Yeremenko. Built between 1976–1980 and opened on the 35th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia (1980), the memorial included the colossal sculpture Brotherhood in Combat (1974–1982) by Miloš Axman, a sculptor who had proven himself as the creator of monuments to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in Vyškov (1972) and Brno (1970). The national significance of the memorial was confirmed by the government of the Czech Socialist Republic when it declared it a national cultural monument in April 1989. It is notable that the object has no specific local or temporal coloring. The use of exposed concrete and the energetic shape of two massive forms in the shape of elongated, unevenly long wedges can be linked to inspiration from Western European brutalism. Its location in the open landscape is provocative and forms a counterpoint to the parish

church in Hrabyně, which had been experienced as a significant pilgrimage site since the 19th century and thus a symbol of Czech national emancipation. The memorial completely overshadowed this dominant, just as the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship, which was authoritatively promoted, overshadowed regional cultural specifics.

In Prague, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968, it would not have been possible to contemplate a similar monumental work in the heightened atmosphere. Here, more conciliatory and unobtrusive forms of Soviet Union commemoration were promoted. One such example was certainly *the Moskevská* (now *Anděl*) *metro station*, built between 1980–1985 with the assistance of Soviet architects and engineers. In the concave-shaped vestibule lined with dark red marble, bronze reliefs depicting a branch of blooming lilac were placed between the inscriptions Moscow and Prague. The design of northern vestibule was dominated by a Florentine mosaic in the theme of Moscow, stylizing prominent landmarks of the Soviet capital with a focus on the famous monumental sculptural composition *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman* from *the Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy in Moscow*. Only this, but only in contemporary photographs, takes us back to the time when the Soviet Union was a land where tomorrow meant yesterday for Czechoslovak elites and a large part of society[1].

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1 A country where tomorrow already means yesterday. This is a paraphrase of the title of a book of reportages from the Soviet Union by the communist journalist Julius Fučík (1903–1942) entitled In the *Country Where Tomorrow Already Means Yesterday* (V zemi, kde zítra zmamená již včera). The first edition was published in 1932, with subsequent editions in 1947, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1955, and several others.

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Ideological and Local Influences on the Urban Area in SSR Moldova (1944–1990)

Abstract

This article analyzed the post-World War Two reconstruction of the public spaces that had been devastated during the conflict. Mostly focused on the Chisinau urban area, we examined the ways in which the communist ideology and the socialist-modernist school of thinking influenced the reconstruction process. It has often been postulated that the main trait of the new political regime was the discrimination against the old conservative society by means of secularization and dismantling of the sacred. In the aftermath of the war, this trend was relatively limited, whereas during the Khruschev's ”thaw”, it significantly gained momentum. As an example, the statue of Stephen the Great, representative for the Moldavian national spirit, was brought back to Chisinau, but the central positions had been already reserved for two symbols of the communist regime: the statue of Lenin and the Victory Square. During the 1970s and 1980s, other monuments representative for the party ideology and discourse continued to be unveiled, one such example being the equestrian statue of Gr. Kotovski. Except for

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the statues of Lenin, Marx and Engels, most of the communist additions to the public space in Chisinau still stand to this day. It was there that the first celebration of the victory over Nazi Germany occurred, in 1965. Ten years later, a majestic memorial complex honoring the same event was to be inaugurated. In line with this, most of the non-metropolitan towns or villages, no matter how marginal, erected a statue of a soldier or at least a commemorative plaque in memory of those who lost their lives against their will. The urban plan itself was altered without any consideration to the street outlines that appeared in the plans of A. Șciusev. This practice was pursued in parallel with a demolition campaign in which the old town buildings and narrow alleyways, influenced by the Oriental style, were pulled down. The top position in the list of monuments that were lost at the time is occupied by the St. Ilie church. However, a section of the pre-war Chisinau, along the upper central boulevard, survived. It consisted of original or reconstructed imperial Russian and interwar Romanian buildings. A change in style occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, when the downtown area witnessed the addition of modernist buildings, tightly clustered and in obvious conflict with the spirit of the old town. In addition to that, their functionality was disproportionate to the role of the small republic. It was after the independence that the process of urban space degradation gained momentum, and some neglected buildings were lost. Meanwhile, some other buildings went through the validation process without any consideration to their contextual harmony. Planned with very little concern for artistic and architectural value, these new additions contribute to the already eclectic and highly inharmonious spirit of the city.

Keywords

SSR Moldova, post-war period, architecture, town planning, secularization

The city of Chisinau suffered traumatic and extensive destruction during World War Two. In the immediate aftermath there was no consensus on a reconstruction project and no town planning initiatives were undertaken. The downtown area continued to be left in a dilapidated state, mainly due to the fact that the party leadership was unable to decide on a specific plan. Although Alexei Șciusev, a Moscow architect with ancestry in Bessarabia, had submitted a well-conceived and, in retrospect, feasible project, his proposal was rejected. According to his plan, the priority for reconstruction would have been represented by the metropolitan palace, reminiscent of the imperial Russian and inter-war style.

With this in mind, in this paper we will analyze the evolution of the architectural trends and the town planning undertakings that occurred in the territory between the Prut and Dniester rivers from 1944 to the end of the soviet era. This historic period may be divided in two or even four distinct stages. We consider that a milestone is represented by the first World War Two celebration in Chisinau, which happened in 1965. This event was followed by a campaign during which many military monuments and memorials were erected. Towards the end of this study we will focus on to the buildings which should have been listed as national heritage but were, willingly or not, left in ruins during the early 2000s, whereas some of them were outright demolished. The influences of ideology on the postwar town planning was of no interest for the academics studying the architecture of Chisinau. However, in the field of the history of architecture there are studies on the reconstruction of some buildings that survived the soviet era. This is the case of the research conducted by Alla Chastina (2022a and 2022b) and Tamara Nesterova (2019 and 2020). Another relevant analysis of the postwar Chisinau town planning was signed by Tamara Nesterova and A. Vatamaniuc (2019), whereas two other studies that take a closer look at the official documents regarding architectural provisions belong to Alina Ostapov (2018, 2020). The larger domain of town planning was covered by studies written during the soviet times by A. Kolotovkin (1973) and E. Bognibov (1976). The latter was awarded a PhD in Moscow, but the thesis was never published. His work seems to have covered the characteristics and architectural evolution of

public institution buildings that have been erected between 1940s and mid-1970s. An extensive resource of images on the topic is to be found in the mass-media of the time. This is valid especially for the 1970s, when the Râșcani and the Botanica neighborhoods were being built or extended. In this paper we will focus especially on the secularization of public space, the destruction of Chisinau during World War Two, the reconstruction and town planning of Chisinau during the post-war era, the important communist monuments, the alley of the classical writers and the massive urban development undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s.

The Secularization of the public space during the soviet period

During the 1990s, there was a tendency to revert to the inter-war and to the soviet period with minimal interest or even without taking into account aspects related to the religious life. Before the times of the Soviet Union, religion played an essential role in everyday life, and this continued well into the post-war period. Inspired by the French Jacobins, the Bolsheviks imposed their own version of religious life, a pseudo-worship practice that failed to replace or even imitate its model. Numerous Christian Orthodox churches, as well as other places of worship, fewer in number, pertaining to the Catholic, Armenian or Lutheran denominations, were closed. Those that had been damaged during the war were never reconstructed and gradually disappeared from the architectural landscape.

An early moment of symbolic importance is the relocation to Chisinau of the monument dedicated to Stephen the Great. Work of the sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală, it had been sent to Romania in 1944, where it was located by the representatives of the Soviet Union. In charge with the Propaganda and Agitation Department, V. Țaranov opened the negotiation process in a letter. A serious ideological obstacle, incompatible with the ideology of the times, was represented by the cross held by the voivod. It was even brought into discussion the option of relocating the statue of another voivod, Vasile Lupu, on a plot of land located in front of the city's public garden gates, but finally Stephen the Great's statue was chosen

instead. The expert consultant from the Propaganda and Agitation Department stated that the cross held by the voivod was inseparable from the rest of the monument, an inextricable and irreplaceable element of the sculpture. Consequently, because of a pro-Moldavian attitude of V. Țaranov , the monument was relocated, albeit a few meters towards the interior of the park, in a less visible position. The relocation to its original emplacement happened only in the early 1990s.

The second important work of architectural value from central Chisinau, still standing, was the triumphal arch known as the Imperial Gates. The moment dates back to 1841 and its function was to mark the entrance to the cathedral park and further on, along the alleyway that bypassed the belltower, to the cathedral entrance. The bell tower was blown up at night, in the 1960s, only to be restored approximately, using only pictures as inspiration, in 1997. During the times of the Soviet Union, the Imperial Gates were called ”triumphal arch”, an expression still used by the Chisinau people to this day. Because of the skepticism related to anything religious, an attitude that was prevalent especially in the Bessarabia elites during the Soviet Union, it is very unlikely that the “Imperial Gates” denomination would re-enter common usage. Right now, only the historians and the experts in connected fields, such as the library or museum staff, are familiar with the true name of the monument.

The dome of the Chisinau cathedral was bombed during the war. Following a prevalent trend imposed by the soviet regime, all religious activities within the building were prohibited, and the functionality of the building was changed. Such changes occurred especially during the second half of the 1950s, during the so-called Khruschev’s ”thaw”. Even in 1989, the only functioning Christian church in Chisinau was the Ciuflea monastery. The orthodox cathedral, located in the center of the city, had been used only as an exhibition venue to showcase breakthroughs in the field of agriculture and technology. Another case is the church adjacent to the former Ferdinand high school, a building which had been completely destroyed during the war, then rebuilt and used as a secret police headquarters. The function of that church was altered as well, and it became a planetarium. The St. Nicholas church, situated on the

main boulevard, towards the Sculeni district, was allotted to the School of Medicine. It was within the walls of this once sacred building that dissections on corpses were being conducted or student dancing parties were being held. The St. Theodora of Sihla church, likewise located on the Pushkin street, not far from Stephan the Great Boulevard, became a sports hall. The St. Patelimon church, also known as the Greek church, a monument dating beck to the 1890s, was simply closed down until the 1980s, when it became a culinary arts sampling venue. Only in 1991 the building regained its original function, but its architectural beauty had suffered alterations and its wide perspective had been limited by soviet blocks of flats built in its vicinity. (see image 3 in the annex)

Two churches from the city's downtown were utterly demolished. In 1959, after being removed from the list of protected heritage buildings, the church of Sf. Elijah was hastily pulled down in order to make way for the Gogol street, nowadays known as the Bănulescu-Bodoni street. The catholic church of Chisinau, also located not far down to the the Stephen the Great Boulevard, was forcibly nationalized[1] in 1947. It shared the fate of many other religious monuments from the SSR Moldova, being razed from the urban landscape of Chisinau. In the town of Bălți, the orthodox church of St. Nicholas, dating back to the 1790s, was likewise used for other purposes than initially intended, and finally became a sports hall. Likewise, the church of St. Emperors Constantine and Helena, which had been built during the 1930s in Neo-Romanian style, was used as a warehouse and ethnographic museum.

The situation was quite different in the rural areas, where many churches were used in accordance with their initial purpose, in spite of the politically-motivated interference of the secret police officers. However, the symbolic photo of a damaged religious building from the rural area was published in the first magazine that adopted the Latin alphabet, "Glasul". It is a 1989 picture of the reclining dome belonging to the Tomai village church. The oldest churches

1 *Scurt istoric al Bisericii Catolice din Republica Moldova*, [Brief History of the Catholic Church in SSR Moldova] available on the Chisinau Romano-Catholic Church Bishopric webpage https://catolicmold.md/page/scurt-istoric (accessed on 28 November 2023).

in the vicinity of Chisinau were located beyond the Chisinau city limits, on opposite banks of the Bâc river. The Mazarache church was closer to Chisinau, whereas the St. Emperors Constantine and Helen occupied a plot of land adjacent to a cemetery. It was not far from these churches that a circus was constructed in soviet times, and both shared the same fate of being closed until the SSR Moldova gained its independence. Although the Mazarache church had been orthodox, it was allotted to the Lipovans' community. The contribution of the local community to the reinstatement of the religious role of these buildings is rarely mentioned in academic papers to the point where it is almost ignored and forgotten. The effort of these mostly anonymous persons who kept their religious convictions during the post-war period was of paramount importance for reinstatement of the Orthodox ritual in Chisinau and other cities from SSR Moldova after 1990.

It is impossible to reconstruct the architectural traits of the old city. However, Lică Sainciuc was still hoping that a partial reconstruction was possible. In his words:

> For the moment, only two sections of the Old City still stand: one between the Pushkin house and the Annunciation church and a second one in the vicinity of the St. George, St. Haralamb and the Armenian churches. These are the very few surviving monuments that might be taken as reference for a gradual reconstruction of the old town (Sainciuc, 2000).

The Destruction of Chisinau during World War Two

The city of Chisinau was severely damaged during the armed conflict. The first wave was of natural origin, as a powerful earthquake struck in November 1940. Its impact on the architecture of the city has not been assessed scientifically (see image 1). In contrast, the Soviet historiography focuses more on the air raids that targeted Chisinau after June 22, 1941, when war broke out. However, there is no study on the destruction caused by artillery or air bombardments on the Alexandru the Good Boulevard, formerly known as Alexandrovskaia Boulevard at the time of the Russian Empire. The

Romanian Army did not possess bombers in order to conduct such an operation. The involvement of the Luftwaffe in this operation needs to be confirmed by means of scientifically-reviewed research. The Red Army had initiated the retreat from Chisinau on the 30th of June. Towards the end of the operation, on the 15th and 16th of July, at least one battalion specialized in mining and demolition was active. Many public administration and landmark buildings were destroyed as a result of these operations[2]. This event constitutes the subject of a short story published by Yuriy Kalugin in 1942 (Tărîță, 2014). At that time, the official discourse of the Soviets went towards the "no step back" directive, which was to peak in intensity during the defense of Stalingrad.

> And the explosions that make the earth tremble, much like earthquakes, keep going all night long, much like a terrible thunder. [...] The city of Chisinau is wrapped in thick plumes of smoke... It is burning on all sides. The city would blow itself up if it were about to fall into the hands of the enemy (Tărîță, pp. 71–72).

Pantelimon Halippa emotionally describes the city that he found once back after the conflict: "the catastrophic effects of fire, demolition and so many more demented undertakings is so great that one cannot look at them without tears in the eyes" (*Halippa...*, p. 299). The lack of safety and multiplication of crimes on the street of the city of Chisinau happened under martial law and was recorded in the diary of Gala Galaction. At the time, while he was priest at a church situated at the corner of Bănulescu Bodoni and Cosmonauts Streets, not far from the Chisinau cathedral, the building was robbed twice.

2 The main area affected by these operations was located betwen the Sadovaia (Livezilor) Street, Moghilevskaia (Movilă) Street, Aleksandrovskaia (Alexandru cel Bun) Street and Frunze Street. In addition, some other buildings were listed, mainly because of their architectural style: the radio station building, the city sewerage system, the power station, the telephone exchange buiding, the telegraphy station, the post office, the "Pasaj" (City Hall) and the "Krasnaia Zvezda" (Steaua Roșie) hotel. Shortly after this operation, the city was engulfed by fire. The batallion in charge retreated towards the Visterniceni railway station, which was also affected by the outbreak. Finally, the troops went towards the Orheiului Boulevard.

This building was fated to be razed from the urban landscape once the communist party leaders decided to bring it down and reconstruct that part of the city. Once the Red Army entered Chisinau again, on the 23rd of August 1944, the city center was surrounded by NKVD squads, and proceeded to remove artefacts without allowing anybody, party members included, inside. As a result, at the end of World War Two, the central Chisinau was in a pitiful state, in urgent need of intensive reconstruction. Many buildings were left in a state of disrepair as time went by (see image 2). A lot of blame for the urban destruction after World War Two goes to the party apparatus. As early as 1945, the secretary of the Central Party Committee stated that:

> The capital of Soviet Moldova (from 1940 onwards, the toponym Moldova was chosen by the Bolsheviks instead of Bessarabia, and it was kept as the name for the future Soviet Republic – M.T.), the city of Chisinau, was turned into a heap o rubble: 76 percent of the walls (buildings – M.T.) and houses were destroyed. Our ancestral cities (sic!) were turned into rubble and ruins. Bender (name used by the Bolsheviks for the town of Tighina – M.T.), for instance, was organically connected with the great people of the Russians from the times of the glorious triumphs of Suvorov (Salogor, 1945, p. 30).

More than 76% of the city of Chisinau had been destroyed, according to this source. Two other cities considered by the Bolsheviks as being most affected (unless the intent was purely rhetorical) were, according to the author, Tighina and Orhei. The Bolsheviks and their architects decided that such a great rate of destruction of Chisinau would result in a high improbability of any initiative towards the reconstruction of the public space being taken in the foreseeable future. The only authentic monument in addition to the ones that have been mentioned above is Livezilor Street (formerly known as Mateevici), and survived the war almost intact. Most of the Soviet public institutions occupied central positions, as well as the residences of the party leadership. For instance, workers in visual arts and other domains took up restored buildings on the Podolsk street, which was to be renamed Iskra, and is nowadays known as București (see images 8–11, pictures taken in 2017).

The reconstruction process and the revision of the town planning in Chisinau during the post-war period

The high degree of destruction suffered by the city of Chisinau was considered by he communist authorities a good opportunity to plan the reconstruction without taking into consideration the style characteristic for the inter-war period, a style that survived in some buildings throughout the city. Another factor that resulted in a slow reconstruction process after 1945 was an internal conflict that was took its toll on the party leadership decisions. The City Hall, built during the times of the Russian Empire, following the plans of A. Bernardazzi, was referred to as ”Pasaj” (passage t.n.). It was reconstructed as late as 1949, five years after the conquest of Chisinau by the Red Army. By 1947, a wing of the building was still waiting to be built (see image 5).

From the point of view of town planning theory, the city of Chisinau looked at the time like two different cities combined. The section along the main boulevard, nowadays known as Stephen the Great, had been planned in accordance with the Imperial Russian architectural specifications. The downtown area, stretching as far as the Bâc river, was crisscrossed by twisted narrow roads, reminiscent of an Oriental town. The urban planning project of Alexei Șciusev[3] took them into account and proved to be quite interesting. Another initiative, dated 1943, that is worth mentioning, belongs to Octav Doicescu. His approach was meant to correct the damage inflicted by the 1941 military operations. T. Nesterov was inspired by Octav Doicescu's differentiation of the old and new cities: ”The city of Chisinau is composed of two urban areas that are quite distinct: the old town, along the banks of the Bâc river, ironically labelled «oriental labyrinth», with small squares that appear along access roads that are fit only for the use of cattle-drawn carts, and the new city, the «colonial» town, built according to a grid plan” (Nesterov, 2019, p. 80).

Doicescu suggested the replacement of the damaged buildings from the lower town with green spaces. It is interesting that Doicescu foresaw the transport problems that were to appear in Chisinau after

3 The depiction is on display at the Alexei Șciusev Memorial House in Chisinau.

a few decades. He considered that a belt of highways was necessary, and the point of reference taken as a center was the green areas mentioned above (Nesterov, 2019, p. 81). The Doicescu plan was analyzed in detail and compared with the 1947 project submitted by Șciusev-Curț in a recent study (Nesterov, 2019, pp. 83–84). The conclusions are highly technical and less influenced by ideology:

> Obviously, the intentions of the Romanian and Soviet architects were pragmatic, in the sense that their objective was to ensure a certain degree of urban life comfort. Both during the interwar period, as well as during the soviet times, the public administration was solving practical issues that overlapped because of the historical and geographical constraints of the city of Chisinau. Yet, architecture is a visual arts discipline. Therefore, it is focused on the external aspect of the solutions and less on the structural organization. The interwar and postwar reconstruction projects have nothing in common, each with their own personal touch. The only common element is the similar approach towards a ray-shaped streets outline. The other solutions adopted the urban planning style of the period: garden-cities, belt highway, a monumental city center (Nesterov, 2019, p. 84).

A necessary observation on Șciusev's plan would be that, although it was in tune with the requirements of the Soviet ideology, it took into consideration the historic heritage of Chisinau. It did not impose the demolition of any religious building, and the foreseeable traffic problems caused by bottlenecks in the central part of the town was solved by two roads that crossed the city diagonally. An illustration of these ideas was drawn by Șciusev himself and may be seen at the "Alexei Șciusev" Memorial House in Chisinau. These streets were meant to reach as far as the Bâc river. Ten years later, the Soviet architects from Chisinau chose to extend the Gogol Street, now known as Bănulescu Bodoni Street, and demolished the St. Elijah church in the process. This destruction could have been averted if the church was to be moved. Beyond the sacrilege, the entire undertaking was useless. For the last two decades, both the Bănulescu Bodoni Street and the Pușkin Street, which run in parallel, are always jammed during work days, and the chances to solve this problem are very slim.

Key monuments of the communist regime and the Classical Writers Alley

Ideologically speaking, the central symbol of Chisinau was the Lenin statue, which witnessed the party meetings and parades. Its position was near the Imperial Russian building of the metropolitan palace. At the time, the square was surrounded by the wings of this building. Later on, a Council of the Ministers building was erected behind the monument, which was to be a central reference for the city until the end of the soviet period. It also seems surrealist, as the statue of Lenin was represented while delivering a discourse in alignment with the Imperial Gates behind which stood the church bell tower and the cathedral with its dome and cross removed. For a perspective from the side of this post-war monument, refer to image 6.

An important place in the efforts of the communist regime towards self-legitimization is occupied by an illustration of the victory over Nazi Germany. A memorial complex was raised near the cemetery situated on the Armenian Street in order to commemorate this event. A series of soldier tombs had been located in the central parc, not far from the "Rodina" cinema. That was the preferred location for wreath ceremonies dedicated to the Unknown Soldier. These tombs were later moved to the new memorial, which was to play a prominent role for the next fifteen years, from 1975 to 1990. The idea for the memorial complex came up in 1965, when May 9th was declared Victory Day. Following the trend, similar monument and memorial plaques appeared in other villages and towns across the SSR Moldova. They represented either a soldier holding a child or a kneeling soldier. The name of the fallen soldiers was inscribed on a plaque or on slabs of stone positioned around the monument.

Once the Red Army advanced in Northern Bessarabia in March 1944, the Soviet authorities started to draft young men from Moldavian villages. Proportional to the total number of the population, the number of the enlisted young men was substantial. Very few of them returned home alive. Every village paid a huge price for the war effort. Although the communist regime intended these low quality monuments as glorification and legitimization symbols for the communist regime, they became places of memory for the local

soldiers who had lost their lives. After 1990, a few crosses were raised near these monuments, and the name of the Bessarabian soldiers who were sacrificed during the armed conflict were inscribed on them. This is the case of the Hâjdieni village in the Glodeni county. The May 9th celebrations were held a few days away from the Provody, a religious feast dedicated to the departed spirits. This altered the original interpretation of the Victory Day.

Each year on the 9th of May and 23rd of August party celebrations were being held within the Chisinau memorial, which had been inaugurated in 1975. Russian Red Army veterans attended the latter ceremony, which evoked the days of the 1944 liberation. The center of the memorial complex was occupied by a sculpture in red stone representing five rifles arranged in a pyramid shape and the eternal flame. The semicircular alley on the eastern side of the memorial was leading towards a few tombstones inscribed with the names of fallen soldiers. Beyond them there were a few bas-relief representations of the suffering that Soviet people went through during the war, the drafting, the sacrifices and the final victory. After 1991 the the memorial was kept intact, as it was considered free from any influence of the communist ideology. Later, the ”Grieving Mother” monument was added, in memory of the soldiers and police officers who had fallen in the Transnistria conflict.

The interpretation of the Chisinau memorial changed somewhat after 2010, as the relations between the Russian Federation and the Western world was altered. For those who embraced the ”Russian World” ideology, this monument stood for the Red Army Immortal Regiment. For the pro-European politicians, the 9th of May celebrations were replaced with the Day of Europe, held on the 8th of May each year. The only soldiers who nobody seemed to remember were the Bessarabians who, fighting for the Red Army, fell on duty. A memorial dedicated to them, as well as a day of remembrance and silence, are necessary. This could be done by adding a chapel or even a church in memory of the Bessarabian soldiers fallen during World War Two.

Another landmark of the communist regime, less important, yet relevant, was the memorial built on a lower terrace, in the vicinity of the Academy of Sciences and the railway station. Located in front of a twenty levels hotel, with a commanding view around, the

equestrian monument was dedicated to Grigore Kotovski, a controversial Communist Party activist. Similar statues are to be found in different cities across Europe, in memory of important generals or princes. Kotovski was neither. The plan of the monument was released to the press on October 26th 1971. The team who worked on the project hailed from Leningrad (before 1915 and after 1991 known as St. Petersburg) and were in charge on the much larger area around the Chisinau railway station. Their concept was orbiting around the idea of a "gateway towards the center of Chisinau" (*Moldova Socialistă*, 26 October 1971). Another monument dedicated to a Bolshevik activist, somewhat more modest, was placed in the Botanica district, at the entrance of a grand square, in the middle of an avenue that was climbing a hill from the railway station towards the Peace Boulevard, renamed the Dacia Boulevard after 1990. It was dedicated to Serghei Lazu, the son of boyars, who embraced the radical leftwing ideology and died under suspicious circumstances somewhere in the Far East, probably at the hand of the Japanese or a rival faction.

Two other important monuments raised by the communist regime were the monument of the August 23rd 1944 Soviet liberation, situated next to the Academy of Sciences, and the monument dedicated to the Communist-Leninist Youth Union, located on the Youth Boulevard, which was renamed the Rebirth Boulevard in 1991 and Vieru Boulevard later on, in 2009. The 1991–1994 economic crisis and the impoverishment of the population forced the local administration to abandon any renovation plans, which at the time could have been executed without the opposition of the nostalgic citizens. Apart from the Lenin statue, a monument that was linked to the communist ideology, there was another statue representing Marx and Engles sitting on a bench. This monument dating back to the 1980s was located in front of the Central Committee, nowadays the Parliament, and its removal was an operation secretly conducted during night-time. In the early 1990s, rumors circulated that the statue had been laid at the bottom of a lake, but it was discovered in the late 2010s, stored in the Parliament building garage.

Among the very few monuments that resonated with the local population of Chisinau was the Classical Writers Alley, inaugurated on April 29th, 1957. After debates, contradictory discussions

and hesitations, the 20th Congress decided to significantly release the ideological pressure over the cultural activities in the SSR Moldova. The result was the planning and construction in the center of Chisinau of an alley dedicated to classical writers. Although the tallest of all was the Russian writer Pushkin, who had spent his exile in Chisinau, the alley became a journey through the Romanian culture, with some statues added after 1990[4]. In the planning stage, the writers who were considered appropriate, athough some had also been political activists, were: N. Milescu-Spătaru, D. Cantemir, Gh. Asachi, C. Stamati, C. Negruzzi, A. Donici, A. Hajdeu, A. Russo, V. Alecsandri, B.-P. Hasdeu, M. Eminescu, I. Creangă. The party discourse was attempting to connect these classical writers with either Lenin or the Moldavian heritage, but all the above were identity markers for all citizens of the Republic. B.Z. Tanasevski, president of the executive branch of the town committee made a few somehow anachronic remarks on the occasion of the Classical Writers' Alley inauguration: "Our gratitude and pride are greater as we come to realize that these writers managed to contribute, to a larger or smaller extent, to the present situation: the erection of grandiose buildings, the multi-disciplinary progress and enlightenment of our people due to the socialist culture" (*Moldova Socialistă*, 30 April 1957).

A much more emotional and reserved speech came from A. Lazarev, Minister of Culture at the time:

> We wish that this modest homage to the founders of our culture, produced through the efforts of the Moldavian people, would become, for the youth, a symbol of love, pride and respect of the Moldavian people towards our classical writers. Likewise, it would also urge the young generation to advance towards a deeper understanding of their works, which is an endless stream of great ideas and artistry, the real origin of our contemporary literature (*Moldova Socialistă*, 30 April 1957).

4 Some of the statues that appeared after 1990 are somewhat debatable, especially in what the choices for the personalities they represented were justified. We will not delve into this topic here.

The monumental buildings constructed at the center of Chisinau 1970–1980

During the 1970s, the Central Committee Bureau of the Communist Party and the Administrative Section of the Central Committee operated serious changes in the center of Chisinau. The entire space beyond the Alecsandri, Lazo, București and Columna Streets were redone architecturally. The fact that the party leadership's role in society was exaggerated is represented by the disproportionate dimensions of buildings such as the Central Committee (nowadays the Parliament), the Marxist- Leninist University (later to become the "Ginta latina" theatre and Alliance Française), the Institute for the Study of Party History (right now the Ministry of Justice and until recently the Institute for History), the Republican Unions, the Town Party Committee (nowadays the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), the communist party hotel (which was situated in the vicinity of the park and was to become in the early 1990s "Seabeco", whereas now it is called "Jolly Alon"). All these constructions should, in our opinion, be considered part of a postmodern socialist trend. The owners of the houses and blocks of flats that were brought down in order to allow the construction of these communist party complex submitted a complaint to the Moscow party. The demolitions took place in 1974–1975 and among the buildings that were razed was a block of flats that had been built just a decade prior. There was also a planning error involved, with a price tag of over 200,000 rubles. At first, the digging took place too close to the Lenin Boulevard (known today as Stephen the Great). Then, they were resumed further away.[5] Following a trend at the time, the complaint was re-sent to Chisinau, and the responsible of the CC replied in a formal manner. The voice of the Chisinau citizens was ignored once more. The citizens had invoked also the directives of the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, where a tighter grip on expenses was recommended. We believe that, at the time, in the Soviet Union, the class of the new masters (called "new lords" by Kenneth Jowitt) had already been active. It was not the ideology that allowed them to

5 Direcția Arhiva Organizațiilor Social-Politice, Fond 51, inv. 40, d. 33, f. 24.

reconfigure the public space on a whim, but the boundless power that these people possessed. Later on, in 1987, the Kojevnikova journalist, working at the time for "Literaturnaia Gazeta" had noticed the huge dimensions of the Ministry of Agriculture, much too big for a small republic as the SSR Moldova. In effect, these extensive buildings triggered a growth in the bureaucratic workforce. As an irony of fate, recent statistics indicate that in the first two decades of the new millennium, the bureaucratic workforce continued to grow after a period of relative stagnation in the 1990s.

The dimensions of the 1970–1980s buildings were, indeed, exaggerated. Another such example is the Railways Palace, a 20 level building (later known as Cosmos) and the Kotovski statue. All these were labelled "the railway station neighborhood complex" and were all disproportionately large. The plans were conceived at an even more grandiose scale. Taking these into account, N. Feldbrina, an architect, foresaw that:

> Next in line is the reconstruction of the Chisinau railway station building. Actually, it will become part of the complex. On the Tiraspol street, a new building dedicated to the railways is about to be inaugurated. It is an enormous block of flats that will offer a lot of comfort to the residents. Nearby, a new bus terminal will be constructed. Further on, parking lots. The railway lines will be crossed via underground passages. It is worth mentioning that the passengers will be reaching the platforms via elevators.

The new building was never built, neither the underground escalators. Towards the last days of the Soviet Union, a few unfinished buildings still remained, to be finished as late as 2005.

Among the most important postmodern-ish building in Chisinau, the last to be built in accordance with the requirements of the socialist ideology, was the Supreme Soviet building, today the Presidential building and the National Palace.

Conclusions

The object of this study is complex. We had to limit ourselves to the particular case of Chisinau, excluding the rest of SSR Moldova. One of the obstacles we encountered was the emotional effect such a study has on a person who spent his childhood in the city during the 1980s. Although the signs of modern life are visible, the socialist postmodernism is quite easy to identify. Even more so, elements of the interwar architecture still survive, reinterpreted by the architects who have collaborated with the communists. There is as of yet no researcher of the demolitions and degradation suffered during the early 2000s. Yet the city still holds elements of a jubilant architecture that was inspired by the Russian imperial architecture or the Neo-Romanian school.

Regarding the districts located on a lower elevation, also known as the nucleus, built in the 18th and 19th centuries, all was lost, according to Lică Sainciuc. Witnesses of the interwar period are only the statue of Stephen the Great, the churches that survived the communist campaigns and a few isolated houses on Livezilor (nowadays Mateevici) and Bucharest Streets. Also there are four schools dating back to the interwar period. Right now, the city has its own architectural identity, kept alive by an eclectic and postmodern trend, visible throughout the cubist and minimalist buildings. Although some buildings were constructed after the 2000s in a modern style, they are positioned in according to the communist principle that the conditioning of the place and the attention to proportion are to be ignored.

There is no sign that the people of Chisinau will ever demand the reconstruction of the St. Elijah church, a monument which was ruthlessly demolished not far from the Academy of Economic Studies. There is uncertainty regarding the Herța House, a case of abandoned reconstruction dating back to 2009 (Munteanu, 2022) as well as the heritage building from across the street, which was demolished in 2007 without any protest from the civil society. The destruction suffered during World War Two and later during the reconstruction stages, as well as the disproportionately large projects of the 1970s and 1980s, coupled with the period of neglect

after the 2000s are already part of the history of Chisinau in the same manner as the Ilie Moromete courtyard, a powerful symbol from the well-known novel written by Marin Preda, has entered the history of literature. Beyond all these, praise should be given to the efforts of researchers who put a lot of effort in ample studies on the symbolic buildings and identity landmarks of Chisinau, like Tamara Nesterov and Alla Ceastina.

The city of Chisinau still holds many obsolete Soviet monuments, such as the equestrian statue of Kotovski, the monument situated near the Academy of Sciences, the monument dedicated to the Leninist youth and others. This is the result of the fact that they have not been demolished at the right time. Nowadays they hold no symbolic value for the people of Chisinau and will continue to be part of its eclectic landscape. As for the "Eternity" memorial complex, there is an urgent need for the construction of a chapel or church, not only the addition of the representation of a grieving mother.

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Literature

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Debates on the Polish Literary Canon in the Second Half of the 20th and Early 21st Centuries

Abstract

The purpose of this article is a synthetic and historical overview of the debates on the Polish literary canon, which took place in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The article attempts to classify post-1945 attitudes toward the canon and the works that constitute it. Political, historical and social circumstances greatly influenced the choice and assessment of works what were considered the most important in the history of Polish literature. In presenting and analyzing the views of renowned critics and literary historians (as well as other experts on the subject), the essay reveals that the outlook on the canon, which is one of the key elements of any nation's culture, is heterogeneous, multilayered and embedded in many different contexts.

Keywords

Polish literature, culture, masterpieces, literary canon, literary discussions

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Discussions about the literary canon – evaluating, ranking, and mapping works, or rather masterpieces, as well as their impact on the present day – have a long tradition in humanistic thought in the Western world. Suffice it to recall the monographs by German-speaking literary historians, such as Ernst Robert Curtius' 1948 *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* and Walter Muschg's 1953 *Tragic History of Literature*, or the acclaimed and still much-discussed *The Western Canon* by American literary theorist Harold Bloom,[1] first published in 1994. Such synthesizing publications have not appeared in Polish research, but disputes over the canon of literature came to light especially in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, which does not mean that they were not there before (Marchwiński, 2017). It should be noted that in the discourse on the canon, regardless of the standpoint, the debaters' arguments are based mainly on three criteria, namely: methodological considerations (or preferences), aesthetic inclinations, and the need to choose certain works and not others, backed up by knowledge and erudition. Thus, for the sake of methodological clarity, it is worth noting that the canon is subject to interpretation (the approach of classical hermeneutics) and reinterpretation (hermeneutics of suspicion).

The canon, in the simplest terms, is "an authoritative list of works, the obligatory reading list in a given cultural circle" (Wilczek, 2004–2005, p. 76); it is also often referred to as a collection of masterpieces. Such a simple and brief definition seems entirely accurate and rational, if we assume that the canon should include the most outstanding works, both in terms of aesthetics, ethics and form, which most fully reflect the human experience in various contexts. Maria Janion noted that "the accumulation of the most important experiences of humankind, the accumulation of meanings, can be found in the masterpieces of philosophy, but most of all in literature" (Janion, 1982, p. 125).

The discourse on the canon, however, often fails to address the determinants of a masterpiece. If we assume that the canon only

1 This famous researcher and expert on Western culture listed the works of five writers from Poland: Bruno Schulz, Czesław Miłosz, Witold Gombrowicz, Stanisław Lem, Zbigniew Herbert and Adam Zagajewski (Bloom, 2019, p. 634).

contains masterpieces, it is worth looking at their characteristics. In Polish research, these were most fully described by Stanisław Jaworski, who claimed that a masterpiece should (Jaworski, 1987, pp. 8, 11–16):

(a) have high artistic value,

(b) have aesthetic and ethical value,

(c) be embedded in literary tradition,

(d) be universal,

(e) include the reader in the totality of culture,

(f) expand the reader's inner universe with a new experience of the world,

(g) establish a link with tradition and the present.

We should add here the definition of Krzysztof Krasuski: "the rank of masterpiece was granted to works that focused and expressed the totality of human experience. They integrated what was scattered in fragments as existential magma. In a masterpiece, this is presented as a whole issue" (Krasuski, 2009, p. 162). To conclude these remarks, we should bring up the obvious: who is to decide whether a work is a masterpiece? To the critic and researcher, popularity and reader response do not make a work a masterpiece: "wide reception of a literary work does not yet mean the work is valuable. Only a professional reader, whose reading behavior, ways and norms of reading are different from ... those of a common reader, makes credible judgements about that value" (Dutka, 1998, p. 47).

In communist Poland, the history of the literary canon can be most simply divided into two periods: 1949–1956 (social realist works as forming the only official canon[2]) and 1956–1989 (works of various styles and genres, but published under censorship). Of course, it should be noted that there were two parallel literary canons: the official canon, i.e. containing works published in Poland, and the émigré canon, which consisted of works by Polish writers published outside the censorship as well as abroad. The 1980s are significant,

2 Until 1956, social realism was the binding and oppressive doctrine, and there was no room for other poetics in literature. After the October thaw, socialist realism did not end, in fact, it still remained, "it only lost its monopoly in literary life. However, it was subject to numerous modifications – within its system" (Krasuski, 2009, p. 92).

with a date that significantly expanded the official canon permitted by the communist authorities: 1980, when the Swedish Academy awarded Czesław Miłosz the Nobel Prize for Literature. This event not only made a lasting mark on cultural history, but also became a catalyst for placing the author of *Three Winters* in the official canon of Polish literature, as until then his writing had been published in the mother tongue in émigré and underground press. During the Stalinist period, Miłosz became the target of attacks when he decided to emigrate, while after 1956 he was condemned to obscurity.

The centers of Polish culture in exile, especially the circle centered around the Literary Institute, since 1947 in Maisons-Laffitte, founded by Jerzy Giedroyc, Zofia Hertz, Zygmunt Hertz, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński and Józef Czapski, produced a particular discourse on the canon, mainly by publishing Polish literature in exile and literature that could not be published in Poland due to censorship. In addition to books, the Literary Institute also issued the famous monthly magazine *Kultura*, which also featured those works that were doomed to obscurity in communist Poland. Witold Gombrowicz's attack on Henryk Sienkiewicz in *Kultura* was one of the most important voices on the issue of the canon in that era. In his opening sentences, the émigré writer diagnosed the remarkable influence of Sienkiewicz, the author of the *Deluge*, on the Polish nation, while accusing his novels of having little artistic value and belonging to the genre of popular literature: "A mighty genius! – there has probably never been such a first-rate second-rate writer. He is a second-rate Homer, he is a first-rate Dumas the father. It is also difficult to find an example of a similar enchantment of the nation in the history of literature, a more magical influence on the imagination of the masses" (Gombrowicz, 1953, p. 3). Gombrowicz's voice was invigorating for the debate on the Polish literary canon. His scathing essay joined the critical debate on Henryk Sienkiewicz's writings, which still continues in the discourse on the canon today. Incidentally, Gombrowicz resolutely and ruthlessly exposed "infantilization," from which, as the narrator in *Ferdydurke* states, "there is no escape at all" (Gombrowicz, 1997, p. 264). It seems that the literary canon is also a sign of "infantilization." Ultimately, Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* entered it as well, although it should be noted that this book "does

not lend itself easily to 'canonization,' mainly because it is a challenging read for most young audiences and eludes school explication" (Rusek, 2008, p. 53).

Due to the polarization of the canon of Polish literature, which occurred after 1945 and lasted until 1989, into domestic and émigré literature, writers such as Józef Łobodowski, Józef Mackiewicz, Ferdynand Goetel, Michał Kryspin Pawlikowski or Barbara Toporska were not widely known by Polish readers, whereas "today it is difficult to imagine the canon of our literature without them" (Staroń, 2023, p. 6). While the works of such famous writers as Gombrowicz, Czesław Miłosz and Kazimierz Wierzyński reached readers in Poland, there was a problem with the reception of the aforementioned authors, although their books were published by the Literary Institute. The situation is entirely different now, as their works are being published, and a number of scholarly studies, including monographs on their writings, have appeared, e.g. books on the works of Łobodowski (see Siryk, 2002), Mackiewicz (see Fitas, 2019) and Goetel (see Polechoński, 2012).

After 1989, the editors of the Paris-based *Kultura* carried out a survey, whose results were published, significantly, in 1992, i.e. after the political transformation and at the end of the 20th century, which was a very interesting testimony to the debate on the canon of Polish contemporary literature. Literary scholars, literary critics and writers were asked to name the writers they believed to be overrated, and thus certainly present in the canon (or at least in literary life), and those that they believed to be underrated, i.e. who did not have a place in the canon, who were not remembered or were too unnoticeable to readers. What prompted the idea was an identical survey in *Le Figaro*. Respondents to the poll included Henryk Bereza, Jan Błoński, Tomasz Burek, Grażyna Borkowska, Małgorzata Czermińska, Michał Głowiński, Krzysztof Koehler, Antoni Libera and Tadeusz Nyczek.

It is worth taking a closer look at the answers of one of the most famous and controversial Polish literary critics of the twentieth century, Bereza, as in the 1980s and 1990s he rose to the rank of arguably the most important reviewer of contemporary literature. He listed the following among the underrated writers: Jarosław

Iwaszkiewicz, Leopold Buczkowski, Tadeusz Różewicz, Miron Białoszewski, Wiesław Myśliwski, Andrzej Łuczeńczyk, and Ryszard Schubert. Apart from the last two prose writers, the remaining authors were already present and much talked about in cultural life at the time, in 1992, and beyond any doubt belong to the canon of Polish literature today. One may wonder why Bereza did not mention the Kashubian writer Jan Drzeżdżon, about whom he had notably written more than a decade earlier that "as the author of works published up to and in 1977, he is a more outstanding writer than Llosa and Cortázar taken together and Borges to boot"[3] (Bereza, 1982, p. 105). One cannot fail to point out here, too, that Bereza consistently tried to broaden and reevaluate the canon of Polish literature, without suggesting that it should be abolished or replaced by another. The critic located on the map of Polish culture such important phenomena as the peasant trend in prose and the artistic revolutionary current. The works of writers of the latter movement, which Bereza was particularly fond of, were neither accepted by the readership nor sanctioned in the canon, but the prose writers of the peasant trend already have their place in the literary scene, if only to mention Wiesław Myśliwski, Marian Pilot and Tadeusz Nowak.

Most certainly, one of the major elements of the contemporary discourse on the canon is the so-called economy of prestige (English, 2013), i.e. the functioning of works which have been nominated and

3 This famous and controversial opinion of Bereza resonated widely in criticism and literary history in Poland, and has often been cited in jest, but it is worth noting that so far no academic has attempted a scholarly evaluation of this statement: simply put, no one, since 1982, has compared Drzeżdżon's work with the writings of Llosa, Cortázar and Borges. In fact, Bereza himself predicted this would happen: "Entire academies, institutes and university departments are already working on an elaborate documentation of my judgment, it will be announced after the meaning of the term 'Gothic novel' is finally established, for opinions are divided on this matter: some believe that the development of the Gothic novel is crowned by Kafka's *The Castle*, others that Capote and Mach are also developing the Gothic novel, while the boldest discover the structure of the Gothic novel in the works of Jan Drzeżdżon" (Bereza, 1982, p. 105). Bereza ironically points out as well as diagnoses that no scholar is dealing with Drzeżdżon's works, thus it is impossible for others to prove or disprove his claim, just as it is impossible to make a conclusive definition of Gothic literature or the Gothic novel.

which have won recognizable, media-publicized awards such as Angelus, Nike or Gdynia. This type of recognition, putting a particular book in the category of the best, most valuable in a given year, has a direct impact on reading choices, publishing circulation and communication between the authors, publishers, critics and readers. The prestigious awards translate into the inclusion of the winner in the canon. The writers of the peasant trend are good examples of this. Myśliwski's two-time winning of the Nike Literary Award in 1997 and in 2007 cemented his place in the canon. Today, some scholars declare that Myśliwski "is Poland's most outstanding turn-of-the-century prose writer" (Kulesza, 2022, p. 7). The Nike for Pilot in 2011, on the other hand, reinstated him into the reader's memory, the interest of publishers, and ultimately made it difficult to think of the Polish literary canon today without the author of *Pióropusz* [Plume]. This is the very reason why the Nike Literary Award shapes the general canon of Polish literature, but also creates a special canon, if "we think … of a canon that is not institutionalized by, for example, the introduction of a given book to the school reading list, but rather a repertoire of titles that we all readily choose, sometimes driven by curiosity, and other times by the need to see if we agree with the jury's verdict" (Rejter, 2017, p. 7).

National canons are always, well, certainly often, influenced by the Nobel Prize for Literature[4]. This is one of the most important processes of canon formation today, because "while the global production of a canon of world literature can and increasingly does flout national hierarchies of prestige, it is certainly difficult in the long run for a national market to support a scheme of symbolic pricing that is radically different from that which obtains on the global market" (English, 2013, p. 212). As soon as the Swedish Academy pronounces its verdict, the winner or laureate becomes part of

4 There are, of course, Nobel laureates who, for political reasons, do not exist in the official literary canon of their country, to recall those awarded by the Swedish Academy in the last quarter century: Svetlana Alexievich from Belarus or Gao Xingjian from China, who, interestingly, "by integrating the norms of literary modernity …, has been able to reconceive, in the Chinese language, the forms of an older Chinese literature" (Casanova, 2017, p. 230). History shows, however, that when a regime changes, a Nobel laureate is placed in the codified literary system of his or her homeland.

the history of world literature, which confirms his or her place in the national canon. This is due to a fact that Pascale Casanova accurately diagnosed when writing about the Nobel Prize for Literature: "there is no better measure of the unification of the international literary field than the effectively universal respect commanded by this prize" (Casanova, 2017, p. 222). With the basic criteria for evaluating a writer's oeuvre, i.e. universality and exceptional artistic value, guiding the Swedish Academy, the works of Nobel Prize-winning authors are (usually) excellently received by audiences around the world, who, even despite some controversial verdicts (such as Bob Dylan), eagerly pick up books by awarded authors. In this way, the link of the national canon becomes part of the world canon. Polish literary Nobel laureates – Henryk Sienkiewicz, Władysław Stanisław Reymont, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska and Olga Tokarczuk feature in the domestic literary canon[5] and in the popular one. Even Sienkiewicz, who is not held in high esteem among some cultural critics and is accused of racism and discrimination, has an important place in it. As Koziołek states, "In the canons of world literature, *Quo vadis* is often the only book that represents Polish literature" (Koziołek, 2016, p. 95).

The voices of individual scholars (not just literary scholars) who provide their own subjective versions of the canon of literary masterpieces stand out in the discourse on the canon. Philosopher and cultural theorist Jan Kurowicki, in an essayistic book with the telling title *Przewodnik po arcydziełach i nie tylko* [A Guide to Masterpieces and Beyond], took a chronological perspective when looking at literary works from ancient to modern times. This is how he explained his decision to publish this work: "Books by literary critics do not contain any suggestions for a canon of readings. Moreover, they always deal with fragmentary issues, being an expression of some fashion or fascination with certain modes of writing" (Kurowicki, 2001, p. 9). Significantly, the researcher, who did not deal professionally with literature[6] proposed and discussed his corpus of texts considered

5 School canon and/or academic canon, in which the author of *The Magician of Lublin* features the least, but this issue requires a separate study.

6 Although he was a writer himself, an author of books of poetry and plays.

masterpieces, without making a division between universal and Polish literature. Kurowicki's proposal of the canon is a repertoire of domestic and foreign works[7].

There are several books similar to *A Guide to Masterpieces and Beyond*. All are organized around a similar principle i.e. the subjective choice of the author, who creates his or her canon on the basis of his or her own reading experience and erudition. In his book *Na obrzeżach arcydzieł* [On the Periphery of Masterpieces], Krasuski undertook a similar task as Kurowicki, but with a caveat that "by considering the works featured here in the context of masterpieces and canons, sometimes more explicitly, at other times only incidentally, I seek to go beyond established, meaning non-modern, literary poetics and aesthetics" (Krasuski, 2009, p. 7). Thus, Krasuski analyzes the works of Bruno Jasieński, Zofia Nałkowska, Wojciech Gieca, Jan Józef Szczepański, Marek Nowakowski and Janusz Anderman (Krasuski, 2009).

Like the author of *Guide to Masterpieces and Beyond*, Jerzy Paszek, in his book *Blask arcydzieł* [The Brilliance of Masterpieces], analyzes and interprets both Polish and foreign works. He chose the following works from Polish literature: *Bogurodzica* [Mother of God], *Fraszki* [Epigrams] by Jan Kochanowski, *Monachomachia* [War of the Monks] by Ignacy Krasicki, *Pan Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus] by Adam Mickiewicz, *Dożywocie* [The Annuity] by Aleksander Fredro, *Beniowski* by Juliusz Słowacki, *Lalka* [The Doll] by Bolesław Prus, *Popioły* [Ashes] by Stefan Żeromski, *Żywe kamienie* [Stones Alive] by Wacław Berent, *Ferdydurke* by Gombrowicz and *Kwiaty polskie* [Polish Flowers] by Julian Tuwim (Paszek, 2020). All three mentioned researchers – Kurowicki, Krasuski and Paszek – named and described their subjective literary canons contingent on the above-mentioned categories,

7 It is worth mentioning the Polish writers whom Kurowicki anointed as authors of masterpieces: Bolesław Prus, Walery Łoziński, Władysław Reymont, Stanisław Brzozowski, Stefan Żeromski, Julian Brun, Kazimierz Wyka, Witold Gombrowicz, Ludwik Flaszen, Jerzy Stempowski, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Andrzej Zaniewski, Edward Redliński, Bolesław Leśmian, Bruno Schulz, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Czesław Miłosz, Tadeusz Różewicz, Miron Białoszewski, Jerzy Kosiński, Ryszard Kapuściński, Sławomir Mrożek, Marek Hłasko, Rafał Wojaczek, Edward Stachura, Stanisław Lem (Kurowicki, 2001) – these authors form the researcher's personal canon.

experience, erudition and necessity of choice. When speaking of subjective canons, it is impossible not to cite Miłosz's textbook *The History of Polish Literature*, published in 1969 in the United States. The Nobel laureate offered a synthetic and chronological overview of the history of Polish literature, yet one that was not free of judgments, opinions and comments. Obviously, "using his extensive reading background supported by his vast teaching experience, he aspired to make a lasting impact on Polish studies in America and on the transatlantic canon" (Shallcross, 2014, p. 290). This textbook is still used today by Polish studies students at American universities, but it did not and does not influence the discourse on the canon in Poland; however the discourse on the Polish literary canon in an international context requires a separate study.

In the 21st century, debates about the literary canon around the world, and therefore also in Poland, revolve around revisiting it: the need to reevaluate and remove certain texts. There is a recurring tendency to censor and amputate masterpieces, which is derived from the discourse of cancel culture. The demands inspired by these tendencies are clearly methodology-driven as usually their etiology can be traced back to cultural theories that grew out of the hermeneutics of suspicion: feminist criticism, postcolonialism, and gender and queer studies. As Arkadiusz Kalin notes, such approaches emerged earlier in the United States, "where the literary canon of Western civilization is being remodeled – even replaced by the representation of minority texts, resulting in the exclusion of, for example, Shakespeare in favor of authors more widely (hitherto) unknown, and representative of oppressed ethnic minorities. This even takes on the dimension of a war for the canon" (Kalin, 2012–2013, p. 84).

In Poland, cancel culture manifests itself especially in disputes over the canon of school readings, which, like the canon of readings in philology studies, is an example of a codified literary canon. It is approved by specialists and relevant state bodies (in the case of academia, by universities), with the goal of teaching pupils/students about the most important works of literature (and more[8]). Some

8 The current Polish literature core curriculum for high school/vocational schools also recommends theater and film works.

researchers, critics and journalists suggest removing Sienkiewicz's 1911 novel *W Pustyni i w Puszczy* [In Desert and Wilderness] from the canon because of the ideology underlying the plot, which is based on racism, colonialism, chauvinism and praise of white domination. Most recently these demands were expressed in a 2021 essay by Maciej Gdula, in which the sociologist stated, "We keep in the canon of compulsory readings a novel that teaches a sense of superiority towards people of other races, shows how to celebrate one's own culture and despise foreign culture, and justifies the domination of the strong over the weak" (Gdula, 2021). Ryszard Koziołek retorted: "Of course this book is, from today's point of view, full of racist clichés, Eurocentric hubris, male superiority, and an exploitative approach to nature. But precisely because of this, it is perfectly suited for teaching ethics and empathy, based on the simulation game of imagination" (Koziołek, 2023, p. 25). A critical reading of the work as advocated by Koziołek allows the work to remain in the canon and to for readers to reflect ethically, aesthetically and methodologically on the controversial elements inherent in its plot.

Sienkiewicz is accused of racism, while Boleslaw Prus and Zygmunt Krasiński are charged with anti-Semitism, which also makes their works (*Lalka* [The Doll] and Nie-Boska komedia [The Un-divine Comedy], respectively) unworthy of a place in the canon, according to the revisionists. Leonard Neuger looked at this issue in his article "Antysemickie wątki w polskim kanonie literackim" [Anti-Semitic Themes in the Polish Literary Canon] (Neuger, 2008). Here, as in the case of Sienkiewicz, it seems necessary to read these works critically, refer them to the present day, yes, but with knowledge of the historical realities in which these pieces were written. Regarding Prus, Neuger remarks on the issue of the writer's anti-Semitism: "I would be very cautious here, in demanding each time that the writings be placed in the political and socio-economic context of the 'here and now'" (Neuger, 2008, p. 41). At the other extreme of the disputes over the inclusion of Jewish themes in the Polish canon, on the other hand, is Jerzy Kosiński's *Malowany Ptak* [The Painted Bird], the only novel from the writer's oeuvre that "has stood the test of time and is included in the American canon of compulsory reading on the Holocaust" (Kępiński, 2021, p. 157). Meanwhile, in

Polish literature, as well as in Polish humanities, it is mostly glossed over or discounted through the prism of Kosinski's biography, as evidenced, for example, by Joanna Siedlecka's 1994 book *Czarny ptasior* (The Black Bird), in which the reporter disavows *The Painted Bird*, and portrays its author as a mythomaniac and a liar.

Thus, it is not necessary to invalidate, amputate a work: it is enough to initiate a discussion about it, to subject it to interpretation, to look at it from different perspectives. Janion pointed out that "Critical hermeneutics … seeks to consciously experience our existence. To this end, the effort to reinterpret tradition and the effort to create a personality that understands and finds a language to speak about their existential situation becomes necessary" (Janion, 1996, p. 36). Such optics on the canon seem to be the most reasonable, if we assume that we want to participate in the canon, have access to it, and yet not remain passive towards the contexts that the present times bring. After all, one could have valid (from the viewpoint of a particular position) objections to any masterpiece. This was mentioned by Fred Nichols: "what would the reading list look like if it were compiled according to the criterion of prohibition of drugs. The first book to be removed would be *The Odyssey* because when Telemachus arrives at the court of Helen and Menelaus, Helen gives him all sorts of drugs that make them forget their troublesome past" (Nichols, 1992, p. 176).

Also the voices about the need to remove Romantic works from the canon of literature are close to cancel culture. Here, there are no accusations of discriminating against anyone, but of shaping Tyrtaean attitudes of future generations of Poles. The works that are still singled out from the rich, diverse and hardly unequivocal oeuvre of the Polish Romantics are primarily those that contain the ideology and symbolism of martyrdom. School teaching guidelines, both when it comes to methodological theory and pedagogical practice, predominantly suggest reading the works of Mickiewicz or Słowacki from a historiosophical angle, ignoring the existential issues. And yet it is perfectly possible to read Słowacki as well as other Romantics "outside the canon" (Troszyński, 2014). The school reading canon has remained intensely saturated with Romantic works since 1945. The number of texts changes depending on the adjustments made to the Polish classes core curriculum, but

Romanticism is always, with the exception of modernity, represented most heavily. For the aforementioned reasons like the prominence of national messianism, the call for active struggle for national liberation or the imperative to fight the revolution, voices calling for the removal of Romanticism from the canon recur from time to time. One of the most recent contributions on this topic is that of Marcin Matczak, who, in his 2022 essay "Pora złożyć Mickiewicza do mausoleum" [Time to entomb Mickiewicz in a mausoleum], argued that "*Ballads and Romances* will not promote romantic attitudes. They will dishearten readers. They will not increase readiness for sacrifice, but discouragement. … There is no point in reading a text that has lost touch with our reality, because it is impossible to make it one's own" (Matczak, 2022, p. 25). However, this is what Janion said on the subject of the presence of Romanticism in the canon more than twenty years ago:

> Careless manipulation of the school reading canon is quite dangerous in general. The school canon […], does mark the space of national culture. […] Communication within the national community is predicated not only on a common colloquial language, but also on the "deep" existence of a literary language, which constitutes a reservoir of meanings that constantly imbue the national culture (Janion, 1996, p. 13).

Another phenomenon in the discourse on the literary canon are voices that advocate rejecting it entirely. The provenance of this position can be found in postmodernism. On humanistic grounds, this current of thought correlates with political determinants, hence "the popularity of the traditional notion of 'masterpiece' is melting away in neoliberal culture, living by the slogan of deconstruction of tradition. For many contemporary art commentators, the concept of 'masterpiece' is overly dogmatic and therefore passé" (Krasuski, 2009, p. 162). Since there is to be no masterpiece, there will also be no canon or even canons. Another reason for the rejection of the canon, one that is not rooted in postmodernism, is the belief that it is oppressive or that it is impossible to define its criteria. Arguing in favor of the former claim, Jacob Kornhauser takes a clear stance that "The canon is something bad mainly because its very essence contains violence,

the desire to impose one's vision and requirements of interpretation on others. Additionally, this violence is seemingly anonymous, hiding under the guise of … lists and syllabuses. Meanwhile, behind each choice there is also a private strategy that charts the horizon of interpretations" (Kornhauser, 2019, p. 73). The second case, in turn, is represented by Jakub Lichanski's outlook: "There is no point in talking about a literary canon when there is no clearly defined hierarchy of values to which literature is supposed to appeal" (Lichański, 2012, p. 67). Given the above-mentioned standpoints on revising the canon or claiming the need to abolish it, it is worth noting the dynamics of the discourse. In 2012, Elizabeth Wichrowska noted that:

> Questions about the need to build a literary or cultural canon have also appeared in the Polish debate. The much later discussion, compared to what was taking place in Western Europe and the United States (the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries), never had the hallmarks of extreme, exclusionary statements against traditional thinking about the canon, tracing the seeds of sexist or racist thinking to its creation. In a word, the Polish discussion of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century did not exactly succumb to the pressure of American universities (Wichrowska, 2012, p. 12).

In a decade, as can be seen from the summary above, the situation has changed dramatically.

The canon should be under constant reevaluation, critical reflection, but the approaches resulting from cancel culture seem dangerous. It is certainly more beneficial for the coming generations, current and future readers, to expand the canon, not censor it, deepen it, not amputate it. Jerzy Szacki, who insisted that the canon should be flexible and subjective, held a similar view. As he noted, "The canon of culture is … inevitably changeable and prone to constant contention from social subjects who, for one reason or another, feel alien to it. The canon of culture is necessarily somebody's: the question about the canon is ultimately a question about the community that produced it and considers it its own" (Szacki, 1994, p. 19). Joanna Przyklenk, on the other hand, postulates thinking about a canon, not the canon. In her opinion:

> Since in the modern world there is no longer any question of a single, central and universally accepted canon, there is rather talk of (multiple) canons, motivated, for example, by the educational situation (the canon of school readings), an ad hoc rankings (the canon of popular books) or sales lists (the canon of purchased books). In this sense, any list made for public or private use will become a canon in its own right (Przyklenk, 2017, pp. 169-170).

Krystyna Koziołek has noted that "any book reading, canonical, social, popular, or fashionable, reconnects the reader to themselves; detaches them from the world, glues them to the book, but forces them to feel, think, and experience for themselves" (Koziołek, 2017, p. 202). This hermeneutic and phenomenological function of a literary work, after all, is also one of the basic functions of the canon, which should provide the reader with images of the world and human experience compatible with their experiences, and enrich their horizon with realities not directly accessible to them. Hence, the following statement by the researcher may come as a surprise: "when reading, they must 'experience' something in my likeness, and I do not mean the community of the canon, but the kind of experience that only reading literature offers" (Koziołek, 2017, p. 202). Does indeed the experience of reading exclude the community of the canon? It does not have to; after all, the canon is precisely meant to produce community, to bring people together, to encourage them to participate in the great history and writing tradition of a country or nation. As Zbigniew Herbert pointed out, "There is an erroneous view that tradition is something akin to an inherited asset and that it is inherited mechanically, without effort, and therefore those who object to inheritance and undeserved privileges speak against tradition. Meanwhile, in fact, any contact with the past requires effort, work, and is difficult and arduous at that" (Herbert, 2000, p. 91). Through the literary texts it includes, the canon also makes it possible – to use the hermeneutic formula again – to understand the world we live in.

In light of all the debates about the Polish canon of literature, it seems that we can distinguish the following stances that have emerged in the discourse and categorize them into:

1. affirmative attitudes:
   (a) acceptance of the current canon;
   (b) acceptance of the current canon, barring the need to reinterpret or expand the interpretation of certain works.
2. revisionist attitudes:
   (a) the need to reevaluate and revisit the canon by removing works containing discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, etc.;
   (b) the need to reevaluate and revisit the canon by introducing under-appreciated, forgotten, absent artists into it;
   c) the need to reevaluate and revisit the canon by rethinking it as conditioned by social structures, rather than a single, fixed repertoire of masterpieces.
3. repudiatory attitudes:
   (a) the demand for the complete rejection of the canon as an oppressive and exclusionary structure, i.e. decanonization of literature.

In her article outlining her private mini-canon of literary masterpieces,[9] Janion wrote: "This is what has always interested me most: what hides under the hard shell of the official canon" (Janion, 2011, p. 55). It is worth peeking under the layers of the official canons to pry them open, and then to find and add more masterpieces that will not only show the commonality of experience, our place in tradition and the universality of destiny, but will also teach humility about existence, because "it is the inherent right of masterpieces that they shatter our understandable certainty and that they question our importance" (Herbert, 2000, p. 90), as well as perform the humanistic task of therapy and insight (Janion, 1982) and help us in moments of doubt, as Herbert wrote in his poem "Old Masters" ("I call on you Old Master / in my moments of doubt") (Herbert, 2011, p. 453).

As the author of this essay, I am aware that I have not exhausted the subject. I have tried to give an overview of the most important standpoints in the debate on the Polish canon of literature, as well

9 The researcher mentioned such Polish literary works as Czesław Miłosz's *Obłoki* [Clouds] and Miron Białoszewski's *Pamiętnik z powstania warszawskiego* [Diary of the Warsaw Uprising].

as to sketch the history of this debate, with attention to the most significant tendencies within it. The research, analysis and findings obviously lead to a conclusion. The Polish literary canon (perhaps) should become more egalitarian, inclusive, and encompass, for example, popular culture works. However, this raises a doubt: will the revamped canon prove more valuable than the current one? Or should the two canons be combined: the traditional one, encompassing works from *Bogurodzica* [Mother of God] to Tokarczuk's *Księgi Jakubowe* [The Books of Jacob], with the progressive one, which would make room for song lyrics or popular literature novels? One thing is certain – discussions on the canon will continue.

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Postmodernism in Slovak Prose

Abstract

In the genre of realistic novels, fiction is confined within the boundaries of the real world, yet the author or narrator presents it as reality, as if nothing were fabricated and the entire plot were simply transposed from reality into text. Contemporary authors disclose the processes of their creation, differentiating between what is fabrication, what is fiction, and what is directly incorporated from reality into the text. In postmodern prose, the methods of realism and modernism are interwoven, both integral to the artistic text. In Slovak literature, this phenomenon appears most notably in the works of Pavel Vilikovský and is even more pronounced in the works of Czech-French author Milan Kundera. Often, authors insert themselves into the narrative, particularly in the roles of commentator or by including mini-stories from their own lives into the plot. This is executed through various forms of metafiction. Metafictional techniques, while a hallmark of the postmodern text, are not new; similar elements have appeared in literature in previous centuries but never as extensively as they do now. By the end of the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century, Slovak literature witnessed the rise of authors with distinct postmodern prose features, such as Peter Pišťanek, Pavel Vilikovský, Lajos

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Grendel, Anton Baláž, Viliam Klimáček, Daniela Kapitáňová, Michal Hvorecký, Pavol Rankov, and others. Metafiction is undoubtedly a defining characteristic of the postmodern text, primarily due to the increased prevalence of these elements compared to the past.

Keywords

Postmodernism, metafiction, narrator, Slovak literature, existential prose, palimpsest prose.

Postmodern art (Postmoderna) reflects the contemporary human condition, characterized by both the fear of nuclear and ecological disasters and the real possibility of human civilization's extinction, and by the shift from nation-states to a new phase of societal evolution — the post-industrial or informational society era. While the factory symbolized the past era, the new one focuses on information (Grenz, 1997, p. 26). Fragmentation and episodicity in various human activities have become defining features of postmodern life (Bauman, 1995, p. 25). Postmodernism rejects messianism and salvation, abandons grandiose projects aimed at an uncertain future, such as Nazism, Marxism, and all forms of national socialism, and instead, gravitates towards stability. It acknowledges the traditional values of conservatism and liberalism, despite their intensifying contradictions.

Contemporary art no longer exclusively pursues originality and innovation but embodies a spirit of humor, new irrationality, hedonism, an escape from urban civilization to nature and rural solitude and is marked by opinion pluralism and tolerance. It consciously avoids the overcomplication of text construction, a hallmark of modernity and modernism. This culture is evolutionarily linked to the counterculture and subculture of the 1950s and 1960s, based on communicational pluralism and a departure from modernity, though not in clear opposition to it. In terms of postmodern art and thought, meaningful discussion is possible only with a keen sense of and appreciation for opinion differences, as well as for anti-elitism,

favoring pluralism over strict adherence to rules (Gabliková, 1995, pp. 76–77). W. Welsch refers to this as "its radical reliance on plurality" (Welsch, 1994, p. 34).

While modernist culture created an aura of uniqueness and irreplaceability, distancing itself from everyday life, postmodern culture bridges the gap between high and mass culture, abandoning the emphasis on the uniqueness and irreplaceability of the work or creator.

In this new orientation, postmodern literature often parodies authorities, employing radical irony, as well as pastiche, persiflage, travesty, parody, and paradox. However, postmodernism is not a rejection of modernism but rather its evolution and continuation, albeit with certain modifications. The beginnings and development of postmodernism/postmoderna in society and art are associated with these years and events:

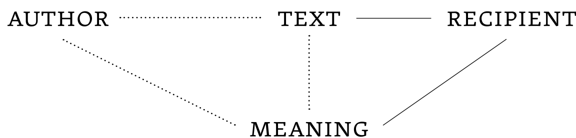
- 1945: Joseph Hudnut publishes a text titled "Postmodern House."
- 1952: John Cage performs his performance art at Black Mountain College.
- 1960: Modern art becomes academic (Jameson, 1983).
- 1960: According to theorists (Leslie Fiedler, Ihab Hassan), pop becomes a challenge to modern elitism.
- 1963: The assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy marks the end of optimism and naivety (L. Mc Caffery).
- 1965: New characteristics of postmodern prose emerge, especially in the works of Pynchon, Barthelme, and Barth.
- 1968: Student movements fail – leading to the emergence of post-avant-garde art.
- 1968: Apollo 8 orbits the Moon at Christmas and returns to Earth; six months later, on July 21, 1969, Neil Armstrong becomes the first person to walk on the Moon.
- 1968: The invasion of allied forces into Czechoslovakia signifies a sobering realization of totalitarian aims and the ideas of socialism based on dictatorship.
- 1968: Works by Rauschenberg emerge; pop art king Andy Warhol is critically injured in an assassination attempt by feminist Valerie Solanas in his "image factory" – a day after the

assassination of Robert Kennedy on June 6; the assassination of Martin Luther King.

- 1977: Charles Jencks in the first edition of his book "The Language of Postmodern Architecture" labels architecture starting from 1970 as "postmodern" (Vay, 1991, pp. 85–87).

Postmodernism is closely linked with the evolution of electronics and the continuous growth of computers. Hence, the term "information society" is used to describe the phase following the industrial society. Particularly after 1968, there has been a fusion of electronics and computing technology with literature and art. Artistic texts are increasingly crafted based on intermediality, utilizing multiple communication channels to provoke an aesthetic response. The television screen enables the simultaneous use of acoustic, visual, and verbal elements in the construction of an artistic piece. The advent and proliferation of video is a hallmark of postmodernity (Pethő, 1992, p. 83), illustrating that visual and verbal elements can be intertwined within a prose text.

In the *postmodern era*, the emphasis in the relationship between the various participants in communication (author, text, reader) shifts to reception, to the act of receiving (Žilka, 2011, pp. 295–296; Fokkema, 1994, pp. 57–58). The author as the creator of the literary work recedes into the background, and only rarely does the relationship (bond) *author* –– *text* take priority, but when it does, a specific work such as an autobiography or memoirs emerges, as an independent communication product, or as a distinctive piece (Hornung, 1997, pp. 221–233). This priority of the text's relationship to the recipient can be illustrated as follows (Žilka, 2015, p. 163):



This is also related to the use of metafictional techniques. *Metafiction* (from Greek *metá*: among, between; [behind] after; and Greek *fictio*:

creation, forming) or "fiction over fiction" or "fiction about fiction". The increasing degree of metafiction problematizes the ontological origin and status of fictional facts and essentially suppresses the story in favor of narration about narration (narrative). The most famous forms of metanovels are:

1. A novel about a person writing a novel (André Gide: *Falšovatelia peňazí* [The Counterfeiters])
2. A novel about a person reading a novel (Italo Calvino: *Když jedné zimní noci cestující* [If on a winter's night a traveler])
3. The work comments on specific conventions of literary creation (John Fowles: *Mantisa* [The French Lieutenant's Woman])
4. The author is a character in their own work (Javier Cercas: *Vojaci od Salamíny* [Soldiers of Salamis])
5. Characters realize they are in a literary work (Miguel Unamuno: *Hmla* [Mist])
6. The reader is hinted that they themselves might be a character in another literary work (Pavel Vilikovský: *Krásna strojvodkyňa, krutá vojvodkyňa* [The Beautiful Train Driver, The Cruel Duchess]).

In contemporary prose, there are passages that are proof that instead of the narrator, the (fictitious) author themselves seems to be asserting in the plot, i.e., the narrator's passage is interrupted by the passage of the fictitious author of the story. This is realized through the use of metafictional techniques. Metafiction is characterized as a technique where a novel (work) refers to its own literary nature, then the fictitious author themselves enters the plot and becomes either a character or directly replaces the narrator. The narrator's speech is replaced by the author's speech, when the author inserts their own expression, their own speech into the text (Pavera – Všetička, 2022, p. 37). M. Kundera in his novel "*Kniha smíchu a zapomnění* [The Book of Laughter and Forgetting] writes about the death of his father, as if putting it in context with the demise of his character Tamina; even the 6th chapter is titled *Taminina smrt* [Tamina's Death] (Kundera, 2017, pp. 171–172). First, the author informs the reader about the health condition of his father, who gradually lost his speech, until he reaches a stage where he can't say a single word. The author-son as a narrator incorporates this into the text as follows:

> There was a doctor with us at the time. He leaned over my father, who could no longer say a single word. Then he turned to me and said aloud, "He doesn't perceive anything anymore. His brain is decaying." I saw my father's large blue eyes widen even more (Kundera, 2017, p. 185).

A novel in which metafiction is prominently featured and abundantly represented is the distinguished literary work of Alexandra Salmela, an author who rose to fame for writing her debut in Finnish, despite her Slovak roots. This is the novel *27 alebo Smrť vás preslávi* (2012), or in Czech, *27 aneb Smrt vás proslaví* (which will be the focus of our considerations, as this translation is closer to the original than the Slovak translation). Alexandra Salmela is not the only Slovak author to have made a mark in a foreign language; preceding her was Irena Brežná, an author who has lived in Switzerland since 1968, writing in German, although she still regards Slovak as her "Muttersprache" (mother tongue). For her, German is the "Vatersprache" (father tongue). Indeed, she emigrated for political reasons (Žilka, 1995, pp. 104–106), but Alexandra Salmela chose Finland as her second home by preference. She also set the thematic backdrop of her work in Finland, although it begins in Central Europe – the Czechoslovak region.

Previous evaluations of her work have primarily focused on the text's composition and structure. The novel features four narrators who alternate, creating a richly varied narration of the story. As she has stated, the novel contains two narrative threads, and within the second, several diametrically different narrators take turns 'speaking':

- the cat – Kassandra,
- a toy pig – Mr. Piggy,
- an old car, Opel Astra.

While Kassandra embodies a rather negative perspective in assessing events within the text, Piggy is portrayed as a friend to the children of the Finnish family, which is most vividly represented by the mother, Piia. The family comprises the daughter, Bean, twins Ziggy and Merlin, and the father, Marko. The story unfolds in the Finnish countryside and is depicted from a Central European viewpoint on family life in

Finland. This perspective is particularly underscored by a comedic lens on Finnish family life and the mentality of its people.

However, the main plot centers around Angie as a foreigner in Finland, even though the narrative begins in the Czechoslovak region, from where the protagonist departs for Finland to gather material for her thesis on Kalevala symbols. What was intended to be a research trip becomes extended as Angie diverges from her thesis to engage in creative writing—composing poems, prose, scripts, and even a humorous textbook for beginners. Naturally, this is a Finnish language textbook aimed at Slovaks (and Czechs). Given the author's extensive exploration of text creation in various forms, these sections are quintessential examples of metafiction, thereby accentuating the postmodern nature of her prose and novel. Pavel Vilikovský is among the most frequent Slovak authors to explore this phenomenon.

Some works defy definitive classification within the literary movement known as postmodernism, as was the case with modernism or earlier with realism and romanticism. It is more about analyzing new elements and techniques even in the works of Slovak authors. Postmodernism as a trend, movement, or current is infused with humor, brimming with new irrationality and hedonism, an escape from urban civilization to nature and rural solitude, marked by opinion pluralism and tolerance, and it purposefully opposes the excessive complexity of text construction — a notable characteristic of modernism and the avant-garde. It is evident that certain trends in contemporary Slovak prose, as well as poetry and drama, directly or indirectly resonate with global events and movements.

A fundamental trait of postmodern literature is the introduction of "unreal reality" into the text from life; it may be more apt to speak of an absurd reality transformed into artistic expression. The postmodern writer does not adhere to established norms but is in a position akin to a philosopher, crafting a new artistic form as if ad hoc (Lyotard, 1993, p. 28). As if haphazardly, even absurd reality is assimilated into Slovak prose through quotations and paraphrases (P. Vilikovský, D. Mitana, D. Dušek, A. Baláž, D. Kapitáňová). Foreign "voices" are either subtly ironized and parodied, or their absurdity is exposed through the author's commentary and additions (an

instance being P. Vilikovský's mocking of excerpts from newspapers and scholarly works). In Baláž's case, it is an endeavor to re-educate prostitutes in camps near Nováky, as satirized in the novel *Tábor padlých žien* [The Camp of Fallen Women].

Not only are Agáty's quotations forcibly classified by parts of literary criticism into postmodernism, but also Jaroš's *Tisícročná včela* [The Thousand-Year Bee], which includes a chapter made up solely of newspaper excerpts, does not quite fit into the overall structure of the text. Conversely, Šikula's novel *Majstri* [The Masters] does exhibit postmodern features, such as segments that challenge the narrator's role. Furthermore, Šikula intentionally rejected lyrical prose, crafting his work in a seemingly contrary fashion, negating poetics. Postmodernism in Slovak prose can be delineated into two phases: the works of authors where postmodern elements are already present (D. Tatarka, J. Johanides, D. Mitana, D. Dušek, R. Sloboda, A. Baláž) and, on the other hand, authors and their works that are distinctly postmodern (P. Vilikovský, L. Grendel). Mitanov's novel *Hľadanie strateného autora* [Searching for the Lost Author] is also a definitive inclusion. P. Pišťanek holds a unique position with his novel (trilogy) *Rivers of Babylon*, as well as his short stories. His work prominently features the principle of parody (echoing Hečko's "Drevená dedina" [The Wooden Village]), but also reimagines the village, which served as an inspiration for lyrical prose. However, it should be clearly stated: being classified as postmodern does not inherently confer artistic superiority. Jaroš's novel and Ballek's prose are qualitatively on a higher level than texts that mechanically employ postmodern elements and techniques (like "Hľadanie strateného autora"). Nevertheless, Jaroš's novel contains elements of magical realism, which are further accentuated in the film adaptation directed by Juraj Jakubisko.

An artistic text of postmodernist lineage is deliberately built on parody and irony; its aim is to explore all spheres of life and mirror them in the text based on the principle of ridiculing certain stylistic strata – specific genres, functional styles – such as educational, administrative, and journalistic genres, political speeches, and the rigid, stereotyped forms and means of rhetoric, as well as literature itself. The statements and genres employed in creating a literary text

are no longer mere reflections of reality but also serve as parody, an ad hoc mockery, par excellence (demonstrating autoparodistic metatextuality and metanarration).

In the novel, fiction took place within the confines of the real world, but the author or narrator pretended as if it were reality, as if nothing was made up, as if the entire plot was just transferred from reality into the text. The contemporary author reveals the processes of their own creation, also revealing when it is an invention, a fiction, and when something is directly transferred into the text from reality. At least one quote from Klimáček's work *Horúce leto 68'* [Hot Summer of '68] (2011): "I am writing a documentary novel. I have changed the names of my heroes, but the name Darina is real. The fact that she appeared and what she did might look like the author's tug on the heartstrings. But it happened like that..." (Klimáček, 2011, p. 150).

We can summarize the techniques used by authors of literary texts in postmodern times:

1. The author explains that someone else passed the text to them (an anonymous author), who also relies on quotations from other works. Evidence is the Note at the end of P. Vilikovský's work "*Večne je zelený...*" [Forever Green...] (1989):

> Proof of the phenomenal abilities and encyclopedic education of the anonymous author (we maintain his incognito for understandable reasons) is also the fact that to support his views, he unobtrusively and perhaps even involuntarily interweaves quotations from leading works of academic literature... (Vilikovský, 1989, p. 87).

Since the authorial law is muddled in publishing practice – the author states – "in this note, we list those works whose quotations we managed to identify securely" (Vilikovský, 1989, p. 87). There are 16 in total. Naturally, this is a note by the author Pavel Vilikovský, with the anonymous author being the narrator, who allows himself the outrageous audacity of taking quotations from other works, mostly scientific. This is a case where the presence of the narrator (so-called anonymous author) of the text is emphasized, while the so-called authorial law on the originality of the text is disregarded.

2. The narrator (author) leaves it to the reader to form their own characterization or description of a character. The reader feels honored that the narrator-author does not impose their feelings or even taste. This technique is used by Viliam Klimáček in his novel *Horúce leto 68'* [Hot Summer of '68] (2011). He comments on the portrayal of his character: "What does a woman who feels genuine disgust at the word 'cabriolet' look like? I leave that to you. In the novel, I deliberately omit descriptions of characters and landscapes. I skip them for you. As a reader, I always quickly skimmed them, and imagining you a bit like myself, I hope you won't miss this fluff" (Klimáček, 2011, p. 8).

3. The narrator reports that one of the characters is collecting material to write a novel (André Gide: *Falšovatelia peňazí* [The Counterfeiters]). If the content of the text involves the creation of a novel (theming creation), we can talk about a metafictional novel, a distinct literary subgenre. Such a text is Stanislav Rakús's *Nenapísaný roman* [The Unwritten Novel] (2004). The main character gathers material for writing a novel, in some ways, it is also a university novel, as it happens in a university environment. It touches on the period of Husák's normalization when many university teachers were dismissed and had to find other employment. The point is the main character's resignation from writing the novel, even though there is more than enough material collected.

4. The narrator becomes a character themselves (Jorge Luis Borges: *Borges and I*). Michal Hvorecký, in the text *Prvé víťazstvo supermarketov* [The First Victory of Supermarkets] from the book *Lovci & zberači* [Hunters & Gatherers] (2001), made the narrator-hunter of customers into a gatherer. The very hunter of customers, who participated in preparing attractions for buyers, eventually becomes a buyer himself. The text is about how the manipulator becomes manipulated, the hunter becomes a gatherer, the arranger of the supermarket becomes a purchaser of goods.

5. Narrative footnotes are as if part of the story, even though they are presented as a commentary on the story. This metafictional technique is used by Pál Závada in his work *Jadvigin vankúšik* [Jadviga's Pillow], which is based on the diary of András Osztatný (1st level), notes of his wife Jadviga added to the text (2nd level), and

meanwhile, there are notes by their son Mišo Osztatný, who not only translates Slovak sentences from Slovak to Hungarian but also aptly comments on them. Slovak sentences, sometimes even longer passages, are part of the Hungarian text, i.e., the narrator's domain.

6. The work contains text by another author, even one's own text, incorporated into the novel. This technique is present in Dušan Mitana's *Hľadanie strateného autora* [Searching for the Lost Author], into which he inserted his short story *Ihla* [The Needle] from the short story book *Psie dni* [Dog Days] (1970) (Mitana, 1991, pp. 23–24). Rudolf Sloboda purposefully incorporated foreign texts into his works, which he admits: "Later, I never considered where the idea came from, and when needed, I copied entire sentences from some book, as for example in the conversation of the hero Urban with Hegel in the novel *Narcis* (Sloboda, 1988, p. 39). Hegel's sentences are taken by the author verbatim, without citing the source.

7. The narrator (author) admits that the character may think differently, allowing that their opinions may diverge:

> Could Imro be thinking about this? Hardly. Or maybe yes. He could think, but a bit differently, why should he think like the writer of this book. Why should he think like me? The writer is audacious enough to reveal to the kind reader that he somewhat sympathizes with Imro and whispers various things to him, simply imposing his own opinions on him… (Šikula, 1976, p. 41).

Imro is the main character of the novel *Majstri*, to whom the author-narrator (writer) "imposes" his thoughts, opinions, contemplations. One might ask: was V. Šikula a postmodern author? Definitely not, but metafictional elements in his novel are already a harbinger of postmodern narrative strategies, domesticated in the next period of development of Slovak literature.

8. The narrator reports that one of the characters is collecting material to write a novel (André Gide: *Falšovatelia peňazí*, this also includes Alexandra Salmela's novel, with the difference that in her work, other characters, such as a fictional editor of a literary magazine, also comment on the written texts). If the content of the text involves the creation of a novel (theming creation), we can

talk about a metafictional novel, a distinct literary subgenre. Such a text is Stanislav Rakús's *Nenapísaný roman*. In a sense, Rudolf Sloboda's *Rozum* [Reason] (1982) is also a metafictional novel, as the central theme of the text is writing the screenplay *Don Juan zo Žabokriek* as a post-text to the "Don Juan" theme. The entire plot is about how the screenplay is created, how entire passages are imagined and certain parts completed: "This much I wrote during my night storming. Jano is running for the morning bus, but what now with him? How will Hanka take her revenge? Will she report him? Who is the young man who came with Hanka to see Hrska? Is he a fiancé, a brother? – That still needs to be thought out. – If you want to know how I further imagined the plot for the film, read the next chapter…" (Sloboda, 1982, p.178).

Alexander Salmela also chose this approach in her novel *27 eli kuolema tekee taiteilijan* [27 or Death Makes an Artist] (2010), for which she received the prestigious Helsingin Sanomat newspaper award.

9. The narrator becomes a character themselves (*Borges and I*). Michal Hvorecký in the text *Prvé víťazstvo supermarketov* from the book *Lovci & zberači* made the narrator-hunter of a supermarket customer, respectively, an avid shopper. The text is about how the manipulator becomes manipulated, the hunter becomes a gatherer, the arranger of the supermarket becomes a purchaser of goods.

10. The work can comment on specific literary techniques, categories, can play with them and parody them. Lajos Grendel in the work *Ostrá streľba* [Sharp Shooting] humorously refers to the narrator, respectively, to this epic category:

> After a few weeks and months, he (meaning: the narrator) realized that inside him lived a self-serving narrator, a nefarious narrator, a trickster narrator, a bloodthirsty narrator, a lustful narrator, a cynical narrator, a self-important narrator, a cowardly narrator, a compromising narrator, a murderous narrator, and many other narrators about whom he knew almost nothing due to incomplete self-awareness.

In this spirit, the author (narrator) contemplates the types of narrators throughout the entire chapter, even analyzing and explaining

each of these types (Grendel, 1985, pp. 88–93). Daniela Hodrová points out that in postmodern prose, there is an emphasis on the moment of text creation, thus thematizing the creation of the text itself (Hodrová, 1989a, pp. 31–41). Within it, the author discusses their own poetics, focusing on the moment of generating, constituting the text. Through it, a game based on irony unfolds. This metafictional technique was also used by Rudolf Sloboda in the novel *Rozum* [Reason], as the content of the text is the creation of a screenplay titled *Don Juan zo Žabokriek*, which is in itself a source of humor. The funny part also includes the last name of the main character, Jano Hrsc, and the story unfolds in the Luhačovice spa at the Miramare hotel (which still exists). Indeed, the novel is about the creation of a text, the constant reworking of the story, which is also influenced by a committee and its chief, who demands that the author write about work in line with the principles of creation under socialism. The moment of text creation (the principle "I write about how I write the text you are reading") was first used by André Gide in 1925 in his novel *The Counterfeiters*.

Another characteristic of the postmodern novel is the visualization of the text. Visual elements are no longer just an addition, nor do they only serve as illustrations, but they often become part of the story itself. A typical example is Pavel Vilikovský's book *Silberputzen* (Leštenie starého striebra) – 2006. It is proof that the relationship between literature and other forms of art should be considered. And since we live in an era of pan-visualization, literature itself is becoming visualized.

However, postmodern literature increasingly focuses on phenomena based on intertextuality and carrying the comedic aspect of the text. Among these expressive characteristics of literary work, parody, travesty, pastiche, and irony can be specifically mentioned; in connection with irony, sometimes the term radical irony is used, meaning the ironic (mocking) character of the plot from the beginning to the end. This characteristic of the text is most pronounced in R. Sloboda's *Rozum* (1982), P. Pišťanek's trilogy *Rivers of Babylon* (1991, 1994, 1999), and its culmination is D. Kapitáňová's satire *Kniha o cintoríne* [Book about a Cemetery] (2005), published under the name of the narrator, a retarded character, Samko Tále. Samko Tále,

in many ways, reminds of Hašek's Švejk, but is set in the 1990s in Slovakia during the era of Vladimír Mečiar, a period characterized by Mečiarism. These characteristics are also present in the overall work of P. Vilikovský, but also in A. Baláž's works, especially the novel *Tábor padlých žien* [The Camp of Fallen Women] (1993) is a poignant satire of totalitarian practices of the 1950s. The satire focuses on the elimination of brothels in Bratislava and the transfer of prostitutes to labor camps, where they are attempted to be re-educated in the socialist spirit.

> Postmodern literature is proof that alongside verbal irony, there is also textual irony. It is primarily applied in parody, travesty, and satire. The essence of irony from a pragmatic point of view lies in the difference between lying and irony and can be explained as follows (Plett, 1982, p. 79).

The text (artistic artifact) in the era of postmodernism is not understood as a "closed" work, but its "openness" is emphasized. This does not mean the possibility of its arbitrary interpretation, but an interpretative program encoded in the work. This allows the reader to perceive (receive) the text at multiple levels. For example, Dieter Penning (1989) lists up to four possibilities of reading or reception of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*:

1. A detective story,
2. A historical novel,
3. A novel of ideas (Ideeroman),
4. A metanovel (novel about a novel).

Czech literary scholar and writer Daniela Hodrová points out that in postmodern prose, the moment of text creation is emphasized, meaning the creation of the text itself is thematized. The author thus discusses their own poetics within it, focusing on the moment of generating, constituting the text. Through it, a game based on irony develops. The moment of text creation (the principle "I write about how I write the text you are reading") was first used by André Gide in 1925 in his novel *The Counterfeiters*. Characteristic symbols of postmodernity include the mirror, museum, mask, labyrinth, and

library. In our case, two symbols (mirror + labyrinth) are metaphorically combined, with the labyrinth playing a key role, allegorically corresponding to the loss of orientation of a person in postmodern hyperspace. Own stories (Dušan Mitana: *Hľadanie strateného autora*), newspaper articles (Pavel Vilikovský: *Kôň na poschodí, slepec vo Vrábľoch*) lose their original meaning and become either a source of self-parody or acquire a parodic character.

We can contrast the characteristics of modernism and postmodernism as distinctive trends of two different artistic directions:

Modernism	**Postmodernism**
1. Mega-structure (Joyce, Proust)	1. Pluralism = self-sufficiency of individual fragments
2. Urban civilization of crimes, murders, violence, Hiroshima, gulags	2. Ecological protection, escape to nature
3. Apollonian (ideal)	3. Dionysian (existential)
4. Rebellion, defiance, rejection	4. Searching for integration
5. Spiritual speculation, creative imagery	5. Simplification, clever improvisation, reduction and impoverishment of form, extravagance
6. Masculine in a semiotic sense as active (original, new, moment of creative input, ethical, committed)	6. Feminine in a semiotic sense as passive (unoriginal, old, moment of adoption, ostentation)
7. A certain alternative ideology of the epoch, contrary to violence; merging and combining of poetic, narrative, and rhetorical techniques	7. Alienation of language, branching and enriching of stylistic possibilities
8. Collage and montage of text	8. Palimpsest (originally a parchment manuscript rewritten multiple times after erasing older text)

Postmodernity is characterized by the same theme, the same movie being remade with different actors, crew, and in a different period. It usually involves reworking the theme, what filmmakers call a "remake." This approach is also known from literary practice – rewriting a text, or "re-writing" the same text in new historical conditions and a different environment, reminiscent of film "remakes" from previous periods.

"Re-writing" as a technique was introduced into literature by J. L. Borges in the short story *Author of the Quixote, Pierre Menard*, which can be a good example of intertextuality – the pre-text is Cervantes's novel, and the post-text is Borges's story. J. Derrida works with the concept of the trace, which can also be applied to the process of creating a relationship between the pre-text and post-text (Derrida, 1999, pp. 77–78). Intertextuality is indeed a prominent feature of postmodern art, which can manifest in the form of quotations or through adaptation, linking the new text to an already existing text in the spirit of contemporary poetics. Overall, in the postmodern era, the focus of creation shifts from the relationship REALITY – TEXT to TEXT (1) – TEXT (2), meaning the new text is linked to an older text, or possibly multiple texts. Older texts – as U. Eco points out – are revised, rewritten "with irony and without benevolence," hence postmodernity deliberately uses intertextual linking, i.e., quotability or intertextuality; this form dominates in the works of P. Vilikovský, L. Grendel, but also in the dramatic work of K. Horák (...let Your kingdom come...), where he subjects Ľ. Štúr, his life, and lifelong work to artistic critique and reevaluation. The work of V. Klimáček belongs more to the second group than the first, as the author parodies already existing texts. In this context, it is worth mentioning that P. Zajac, instead of palimpsestic creation, uses the term "simulacral form" of postmodernity.

Existential prose

The existential form of postmodernism mainly developed in Central and Eastern European regions, where societal absurdity reached such a degree that it almost invited themes for exploration. Instructive in this respect is the thinking of Czech (now French) writer

Milan Kundera, who draws from the Jewish proverb: "Man thinks, God laughs." As he himself states: the Renaissance author François Rabelais emerged in his imagination as having heard God's laughter one day, and probably from this idea the first significant European novel "Gargantua a Pantagruel" emerged. Within this concept, political reality is either negated or re-evaluated from the perspective of so-called radical irony. Man thinks and acts nonsensically, yet reality slips through his fingers. God must be laughing at this, as from a higher perspective, all ideas – especially the way they are deformed – must seem funny and absurd. The postmodern era rejects and ironically re-evaluates all so-called "great ideas" of salvation and messianism; the so-called "metanarrative stories" with universal validity should be eliminated (Lyotard, 1993, p. 29). These "stories" (monolithic ideological projects) should be replaced by a plurality of opinions, ideological projects of various origins.

Milan Kundera's most famous work from his domestic period is the novel *Žert* [The Joke], completed in 1965 and first published in Prague in 1967. The criticism at the time (Zdeněk Kožmín) labeled this work as "existential prose," a novel of "human existence." The critic stated: "The individual characters of the novel represent more than just contemporary types: they are also an expression of a certain existential position in life, they are a possibility of how to live in the face of the threat and reality of absurdity. The always successful ideologue Zemánek is only fully revealed and convicted in this existential layer of prose" (Kožmín, 1991, pp. 315–316).

Kundera's novel is based on the establishment and resolution of existential questions within totalitarianism, thus representing the existential form of prose.

A purer form of existential prose is represented by the short story "Eduard a Bůh" [Eduard and God], found in the collection *Směšné lásky* [Laughable Loves] (Brno 1991). A young teacher is accused of religiosity, but he solves his existential problem by having an affair with the principal under peculiar, grotesque, and absurd circumstances. Before the act of love, he forces the principal to kneel, clasp her hands, and pray. "Pray, so God may forgive us," hissed Eduard at the principal. The fledgling pedagogue existentially saves himself through a distasteful erotic adventure.

We know that Milan Kundera, similar to Umberto Eco, first devoted himself to the theory of the novel, and then became a novelist. His theoretical work is titled *Umění románu. Cesta Vl. Vančury za velkou epikou* [The Art of the Novel. Vladislav Vančura's Journey to the Great Epic] (1960). A more elaborate and complete version of this work was published under the title "L' art du roman" (1986).

It seems that of the Slovak classics, from modernism to postmodernism, Dominik Tatarka progressed the furthest. He too represents the existential form of creation, as evidenced by the trilogy written during his dissident period under the title "Písačky" [The Scribblers] (*Listy do večnosti* [Letters to Eternity], *Sám proti noci* [Alone Against the Night], *Písačky*). The entire book has an autobiographical character, including passages about friends and former friends (Milan Kundera, Vladimír Mináč). It's no longer pure literature of fictional provenance; the story isn't always invented but rather adapted to the individual intention of the author. Factography is equated with fiction, with "unlyrical" passages following lyrical ones. In his book, Tatarka addresses the existential problems of a person pushed to the periphery of life. This is particularly felt in parts describing the encounter with a well-known writer, his former friend – Vladimír Mináč. The author here highlights an asymmetric relationship: the author (narrator) is hierarchically "down" on the social ladder, and his partner is "higher up," belonging to Kafka's unattainable "castle," yet offers to mediate, to assist in settling disputes. Friends turned away from Tatarka, which is why his prose is interwoven with autobiographical traits. His financial situation was unsatisfactory, his books were published only in samizdat. Therefore, he inclined towards existential prose, continuing to create even in crisis situations, overcoming everyday challenges through his work.

In Slovak conditions, the inclination towards existential literature began in the 1960s in the prose of Ján Johanides and Rudolf Sloboda. Ján Johanides debuted with a collection of short stories titled *Súkromie* [Privacy], which can be considered the beginning of literature (prose) of this kind. Here, Privacy replaced the empty socialist pathos; where the focus on the life of the individual increases, the existential character of the creation inevitably comes to the forefront. The author has remained faithful to this principle

to this day; this is also evidenced by the preference for "balladicity" in his work. As many as two novels have "balada" [ballad] in their very title as a genre designation (*Balada o vkladnej knižke* [Ballad of the Deposit Book]; *Najsmutnejšia oravská balada* [The Saddest Orava Ballad]).

Rudolf Sloboda debuted with the novel *Narcis* [Narcissus] (1965), which is one of the best works of post-war Slovak prose. He created the type of anti-hero and in the work itself demonstrated the disintegration of human identity, as well as the continuous changes in perspective on reality. He achieved this aesthetic level only in the novel *Rozum* [Reason] (1982), and in his dramas written shortly before his fateful suicide in 1995 (*Armagedon na Grbe* [Armageddon on the Grbe]; *Macocha* [Stepmother]).

To existential prose, we can also assign the novel (text) *Pamäti* [Memories] (1996). Rudolf Sloboda here – in the spirit of Central European traditions – engages publicly and socially: judges, evaluates, equates dreams and reality. He assesses "fatherly thoughts": "... such a father must understand everything, starting from the creation of the world to the relationship with the monetary union or NATO. His opinions are always ahead, best 'capture' the era, but if you take the trouble to analyze his article, you will find only verbalism in it" (Sloboda, 1996, p. 120).

Elsewhere (further on):

> ...these ideologues, fathers, are completely corroded inside. Their soul is destroyed or dysfunctional, they have killed their conscience. It becomes evident in rare moments when these men of the nation sit next to you, slightly drunk, say, and you quietly ask them, so they don't have to 'proclaim', whether they really think Slovaks are more than Hungarians... Such a person roars: 'Yes, a Slovak is more than a Hungarian.' He must with this roar intimidate both me and his conscience, or rather his reason. (Sloboda, 1996, pp. 122–123).

Here, however, these are political, civic opinions, but this work is also special in that it presages the author's death, his suicide. The entire chapter (16.) is dedicated to the analysis, thorough (existential) analysis of the concepts of spirit, body, and soul.

Even more intriguing is the next chapter (17.), especially its conclusion, where the author speaks with God and then enters a bunker – this bunker resembles a grave. The section (and chapter) ends with the sentence: "Just to get away from there as quickly as possible..." (Sloboda, 1996, p. 114). Here, in the Heideggerian sense of the word, it's not just about anxiety as an abstract concept of death, but about the very concrete proximity of death – and fear of it. Yet, the author seems to want to test it, flirting with it. Sloboda also employs a frequently used trope of postmodernism – prosopopoeia (here revives J. Šimonovič, a poet, his/our schoolmate), but often interprets texts, deliberating his opinions.

At the very beginning of existential prose stand J.P. Sartre, but perhaps even more so A. Camus with his novels (*The Stranger; The Plague*). But mainly representatives of the "new novel" influenced Central European literature, including Slovak prose. Among the younger prose writers who chose this path is Dušan Mitana, especially with his novella *Patagónia*, but also some of his short stories belong here. Alienation, nothingness, inner emptiness is a characteristic feature of his short story *Dohady*, where he describes the funeral of the mother of the main character of the artistic work. Alienation is reflected in the fact that no one mourns his mother during the funeral.

A new type of prose represents, exemplifies the work of Peter Pišťanek *Rivers of Babylon*, which is thematically set in the new conditions – after 1989. If the previous examples in terms of using so-called radical irony do not reach the level of Milan Kundera's works, although undoubtedly in some texts this aesthetic category flashes as part of the literary norm (*Balada o vkladnej knižke* [Ballad of the Deposit Book] or the drama *Macocha* [Stepmother]), P. Pišťanek spices up his repugnance with his radical ironic attitude towards the then methods of privatization as well as the adaptation of former state security officers to new conditions. And finally, the career of the main character, based on audacity, uneducation, coarseness, and rusticity, is instructive. Existentially, the type of person with substandard lexicon and non-salon manners continues to be at an advantage, which in itself is a source of irony, even cynicism.

In this category, we also need to include the work of Václav Pankovčín, author of two novels (texts): *Marakéš* (1994) and *Tri ženy pod*

orechom [Three Women Under the Walnut Tree] (1996). It should be said that the first of these is more significant and can be considered an attempt at a literary depiction of a postmodern Kocúrkovo. Although the story takes place in some Eastern Slovak village, it could happen anywhere. With *Marakéš*, we are, as Faust with Kocúrkovo. It's worth quoting J. Záborský:

"Faust shook his head gravely at the mention of Kocúrkovo. Although he was very proficient in geography, he knew nothing about Kocúrkovo.

'Eh, well,' the oil merchant helped him, 'wherever you point on the map between the Tisza and Morava, you always hit Kocúrkovo, this funny side of Slovakia.'" (J. Záborský: Faustiáda (1984)

Postmodern elements here include: the application of radical irony and absurdity in the form of grotesque, fragmentation of the text, resignation on the story (second part). Connections should be sought with the work of M. Zimková *Pásla kone na betóne* [She Grazed Horses on Concrete], and finally, the use of dialect as a characteristic tool has its traditions in Slovak prose (Zuzka Zguriška). The most significant characters speak Zemplín dialect: Chosé, the greatest politician in Marakéš, Sandokan, the lion of Marakéš. Sandokan, the main character in part 3, heads to the Big City to support the prime minister, where he also demonstrates his belonging to the village with his Zemplín dialect, shouting: "We won't give up our Premier!" His banner is written in Zemplín dialect: "EVEN SANDOKAN FROM MARAKEŠ LOVES OUR PRIME MINISTER AND SUPPORTS HIM" and on the other side "WE WON'T GIVE UP OUR LEADER!" Marakéš becomes a symbol, is pars pro toto, and is geographically located somewhere in Eastern Slovakia. (The author is from Papín, district Humenné). Marakéš is not located in Morocco, but near Papín: "Marakéš is not Papín" – writes the author. – "Marakéš is an imaginary village, somewhere in Eastern Slovakia, but no one knows exactly where." Characters such as grandma Ovaňa, and all members of the so-called Rapid Rota (Vlaďo Ďugov, Ďoďo Cvanciger, Laci Karbuľa, Janko Falat, Cyril Hvizdoš, and Sandokan) speak in dialect.

In the prose *Tri ženy pod orechom*, the author makes even greater use of folkloric and mystical, or rather mystifying elements; it could be said that these are more folkloric motifs than elements. For

example, three women have been sitting under a walnut tree for 17 years, praying and waiting for the end of the world, reminiscent of the structure of ballads about a mother and daughter known in the Carpathian region. The mother (Marimka) does not want to allow her daughter Martuška to study in the city, fearing she will become (morally) corrupted. Maruška was the only girl in the village to whom an angel appeared. Marimka had such magical power that she could attract all the men from Marakéš. Explanation of the magical power: Marimka longs greatly for men. The book also contains curses and comparisons with the mythological element "perún" (the Slavic god of thunder). The coffee is described as strong as a hundred perúns. Pankovčín also ironizes Slovak politics, ideology, and even the rustic way of religious life, giving his texts nationwide significance. A special place in his texts is occupied by the PUB as a chronotope – many significant events take place on this sacred ground. Alongside the pub, the church (or listening to mass on the radio with a bottle of slivovice – p. 105) – dinner or supper – the toilet (thinking only happens in the toilet).

Palimpsest prose

Alongside existential prose, palimpsest prose has also developed in Central European contexts, although it started evolving later and is even today less represented than the former type. Generally, it can be said that every text exists only in relation to other texts, ontologically and epistemologically always tied to some existing pre-text or pretexts. While previously this relationship was obvious, today quotations and allusions become an integral part of the post-text; it is now difficult to precisely determine the sources of some references in the text. The literary (artistic) norm has fundamentally changed: the priority of production has been replaced by the priority of reproduction. The aura of uniqueness is no longer a requirement for an artistic work, as the focus shifts to seriality, to the mass occurrence of the same segment, medium, or phenomenon; originality lies more in how individual elements are embedded in a new context. Instead of writing, emphasis is shifted to re-writing. In this context, we can talk about the palimpsest form of new artistic

works, as their structure intersects many other segments, passages known from other works, only they need to be precisely identified. However, the new text can also become a commentary on a previously created text, it is linked to it, can reassess and meaningfully correct or supplement it. Eugène Ionesco, in the short story "The Grotesque and Tragic Life of Victor Hugo," subjects a significant representative of French literature and global Romanticism to humorous criticism. Something similar is attempted by K. Horák in his theatrical work: he has already experimented with the de-canonization of the established "image" of Janko Kráľ, Jonáš Záborský, and later Ľudovít Štúr in the play "Príď kráľovstvo tvoje alebo život, skutky a smrť proroka Ľudovíta (Štúra)" [Thy Kingdom Come or the Life, Deeds, and Death of the Prophet Ľudovít (Štúr)] (staged by the SNP Theater in Martin, directed by R. Polák). But de-canonized forms of "Jánošík" themes in the works of some Slovak dramatists are also known (M. Lasica and J. Satinský, Ľ. Feldek, S. Štepka). It can be said that there is a fusion of procedures for creating a fictional world from the Romantic era with the real world, characteristic of the literary direction from the Realism period (Hodrová, 1989b, pp. 5–13).

In conclusion, it should be stated that, as in Western culture, the contours of postmodernism cannot be precisely defined in connection with Slovak literature. Therefore, the entire issue needs to be addressed by grasping the oscillation between the "old" and the "new", i.e., between modernism and postmodernism as a literary direction[1].)

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1 The study stems from the researcher's several years of interest in the postmodern form of Slovak literature and is based on some of his previous published outputs. This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract no. APVV-20-0179.

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Undesirable Borderlands. Nationality Policy of the Authorities of the Second Republic in the 1930s in Ethnically Transitional Areas

Abstract

Ethnic borderlands were an important part of the national landscape of the Second Republic of Poland. They existed in the areas of contact between the Polish national population and the most important national minority groups inhabiting distinct territories: Ukrainians, Belarusians and Germans. Especially in the 1930s, they aroused growing interest in the state administration. The purpose of this article is to outline different policies of the Sanation camp toward "ethnically transitional areas". These policies varied, but their final goal was always unification through the Polonization of the communities inhabiting such borderlands.

Keywords

ethnic borderlands, Second Republic, Sanation camp, nationality policy, national minorities

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In the cultural context, or even in the narrower sense of nationality, the term "borderland" tends to be not only a descriptive, but also an evaluative term. It seems that until recently it more often evoked positive connotations with the beneficial effects of an "osmotic" process, leading to mutual enrichment of neighboring – and mixed – communities. In the interwar period, similar interpretations were also made within political circles active in the Second Republic, including those in power since 1926, such as the Piłsudski camp. However, in the 1930s, members of this group progressively changed their opinions on the consequences of the existence within the Polish state of ethnically transitional territories, i.e. ethnically unformed territories, located at the junction of large and recognized national groups living in the state.

The issue was and is still disputed. During the interwar period, especially political forces representing national minorities were inclined to deny the existence of such borderlands. In this view, Polish authorities' exposure of their existence was treated as a deliberate "production of tribes," serving exclusively Polish interests. It was argued that such measures are designed to weaken the position of national minorities, as they conceal attempts of Polonization. At present, these discussions are mainly academic both in Polish historiography and international studies. Until the end of the 1980s, and in the literature of our eastern neighbors to this day, there was a very strongly voiced view, which can be simplistically described as a denial of the existence of national border areas, as a living area of groups that are not defined strictly in terms of nationality (Michowicz, 1988, p. 288; Tomaszewski, 1985, pp. 46, 52, 77; Кривуть, 2012, p. 3; Памяць, 1998, p. 93). However, also in this period there were estimates taking into account the existence of these borderlands (Michowicz, 1988, p. 288; Mędrzecki, 1983). More recent Polish historiography seems to share the latter point of view (Linkiewicz, 2018, pp. 25–123; Paruch, 1997, p. 162). As an aside, it should be noted that this view is close to mine.

In order to define "ethnically transitional groups," I have chosen the definition formulated in the 1980s by Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, who, placing emphasis on the subjective factor in determining national consciousness, described these groups as having no sense of belonging to a specified "ideological homeland" (Mędrzecki, 1983,

pp. 236–237). In practice, this meant communities either lacking a "modern" national consciousness (like some Polesie residents), or labile in this regard, as was sometimes the case in the Polish–German borderlands.

Given the controversial nature of the issue, and certainly the peculiar "nebulousness" of "ethnically transitional" communities in the Second Republic, we can only estimate their scale. More recent literature assumes that, in absolute numbers, these groups totaled well over one million inhabitants of the interwar Polish state[1]. One should add to this figure several hundred thousand residents of the Polesie voivodeship from among the group that the 1931 census reported as so-called "locals"[2]. Consequently, it can be conservatively estimated that the "ethnically transitional" communities numbered up to 2 million citizens of the Polish state.

The key issue is to identify those territories of the Second Republic that should be defined as borderlands, as well as the size of the "transitional groups" inhabiting them. Generalizing, we can use a simplified division into eastern and western Polish ethnic borderlands. A more detailed description of these regions should include, in the "western" part, Silesia (Wanatowicz, 1995, pp. 17, 20) and the Kashuby region[3] which is not always mentioned in this context, while in the "eastern" part, the southeastern districts of the Lublin region, as well as the Carpathian Foothills. If one considers the Poleshuks as a "transitional group" – which one does for the purposes of this article – then one would have to add to this simplified division the

1 A figure of 1.4 million is usually given, but this figure should probably be treated as an estimate, rather accurately reflected the actual state of affairs (Paruch, 1997, p. 162). Detailed calculations: (Mędrzecki, 1983, pp. 247–250).

2 The census showed 707,088 declarations of the "local" language, (*Second census*, 1938, p. 24). Mędrzecki expressed the opinion that this figure should be increased by 100,000 inhabitants of the neighboring Novogrudok and Volyn provinces (Mędrzecki, 1983, p. 243). I would lean towards a different estimate, given the political aspect of the operation that was the 1931 census. However, this does not absolutely mean denying the existence of an "ethnic transitional group" of several hundred thousand in Polesie (Cichoracki, 2014, p. 25).

3 Mędrzecki did not qualify Kashubia as an "ethnically transitional" area, but Janusz Kutta, the author of the fundamental study on the history of the region in the interwar period, practically does so, (Kutta, 2003, pp. 13–14). See also Borzyszkowski, 1995, pp. 136–137.

(Polish)–Belarusian–Ukrainian ethnographic borderland within the Polesie voivodeship.

When presenting the very schematic overview, I should make a few caveats. First of all, we are dealing with a very large range in the size of "transitional ethnic groups" living in the regions mentioned. By far the largest are the Poleshuks ("locals"), a community numbering even, according to conservative estimates, several hundred thousand people. The medium-sized groups category would include "transitional groups" living among Silesians and residents of the Lublin region (100,000–150,000). The smallest groups would comprise regional clusters of homesteaded gentry (ranging from several tens of thousands), the most important of which was that concentrated in Podkarpacie, the eastern part of the Lviv province and the Stanislaw province.

It is clear from the above tally that the groups listed do not amount to the indicated global figure of "up to 2 million." What is missing here are both transitional Polish–Jewish and Polish–Belarusian groups (with the exception of the Polesie group, treated here as a whole), as well as several Polish–Ukrainian groups mentioned in the literature (Mędrzecki, 1983, pp. 247–250), or even "Ukrainian-Ruthenian" groups if one keeps in mind the distinctive features of the communities living in the Eastern Carpathians, and especially if one takes into account the Polish authorities' approach to this issue in the late 1930s (Bruski, 1995, pp. 167, 168; Stawecki, 1969, pp. 199–200). Those groups that have been identified, however, are worth special attention for two reasons. Their geographic location is usually easy to pinpoint, and their settlement area coincides with more common geographic-historical concepts. More importantly, however, they were the target of more or less accurate and comprehensive political programs that the organs of the Polish state, whether civil administration or the army, tried to implement.

The nationality policy of the Sanation camp, which came to power in 1926 and held it for the next thirteen years, underwent considerable changes. We should also add that these changes were perhaps greater in theory than in practice. In the first stage of its rule, the party adopted a course that could be described as relatively liberal. The underlying idea was to pursue a program of "state assimilation,"

which, in simple terms, can be defined as a sort of exchange between the state and national minorities. The state was to offer a guarantee of freedoms in the areas of social activism, education and culture, expecting in return political loyalty and, in practice, forsaking attitudes and actions that were designed to cause the territorial disintegration of the Second Republic (Chojnowski, 1979, pp. 73–125).

One vital element of nationality policy in the second half of the 1920s was that it would be individualized at the regional (in practice, voivodship) level. When regionalized and made dependent on local, and in each case at least slightly different, conditions, the administration's actions were supposed to become more flexible, and thus more effective (Paruch, 1997, pp. 153–163). It must be noted that, theoretically, the idea of "regionalizing" the nationality policy could also have been a response to the existence of "borderlands" inhabited by "ethnic transitional groups" (or the authorities claiming so). And it is precisely in such areas, requiring, as it were, *ex officio* individual approaches that they could have been applied. In reality, however, this was not the case. This applies to both the second half of the 1920s and the following decade. In the 1930s, Polonization trends – even if we consider them as incomplete programs – strengthened to reach their apogee in the last years before the war. "Regionalism" was no longer an ideological and political slogan and was becoming only a term suitable for describing the fact that the nationality policy of individual provincial governors[4] was not well coordinated. However, bearing in mind the topic analyzed in this article, the 1930s saw a growing number of projects aimed at the Polish national assimilation of "ethnic transitional groups."

"Borderlands" defined in the context of nationality throughout the rule of the Piłsudski camp were treated as existing, albeit worthy of interest as areas of potential Polonization of "transitional ethnic groups." Even in the 1920s the official goal was "national assimilation through regionalization" (Paruch, 1997, p. 162). Interestingly, political figures who cannot in any way be tied to national (nationalist)

4 The insufficient coordination of nationality policy in the 1930s in the neighboring territories (Polesie and Volhynia) is discussed in Cichoracki, 2015, pp. 119–133.

ideology expressed similar views, which shows how ingrained these beliefs were. A glaring example is Leon Wasilewski, whose politics are interpreted in this way by historiography (Paruch, 1997, p. 162). To the end of his life, he remained loyal to the socialist movement, and occupied a prominent place among the activists of the Polish Socialist Party (Friszke, 2013, p. 99). In post-May Poland, this meant a declaration of anti-Sanation views. On the other hand, however, as co-founder and head of the Institute for the Study of Nationality Affairs, he effectively created an intellectual base for the nationality policy of the Sanation camp (Grott, 2013, p. 38). With the passage of time, in fact, statements, similar in spirit, but incomparably harsher in tone, now seem to have been deliberately planned for propaganda use. It is difficult not to consider otherwise the statement of the long-serving (1926–1939) Silesian voivode Michał Grażyński, which he made in October 1938 in Cieszyn, shortly after the annexation of the Zaolzie part of the city to Poland. Responding to tributes from the mayor of the – until recently Czech part of the city – Józef Kożdoń, the governor said bluntly, “We Poles like clear situations ... we cannot tolerate any intermediate types” (Długajczyk, 1983, pp. 349–350). Grażyński was thus articulating his preconceived notion (Wanatowcz, 1995, p. 24). This wording is even more though-provoking given that Kożdoń was considered the leader of the “Silesian” movement, which – probably contrary to the intentions of the movement’s activists – could be regarded as an “intermediate ethnic group” in the circumstances of that time (Nowak, 1995, p. 19).

Leaving aside the more or less sophisticated assertions coming from the center or periphery of the Sanation camp, what is important is the arguments used to justify the clear-cut attitude to the “ethnically transitional areas” and the groups of their inhabitants. The essential point was the recognition that, depending how far they had come in the process of acquiring national consciousness, these communities were worse or better suited in the eyes of the ruling camp to be drawn into the Polish ethnic group. The numerical increase in the share of the Polish population in the general group of citizens of the state, if only for the sake of securing internal and external security, had to be considered at least a desirable scenario, if not a priority by the ruling camp. Another argument was that an effective campaign for Polish

national choice carried out within the "transition groups" would be a sort of testament to the quality and strength of Polish culture. It would thus also become more attractive from the point of view of those communities that had no problem defining their non-Polish "ideological homeland" (Paruch, 1995, p. 163).

In the second half of the 1930s, with the growing sense of risk of war, a defensive argument emerged with similar reasoning. It boiled down to the belief that in "ethnically transitional" areas, Polishness was not only not gaining, but was actually retreating under the pressure of actions by national minority circles. Such a situation was diagnosed in both the western and eastern regions. In the spring of 1935, officials of the civil and military administration, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sounded such alarm bells, while also pointing to the "unstable and uncertain elements there, whose national affiliation is not clear" ("Diariusz", 1964, pp. 269–270, 502). In 1938, an operation was launched to weaken the Orthodox Church in the southeastern districts of the Lublin Province, which as indicated above, was also classified as "transitional" territory. The military, the main initiator of the endeavor, which in theory was planned as a more extensive as well as a much more elaborate and nuanced project, also stressed the issue of the "retreat of Polishness" (Sawicki, 1992, p. 109).

In practice, the activities for Polish national assimilation of "transitional groups" can be divided into those aimed at organized social life, language, and, finally, religion. It should be noted that these efforts never had the character of a well-thought-out, comprehensive plan. Although they resulted from the aforementioned general premises, they never constituted a coherent, country-wide coordinated project. As there was a variety of activities, with varying degrees of aggressiveness and varying duration, this could indicate a certain potential for the nationality policy becoming more flexible, depending on local conditions, but, on the other hand, it also proves that the policy was short-term, which was not always beneficial from the point of view of its effectiveness.

It can be argued that the priority in the field of organized social activity was to make it difficult for members of "transitional communities" to join non-Polish structures. It seems that we can identify at least three variants of the state administration's approach to this

issue in the 1930s. The less aggressive scenarios were implemented in the Polish–German borderlands. Let us point out, by the way, that this relative – though uneven – temperance of measures in the western region (Silesia, Kashubia) was typical in every area analyzed here. The most important manifestation of it was discouraging the participation in non-Polish or "separatist" organizations, but maintaining the existence of these structures. However, tolerance for those among them that exposed regional – and, to some extent, ethnic – separateness was not the rule and was not maintained until the end of the interwar period. In Pomerania, this approach was seen when Kashubian organizations were officially tolerated while their activities were obstructed (Regional Association of Kashubians, Union of Kashubian Nobility). Remarkably, the context for this was the belief that Kashubian separatism could be used as a channel for German operations. This case, moreover, shows the deficiencies in the coordination of nationality policy in the western region, since the administration was skeptical of the "regionalist" initiatives that were emerging from the military (ZSZK) (Kutta, 2003, pp. 293–324). The Union for the Defense of Upper Silesians, which operated in the Silesian province, survived until 1934 (Wanatowicz, 1994, pp. 112–113).

In the eastern part of the country, action was much more decisive, which was still visible in the first half of the 1930s. Polesie, the largest and most populous of the "transition areas," can serve as an illustration. The setting for the fundamental revision of the principles of nationality policy – announced with regard to Polesie – was a serious threat to internal security (Cichoracki, 2007, pp. 23–104). The turning point, however, was when the leadership of the local administration recognized that the 1931 census, which showed a community of more than 700,000 "locals" (62.4% of the province's population), not only reflected the real state of affairs, but legitimized the elimination of Belarusian and Ukrainian and even Russian organizations (vital in the late 1920s) from the province. In this perspective, so to speak, these organizations lost the right to function in Polesie for nominal reasons, since the communities they were serving accounted for a marginal part of the province's population according to the official census data: 6.7% Belarusians, 4.8% Ukrainians, 1.4% Russians (*Second census*, 1938, pp. 24–27). As a result, up to and including 1933, not only

were socio-political structures abolished, but also those nominally fulfilling cultural and economic goals (*Report "Development...*, 1933, p. 124; Винниченко, 1997, p. 274).

Under special conditions, it was decided to create "regional" structures, but with strongly Polonizing objectives. Such was the nature of the campaign carried out between 1937 and 1939, and designed to activate, under the auspices of the army, the so-called homestead gentry, which was largely recognized as a community that "has lost a sense of Polish national consciousness and is attacked by both Ukrainian and Belarusian nationalisms" (Stawecki, 1969, p. 180). It is worth noting that activism among this community had many different faces. This translated into its organization. In the southeastern provinces, branches of the Union of Homesteaded Gentry were set up, while in the northeastern areas, cells of the Union of Polish Homesteaders were established. In the second instance, the aim was to avoid highlighting the exclusive nature of the new movement in the area, where a certain part of the rural population consisted of Poles who could not be recruited into it for formal reasons as it consisted of communities of historically non-noble origin (Stawecki, 1969, pp. 179–188).

After 1926, the state authorities noticed the linguistic particularities of the "transitional areas." To define it, they used the concept of dialects. However, it was always assumed that these dialects were Polish in nature. Thus, they could not serve as a kind of bridge between solely non-Polish national groups, as was the case, for example, in Polesie, i.e. in the area of demarcation between primarily Ukrainian and Belarusian populations (State Archives of Brest Oblast, hereinafter: PAOB, Polesie Provincial Office, ref. 1/10/2884, k. 67). The example of this region, as well as that of Silesia, shows that the administration's approach to this issue may have been different, although essentially similar assumptions were made (the Polish character of local "dialects"). In the western part, it was deemed that the Silesian "dialect" could be "a component of Polish ideological consciousness" (Wanatowicz, 1995, p. 23). Consequently, we can say that it was, in a way, approved by official bodies.

In Polesia, a fundamentally different scenario was implemented, although it was not without some nuance. Back in the first half of the

1930s, it was recognized that the local dialect should, in the long run, be supplanted by the Polish language, as unlike it, it is not codified, not to mention the whole, widely understood cultural sphere that is not necessarily its asset. This replacement would thus be a relatively natural process as the theory went. Interestingly, in a shorter scheme of things, it was recognized that the "dialect" should not, however, be eradicated, or forcibly eliminated from all spheres of public life at once. This applied to education (more specifically, the language of religious instruction in the state's public schools), as well as to the population's communication with the state apparatus (PAOB, Polesie Provincial Office, ref. 1/8/1089, k. 1; Загідулін, 2005, p. 20). The belief was that this would justify the elimination of the languages of the three largest Slavic national minorities: Belarusian, Ukrainian and Russian. It should be noted that until the end of the 1930s the instructions of the provincial authorities allowed petitioners to address administration officials in the "local" language, in education – with the exception of individual private institutions – the dialect was completely replaced by Polish by 1934 (*Archive of New Records*, Ministry of Internal Affairs, ref. 62, b. 135).

With regard to religion – which, in practice, meant efforts to strengthen the Catholic elements strongly associated with Polishness – the authorities were perhaps relatively the most cautious. The dramatic incidents in the Chełm region in 1938 should be treated – at least with regard to the "transitional areas" – as an exception, rather than a rule in the actions of the government. Similar incidents, though on a smaller scale, occurred in Volhynia. This region, however, can hardly be described as an ethnographically transitional area (Kęsik, 1995, pp. 143–145). In the western Polish ethnic borderlands, the restraint of government actions had a largely objective basis. In both Pomerania and Silesia, it can be considered that by far the majority of the "transitional" communities were Catholic (Wanatowicz, 1995, p. 19). Consequently, there was no room for campaigns to change the existing religious structure.

In the east of Poland, the situation was more complex, the most important sign of which was the role played by the Orthodox Church among the transitional communities. An example of forceful action, aimed, in its essence, at re-Catholization, was the events in the

southeastern areas of Lublin, which were instigated by the military administration. The original plan was to implement a diversified program with regard to the local Orthodox population. It depended on susceptibility to re-Catholization and, in the long run, Polonization. In practice, the most spectacular manifestation of it was the physical removal of infrastructure such as worship sites on the grounds that they were unoccupied or illegally staffed (Stawecki, 1969, pp. 188–201).

However, the example of Polesia shows that re-Catholization was by no means a universal goal for the state administration. Precisely because of the events in neighboring Chełm province, the authorities of the Polesie province steered clear of similar measures. Another reason was the aversion to the neo-Unionist campaign launched by the Vatican, which was, by the way, characteristic of Polish state authorities in general (Klobuk, 2013, p. 159; Śleszyński, 2007, p. 228). It can be inferred from the above that the priority was not to diminish the right of the Orthodox Church to function as such, which is what the political, state-led pressure on believers to change their confession would amount to. This does not mean, however, that changes were not planned or implemented in the sphere of religion, with the aim of winning over "transitional" communities to Polishness. The method, however, was not supposed to be conversion, but Polonization of the Orthodox Church. It seems that it was in the Polesie province, the largest "transitional area," that a set of measures aimed at the Polonization of the Orthodox Church was first developed. These included the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, the gradual Polonization of the liturgy, and finally the imposition of the Polish language on the internal functioning of the Church (PAOB, Polesie Provincial Office, ref. 1/10/2899, k. 52; Вабішчевіч, 2008, p. 225). It is another matter that these measures, originally introduced in an ethnically borderland territory such as Polesie, became, by the late 1930s, elements of a program imposed on the entire Orthodox Church (Central Military Archives, Independent Information Desk of the Corps District Command No. IX, sign. I 371.9/A.45, pp. 3, 4).

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One of the features of the Second Republic was the unfinished process of forming a national consciousness in a large percentage of its citizens. This had its political implications, which were also reflected in the nationality policy of the Sanation camp. The attitude of the Sanation party to the phenomenon of "transitional" ethnic borderlands contained a paradox. The existence of these "borderlands" was a fact from the point of view of the people of that camp responsible for the concept and implementation of the discussed aspect of domestic policy. This fact was unquestionably beneficial at that, but not because this "borderlandness" was a value in itself from the point of view of the interests of the state. For the ruling circles, the advantage of ethnic borderlands was that they could undergo easier – though usually planned for the long term – liquidation, by being given a Polish character.

In the 1930s, and especially in the second half of that decade, when Polonization became an important – and openly declared – element of the state's nationality policy, the number of "borderlands" being contested increased. This paradoxical trend, involving an interest in "transitional communities" in order to change their "transitional" character, was particularly pronounced in the Polish–Ukrainian borderland, or to use a more capacious term, in the southeastern region. Several years before the outbreak of World War II, it became the object of increased, though not always consistent, efforts, whether exploiting even the hypothetical potential for Polonization (landed gentry) or simply designed to weaken the Ukrainian identity of these groups (Carpathian mountain communities).

The answer to the question of how effective the actions of the authorities of the Second Republic were with regard to the "transitional" communities should be left open. The reason for this is the outbreak of World War II, as it is only in a longer time frame than a few years that one could make judgments on the degree of effectiveness of this nationality policy. On the other hand, it should be assumed that where the Polish language gained a monopoly in the broadest sphere of organized social life (Polesie was an extreme example), the progress of Polonization and thus the erasure of the "borderland" character of a given area should be considered to have been likely.

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List of abbreviations

AAN – Archives of New Records
CAW – Central Military Archives
PAOB – State Archives of Brest Oblast

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The Russian Antihero, Or: The Eastern Alternative to the Western World

Summary

The article is an attempt to reflect on the category of the Russian antihero not only as a literary phenomenon, but also as a philosophical and cultural one. The concept of antihero refers to problems that are important for the formation of modern culture, because it models a certain type of anthropology of characters who critically fit into the traditionally established model of heroism and European identity. The Eastern (Russian) perspective adopted here provides an alternative to both Western anthropology and the Western antihero. The specificity of the Russian antihero can be described, among others, on the basis of distinctively Russian problems, such as the so-called 'superfluous man' or 'broad soul.' The Russian antihero is open to criticism of Western values, such as reason, 'disenchantment of the world' (rationalization), and social activism.

Keywords

antihero, Russia, Dostoyevsky, Goncharov, 'living life,' 'superfluous man'

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The word 'antihero' belongs to words with an unstable meaning. On the one hand, it seems to have certain customary meaning (like 'horse' or 'youth'), which is understandable in itself, for example when used in sports reports to describe a football player who, standing in front of an empty goal, misses terribly. On the other hand, however, it refers to a literary or film character to indicate their de-heroized traits and inability to act. However, Anglo-Saxon researchers and critics have something completely different in mind here (they situate the antihero primarily in popular culture, especially in film and entertainment) than Russian ones. It is also justified to claim that the concept of antihero has much broader connotations precisely in the latter tradition, where it cannot be reduced only to a literary (or film) construct, but turns out to be a sign of belonging to a modern formation of the Eastern culture, in which the antihero becomes a clear sign of identity. It is manifested by the opposition of 'us' and 'them,' where 'us' means people of the East (especially Russians), and 'them' indicates people of the West, representatives of the 'disenchanted world,' dominated by the cult of reason, rationalization and pragmatism in action (driven by instrumental reason). In this sense, the antihero counters the Western hero with completely different values: love of nativeness, mystery, the element of irrationality, in short, everything that is characterized by the metaphor of a 'broad' soul: sentient (sensitive, affectionate, melancholic, but also unpredictable, dangerous), poetic, religious and... anti-religious. Simply put: full of ambivalence.

Who is an antihero? He is an outsider, a character who is in particular conflict with commonly accepted norms and forms of social life, questioning them and justifying this attitude in a reflective way. The antihero is not simply an unprincipled scoundrel or villain. He is most often involved in moral conflicts and sometimes causes resentment. However, he also evokes sympathy in equal measure. Sometimes he scares and saddens, but, on other occasions, entertains and amuses. One of the most important theories of humour (represented, among others, by Kant, Hegel, Vischer, Nikolay Chernyshevsky, J. B. Boriev, Anatoly Lunacharsky) (see: Ziomek, 2000, p. 22) assumes, as its condition, contrast, deviation from the norm, contradiction. The antihero is a person who, if he has

bad intentions, causes good outcomes. If he desires good, he achieves evil. The more he dreams of ideals, the more he discredits them and the other way round. The lack of heroic features in this case reveals a longing for heroism; questioning generally accepted moral principles also shows a longing for these principles. As a conscious and self-aware man, the antihero only discovers the illusory or fictional nature of the social order, and exposes its instability, impermanence and hypocrisy, whereas at the same time he dreams of such perfect order. He is indeed a nihilist, but in the sense of disappointment that he experiences when he recognizes that an ideal world does not exist. It is hard not to recall here the definition of a nihilist by Friedrich Nietzsche (2003, p. 87): "A nihilist is a man who judges that the real world ought not to be, and that the world as it ought to be does not exist." But precisely for this reason, paradoxically, he is also a moralist. Recognizing the abstraction of codified ethical systems, he formulates a morality based on sensitivity and basic human feelings. This morality is the expression of an encounter with a changeable and foundationless world, with another human being who is ephemeral, weak and suffering.

When it comes to the antihero tradition, the Russian context deserves special attention and distinction. The word antihero itself has Russian origins (*антигерой*). It was used for the first time in *Notes from Underground* (1864) by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a novel in which the basic model of this sort of character was created ("a novel needs a hero, and all the traits for an antihero are expressly gathered together here"). It should be emphasized here that although it is possible to distinguish several subtypes of this character, as one can read in the Russian *Literary Encyclopedia*, they all appear in the most radical form in Dostoyevsky's work.

It is reasonable to assume that the type referred to as *лишний человек*, the 'superfluous man,'[1] precedes radical heroes associated

1 Among the 'superfluous men' one could mention heroes such as: Eugene Onegin (Pushkin), Pechorin (Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Times*), Rudin (from Turgenev's novel of the same title), Oblomov (Goncharov's title character), Leonid Stepanovich (*Leonid Stepanovich i Lyudmila Sergeyevna* by Avdotia Glinka) or Valerian Pustovtsev (*The Asmodeus of Our Times* by Viktor Askochensky).

with historical Russian nihilism, so it has a prototypical dimension[2]. Before the works of Dostoyevsky (who created various types of antiheroes, e.g. Stavrogin in *Demons*, Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, etc.), one should mention Lermontov (*A Hero of Our Times*) and Pushkin (*Eugene Onegin*), the works of Nikolai Gogol, and later Chekhov. A special place in this tradition is certainly occupied by Oblomov, the title character of Ivan Goncharov's 1859 novel, a Russian classic. I will return to these matters later on.

The antihero's place of residence is a carnivalized world. Some characters from ancient and later heroic poems and comedies have a carnivalized image. One perceives the way of thinking and personalities of these figures in clear opposition to the cultural model in force in a given historical period[3].

The carnival image of the world, as it is known thanks to Mikhail Bakhtin, placed emphasis on freeing oneself from binding, universal and permanent truths and values, and opted for perceiving the world as becoming, dynamic and renewing. It also abolished the hierarchical nature of relations in favour of equality (Bakhtin, 1983, p. 148).

The 17th and 18th centuries marked the definite departure from carnival sensibility, its place was taken by seriousness – from then on it claimed to express the truth about human existence (Bakhtin, 1983, p. 161). Bakhtin, however, believes that the carnival image of the world is subject to a deeper adaptation, and although its external manifestations disappear, its new dimension turns out to be the carnivalization of passion, the essence of which is the ambivalence of love and hatred, greed and selflessness, lust for power and humble humility, comedy and tragedy, etc. (Bakhtin, 1983, p. 168). A literary character with antiheroic features that will turn out to be

2 For more on this subject, see: Kryska, 1998.

3 As Krystyna Ruta-Rutkowska writes: "The comedy of Aristophanes negates […] pathos, opposes the belief in the inviolable hierarchy of the world. Therefore, it often creates inverted visions, based on the idea of a different hierarchy. […] the vision of the world contained in the Aristophanic comedy […] turns out to be too subversive, exceeding the norms «of good taste». Not only does it make the body, which is cursed because it is sinful and devoid of any rationality, a matrix for understanding reality, but it also contradicts order; it mixes reason and instinct, unofficial and official, uplifting and «scandalous»." See: Ruta-Rutkowska, 2002, pp. 429, 434.

a consequence of this adaptation is a romantic hero – Byron's Don Juan, Goethe's Faust, Słowacki's Kordian, Pechorin from Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Times*, or Pushkin's Eugene Onegin. They consistently reject the generally accepted system of moral values, lifestyles and universally respected life and social goals approved by the traditional paradigm of European culture. In this sense, one can talk about **the first antihero model**. It often includes literary characters with unique, outstanding features, but unruly and rebellious (like Stavrogin from Dostoyevsky's *Demons*). **The second antihero model** would be defined by characters who could be described as **everymen** – average, weak, lost, de-heroized – like Oblomov, the title character of Goncharov's novel. The antihero is an inverted idealist: ideals and the world of spirit are what he desires, but he is aware of the futility of this desire. The world of ideals does not exist. In this sense, one can call Faust, Werther or Kordian antiheroes. However, Tristan, Robin Hood, Rob Roy or Janosik are not antiheroes. Although they question the officially recognized system of values, they are heroes "in the eyes of socially and politically disadvantaged classes," as Hanna Gosk (1992, p. 115) notes.

Certainly, the second and no less important antihero tradition, next to the carnival one, is the one that can be traced back to the world of fairy tales, fables and epic poems, and in which a demonic element is visible, as Meletinsky (1994) notes. At first, it poses a challenge to the activity of the heroes, who tirelessly fight against it. However, since the 17th and 18th centuries, when the departure from carnival sensibility becomes more and more visible, and the joy of life is replaced by the awareness of the seriousness of the world and existence, demonism sometimes becomes the experience of literary characters themselves (from the legendary motif of selling one's soul to the human-devil figures of Satan from Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*). Therefore, Romanticism once again turns out to be an important breakthrough, in which the antiheroic element is found in the metaphorical unconscious and dark side of the soul (e.g. the motif of the twin, the doppelgänger). A whole range of characters could be mentioned here: Don Juan and Manfred (Byron), Mandeville and St. Leon (Godwin), Faust (Goethe), Pechorin (Lermontov), and Polish

ones: Konrad (Mickiewicz), Kordian (Słowacki) or Count Henryk (Krasiński) – with various reservations, of course. The demonic nature of antihero, a special kind of 'dichotomy,' is expressed here as various forms of division, the clash of forces of good and evil, also in the perspective of romantic irony distancing itself from the world. Each time they prove isolation, loneliness and suffering of an individual.

Following the romantic lead, one may notice that Don Juan, Pechorin and Onegin undoubtedly gravitate towards the category of antihero. What is certain is that while the concept of antihero cannot be unreservedly compatible with the romantic attitude, this relationship does exist. An antihero is a disappointed idealist who experiences existence as passing of time, transience and impermanence. The bridge between the romantic and the modernist antihero (in the narrower sense of the word modernism) may be the category of dandyism, a rebellion against mass culture and the established social order, with the simultaneous failure to put forward any ideal (apart from an aesthetic one) or a new system of values. The category of dandyism seems to connect the above-mentioned romantic heroes and leads to the modernist dandy antihero: Jean des Esseintes from *Against the Grain* and Durtal from *Là-bas* by Huysmans, Lord Harry and Dorian Gray from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Wilde or Lafcadio from *The Vatican Cellars* by Gide.

The unquestionable and original concept of Russian culture and literature certainly is the superfluous man, which I mentioned earlier. The term itself has its source in literature, it appears for the first time in 1850 in Ivan Turgenev's *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*. The protagonist, thirty-year-old Tchulkaturin, terminally ill with tuberculosis, decides to describe his life in a diary. All his relatives have left him, except for his old maid. There is no reason to summarize Turgenev's novel here, but it is enough to note that it contains important attributes and properties typical of the Russian antihero: clerical work, illness, unrequited love, in-depth self-analysis, a feeling of being useless and an inability to cope with the challenges of the world.

The concept of superfluous man turns out to be extremely accurate in relation to many of the central figures of 19th-century Russian

literature. It can also be said that the superfluous man becomes very important for the formation of the literary figure of antihero, he also precedes the radical heroes associated with historical Russian nihilism, so he has a prototypical character (see: Kryska, 1998). In this context, references are made to Eugene Onegin from the novel in verse of the same title by Alexander Pushkin, Pechorin from Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Times*, Bazarov from Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*, and Beltov from Alexander Herzen's novel *Who is to Blame?* (who could be somewhat compared to Stanisław Wokulski from *The Doll* by Bolesław Prus), Rudin from the novel of the same title by Turgenev, Belkov from Chekhov's story *The Man in the Case*, Oblomov from the novel by Ivan Goncharov (*Oblomov*), Leonid Stepanovich (*Leonid Stepanovich i Lyudmila Sergeyevna* by Avdotia Glinka), Rodion Raskolnikov from Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, or Valerian Pustovtsev (*The Asmodeus of Our Times* by Viktor Askochensky).

It would take a long time to list further examples, because this type of a literary figure seems to be one of the dominant types in Russian literature of the 19th century. An amusing exemplification of a superfluous man is an episodic character (the comically presented *лишний человек*) from *Oblomov* by Ivan Goncharov (1978, p. 39), whose *superfluity* is characterized by the narrator as follows:

> A man of indeterminate age, with an indeterminate face entered; it was difficult to guess how old he was, he was neither beautiful nor ugly, neither tall nor short, neither blond nor dark-haired. Nature has not endowed him with any particular, more expressive feature, good or bad. [...] Having heard his name, one will immediately forget it, as well as his face; one will pay no attention to what he says. His presence will bring nothing to the company, just as his absence will deprive them of nothing.

There is no doubt that in the superfluous man developed in Russia one finds the essential features of an antihero: stagnation and inability to act, alienation, a sense of uselessness of one's own existence resulting from the inability to fulfil one's own aspirations and ideals, despite one's undoubted talents and education. A superfluous man

searches for the meaning of his existence, but cannot find it. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the experience of the superfluous man is primarily typical of representatives of the nobility (where officers and soldiers play a special role) and the emerging intelligentsia.

This is a very important context because it prompts one to ask the following question: is the problem of the Russian antihero limited to the problems of a specific social class? This question should be answered carefully. One has to notice that it is impossible to describe an antihero without also locating him in another extremely important layer of the Russian society, namely, the layer of clerks. While the 'antihero' implications of the nobility and intelligentsia could be characterized as resulting from a specific anomic state, lack of perspectives and the resulting anxieties that plague the intelligentsia, the participation of the layer of clerks in the formation of antihero seems no less significant. As Juri Lotman (2010, p. 29) notes, state power in Russia was based on two pillars: the military (considered noble and hence belonging primarily to the nobility), where the superfluous men are, so to speak, recruited from; and the clerks. Due to the monthly salary, a clerk inevitably becomes completely dependent on the state and, therefore, its bureaucratic machine. The one who was initially supposed to serve the social order, at least according to Peter the Great's intentions, is more and more often seen from the worst side, as a formalist and a bribe taker. Dependence on the salary makes him passive, and low social prestige triggers in him a humble attitude, as well as frustration and anger (maliciousness) (Lotman, 2010, p. 29). In this way, the clerical status defines new antiheroic features that one finds in the works of the writers who presented them with such insight. I am thinking here primarily of the works of Nikolai Gogol (with his *Dead Souls*, *The Government Inspector*, *The Nose*, *Diary of a Madman* and many other works in which satire on the clerical status is one of the most characteristic features) and Fyodor Dostoyevsky (with his numerous creations and… creatures of the office, appearing throughout his writing). A special place in his work is certainly occupied by the first modernist antihero (by profession: clerk) from the previously mentioned *Notes from Underground*.

It is tempting, of course, to divide the Russian antiheroes into intellectuals (nobility, military, teachers, artists) and officials. However, I think that this would be an inaccurate division, because it reduces the problem of antihero to a specific profession or occupation. This is, of course, an important historical and cultural context for these characters, but it does not yet allow one to capture their essence. Similarly, it would be equally wrong to reduce antihero to superfluous man. It seems that while every antihero can be interpreted as a redundant, superfluous man, rejected by society or rejecting it himself, not every *лишний человек*, in the sense in which he is understood in Russian literature, is necessarily an antihero (for example, Bazarov from Turgenev's *Fathers and Children* is not one). I believe that what needs to be emphasized is the fact that antihero cannot simply be reduced to a romantic hero; such an identification is not justified (for example, is Silvio from Pushkin's short story *The Shot* an antihero?). However, this issue would require separate discussion.

To sum up, it is necessary to emphasize that both pillars of the Russian state, the military (noble) class and the clerks, despite completely different conditions, goals and needs, have many common features that led to the creation and unrestricted development of literary characters who can be defined as antiheroes. These features include self-awareness, passivity, a sense of meaninglessness of existence, problems with identity (a particular kind of indeterminacy, different for an intellectual, different for an official), suffering, and finally, a constant split between the desire for freedom (often: unrestrained) and the feeling of enslavement by various external (socio-cultural) and internal factors (mental helplessness).

Playboy – loser (klutz) – the dark type

Meanwhile, I would like to propose another possible way of approaching the concept of antihero, this time more from the literary and anthropological-literary perspective. It seems that, basically, one could talk about three models here: playboy (dandy, trickster, seducer), loser (klutz, the man of resentment) and the dark type (demonic, tragic). I will add right away that such a taxonomy does not fully

convince me (as evidenced by a number of not necessarily synonymous terms in brackets). All modelling is always about cutting margins and cannot handle mixed situations. Modelling is always just constructing, forming to fit a specific interpretation. On the other hand, it allows one to see things clearly. I would like to emphasize here that the types I propose are in fact impure and that certain features, actions and goals of one literary character may fall within different types. The terms: the playboy, the loser, the dark type can only serve as an interpretation of the character's dominant feature.

The playboy antihero (I am aware of the inadequacy of this term) appears in literature as a dandy, a charming trickster, or a seducer. In the description of the literary work, he is characterized as an educated and refined type. At the same time, however, he comes across as a person who is bored with the world which, for some reason, no longer provides him with the stimuli he needs to live. The clearest representative of this type in Russian literature is Eugene Onegin. This type seems to have its origins in carnival culture and literature. He is characterized by weakened self-reflection and focusing his attention primarily on the external world, with which he decides to play in various ways: he fools around, seduces, experiments, makes up things. He is unpredictable. Sometimes he is simply a comic character (like General Ivolgin or Ferdyshchenko from Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*), sometimes a self-confident ironist (like the Count from Pushkin's already mentioned short story *The Shot*, who eats cherries from his hat during a pistol duel, smiling mockingly). Sometimes, however, and this is probably the most interesting, since the most complicated case, he shows features of the demonic type, like Stavrogin from *Demons* or Svidrigailov from *Crime and Punishment*. If one was to recall Søren Kierkegaard, the type discussed here is an aesthete. He cannot be a hero in the strict sense because he is significantly devoid of heroic features. His existence takes place, as it were, beyond good and evil, beyond moral choices. An aesthete, as Kierkegaard presents him, is a man who wants to avoid the radical moral alternative of 'either/or' at all costs, and instead seeks ever stronger stimuli. However, when he reaches the end of his experiments, due to weariness or deepened self-awareness, he chooses a change of life or despair, which often

ends in suicide. This type of antihero, marked by undoubted comic features, turns out to be, in fact, a sad person with no faith in the meaning of his own existence.

Another type of antihero, very well represented in Russian literature of the 19th century, is **a loser and a klutz**. Characters of this sort in Russian literature are most often presented as comic and grotesque, but even in their case there are significant moments of sadness and melancholy. The type in question can be found both among representatives of the nobility and the officials. However, one could reasonably believe that this differentiation of worlds also differentiates the attitudes of antiheroes. Those from the nobility are often good-natured and naive idealists, while the clerks are frustrated and full of resentment.

Undoubtedly, the most important example of this type of antihero in the Russian nobility is Oblomov, the protagonist of Ivan Goncharov's novel of the same title. The entire novel is full of all kinds of antiheroes. Ilya Oblomov, a nobleman of extraordinary intelligence and talents, is particularly passive and stagnant in life, he is incapable of action, a weak, superfluous man. At the same time, however, he is naive and big-hearted. It should be emphasized that Goncharov's hero is also a character manifesting an important philosophical attitude, and the work takes on the characteristics of a morality play. Here Oblomov, visited in his room by his friends, seems to be in the position of a person put to the test. The first of his guests, Volkov, tries to persuade the protagonist to participate in the world of fun and entertainment. Oblomov refuses. Another friend, Sudbinsky, explains to Ilya the benefits of office work and career. Oblomov also rejects this possibility, seeing work as the source of enslavement. Finally, Petkin, who praises the social value of writing, is also rejected by Oblomov. However, the central, axiologically and ethically significant opposition in the novel is the confrontation between friends: the title character and Stoltz, a German by origin. Stoltz embodies the spirit of Western activity and entrepreneurship. The friendship between the German and the Russian is significant here and proves mutual fascination, but also a radically different way of looking at the world. One can be claim that it is a certain prototype of Russian–German relations, a friendship full of tensions.

Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky from *Demons*, Prince Myshkin from *The Idiot* (Dostoyevsky), and Grushnitsky from *A Hero of Our Times* (Lermontov) have similar 'Oblomov-like' features. In the context of the antiheroic world of the nobility, it is worth paying attention, at least briefly, to another type of antiheroes who appear only episodically: servants and butlers. Most often portrayed in a grotesque manner, they are antiheroes because, to a greater or lesser extent, they question the sense of the tasks entrusted to them and rebel against them, thus undermining the social order to which they belong (an example may be Oblomov's servant Zakhar, or a butler mentioned by Gogol in *The Diary of a Madman*, who hits his master in the face).

'Losers' from the world of the officials look completely different. These are (anti)heroes who react to the humility, routine and passivity imposed on them by the bureaucratic system with frustration and resentment, hostility towards the surrounding world. Suffering and anger, disappointment, paradoxical formalism and disagreement with the world as it is, are the domain of the most often comically presented characters in Anton Chekhov's works – Belikov from *The Man in the Case* or Chervyakov from *The Death of a Government Clerk*. Nasty officials-losers appear often in the works of Nikolai Gogol, whose satire on the clerical status, mixed with sadness, reached the highest level (*The Government Inspector*, *The Overcoat*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Nose*). A clerk is also an inseparable character from Dostoyevsky's prose. His particular incarnation appears in the novel *Notes from Underground* (1864), which is the most important one in the context of the discussed antihero character. The (anti)hero of this work introduces himself to the reader at first as a former clerk who found satisfaction in being unpleasant towards others. Seen from this narrow perspective, he would be just another case of the antihero-official. However, this is a character that definitely goes beyond such frameworks, and it is not without reason that so much space has been devoted to him not only in the history of literature, but also in philosophy. It is enough to recall the fact that that Dostoyevsky's novel was considered one of the most representative examples of European existentialism, and its hero – a prototypical existentialist; this figure was also repeatedly referred to the

nihilistic movement in Russia, emerging in the 1840s and formed in the 1850s (during the reign of Alexander II). The case of the hero of *Notes from Underground* is an excellent example of rebellion against the Western model of the world, embodied by theoretical thinking and the cult of social activity. Dostoyevsky's hero contrasts them with an attitude that advocates what he calls 'living life.' The phrase itself appeared in Russia as a translation from German of *Ein Lebendiges Leben* and was used in the language of the Russian intelligentsia even before the 1830s. Dostoyevsky himself uses this formula in an apophatic manner in *Notes from Underground, The Adolescent* and *A Writer's Diary*. However, what is interesting in the context of the present paper is the appearance of this term in the first of the above-mentioned novels, in which for the first time in the history of literature (it is never enough to repeat it) the concept of antihero appeared. Moreover, both concepts, 'living life' and antihero, are inextricably linked by Dostoyevsky. The first-person (anti)hero of the work justifies his hatred of the world, among other things, by the fact that no one actually knows what this 'living life' is anymore and that he is the only one who has really managed to get close to it. *Notes from Underground*, using negative terms, answer the question of what it actually is: firstly, it opposes 'book' life; secondly, it opposes all artificially derived dead theories; thirdly, 'living life' opposes the 'mathematization of the world,' calculations, rationalization, in short, it opposes instrumental reason; fourthly, it is against all types of activists and, to put it another way, against the fetishization of action and turning it into an object of cult; finally, fifthly, 'living life' questions the order of established social norms (organized in a bourgeois manner) and argues against any standardization and uniformity of life. However, the protagonist himself says that he only manages to get close to 'living life,' not participate in it. This is because the progenitor of modern antiheroes himself lives *podpol'yu* – under the floor, he leads the life of an underground man, separated from 'living life.' Dostoyevsky does not answer the question about what actually animates this 'living life' in *Notes from Underground*. Nevertheless, his work clearly shows that the guarantee of 'living life' is the living God (not the God of philosophers!) and *pochva* – the soil. In the dark creation of his antihero, Dostoyevsky

created a vision of human existence searching for the truth about oneself and authenticity, understood as unconditioned life. What is very interesting, he posed the problem of authenticity ('living life') differently and more broadly than the philosophers of existence, who emphasized in authenticity primarily the distinguishing feature of what is individualistic and what belongs to the individual. It seems that for Dostoyevsky 'living life' has many meanings and it is difficult to find a clear and unambiguous explanation for it. Is it a state of consciousness? Or maybe an equivalent of the state of nature (as in Jean-Jacques Rousseau)? Or does it determine the nature of existence? Is it the highest dimension of existence? Does it belong to being, or is it rather what encompasses it? Isn't it what one participates in oneself, or what one can participate in? Perhaps all of these questions should be answered affirmatively. Certainly, Dostoyevsky's concept is interesting and special because it combines two dimensions: radically individualistic and radically religious. Hence, it is possible to answer the question why the antihero of *Notes from Underground* did not get to know 'living life,' but only approached it: he did not manage to leave the underground, he locked himself under the floor in the basement of radical individualism, which he considered to be hell. Aware of this and aware of his guilt, he approaches 'living life,' the meaning of which he only senses.

It can be said that the antihero of *Notes from Underground* is an extremely complex character, **a dark antihero** with demonic features, a repulsive and cynical character whose core personality trait is resentment – vengeful hostility towards the surrounding world and meanness, revealed in the scene of deception and humiliation of the woman who loves him who sees salvation in him. It seems that none of Dostoyevsky's dark antiheroes (and one could mention many, e.g. Stavrogin from *Demons*, Svidrigailov or Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment*) can equal him. Partly, as it is known, this is because the tsarist censorship did not allow Dostoyevsky to publish the last part of the work, in which the hero experiences conversion. The result is a novel that initially appears to be a manifesto of nihilism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, the writer tries to show what can happen to a person detached from the soil. Dostoyevsky's novels cannot be understood without reference to

the Russian *Pochvennichestvo* (*почвенничество*), however, this is an issue that requires independent discussion. Let us return to the antihero. He is not simply a clearly negative hero. He can be, especially in the first part, a trickster, arguing with a world from which all values have been eliminated, the world of the West and its atheistic socialism and instrumental reason. The hero in a special way questions both the entire European philosophical tradition, focused on a rationalistic view of the world, and the literary tradition associated with the dominant type of literary figure. In the last paragraphs of the work, the hero of the novel wants to counter the threats coming from the West with the idea of 'living life.'

Is antihero a man from Russia? This question cannot be answered clearly, i.e. unambiguously. After all, antihero is a character present in literature, film, and modern European culture, whose tradition is rich and diverse. However, it is certainly justified to say that the Russian tradition is of fundamental importance here, especially when it comes to the modern world. The Russian antihero cannot be reduced to a literary construct, but is a proposal of a 'different' modernity and a different philosophical proposition compared to the West, a different type of understanding of the world and a different sensitivity.

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The Image of *The Last Judgment* on the West Wall of the Church in Voroneț – Genesis and Message

Abstract

The article undertakes an analysis of the depiction of *The Last Judgment* on the western wall of St. George's Orthodox Church in Voroneț, northern Romania. The composition is part of a larger artistic issue related to the phenomenon of painted churches of northern Moldova, created in its essential core in the 16th century. The objectives established in the title, that is, to determine the genesis and meaning of the composition, encourage tracing several aspects of the fresco. First, it is necessary to outline the possible directions of the influx of inspiration, artists and cultural influences. Next, the sources of the very way of depicting the Day of Judgment and the pictorial formulas used (iconography) should be examined. The message of the work is also directly linked to the functions the fresco has performed over the centuries, reflecting the radical change in the optics of perception depending on the historical and cultural situation. As a whole, it reveals the complex meaning of the image, which invariably makes for an interesting research topic.

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Voroneţ, painted churches of Bukovina, northern Moldova, Last Judgment, cultural study

In the former ancient Dacia, whose conquest is commemorated on Trajan's Roman column, the historic territories of Northern Moldova, and present-day Romania, there is a unique complex of Orthodox churches. They amaze with the picturesqueness of their location and the richness of their fresco decoration. Their uniqueness is evidenced by the presence of paintings perfectly preserved not only in the interior of the building, but also on its exterior. One of Bukovina's more famous monasteries is the Monastery Church of St. George in Voroneţ. On its western facade is a monumental depiction of the *Last Judgment* dating from 1547–1550, the analysis of which is the subject of this paper.

State of Research

The phenomenon of painted monasteries of Bukovina (or Northern Moldova) is an interesting research problem for a number of reasons. The present work focuses on artistic themes, necessarily marginalizing other interesting issues, such as the anthropological perspective, brilliantly developed by the Polish researcher E. Kocój (2006).

One of the key issues is the still unresolved genesis of the exterior polychrome. Indeed, the decoration of 15th-century churches in the area was limited to alternating rows of brick, often enameled in green, yellow, red or blue, and stone (Ştefănescu, 1928). Painted decoration appears in Moldova in the 16th century, and there are several hypotheses about its origin.

J. Strzygowski argues for an oriental genesis. He believes that the transcendental Old Iranian religion of Mazdayasna played an important role in the formation of Christian art. According to him, the origin of the exterior polychrome can be traced back to the custom of Iranian and Syrian origin. Byzantine and Armenian art, as well as Ruthenian art, would play an important role in the

transmission of this tradition. The fundamental downside of this hypothesis, however, is the lack of surviving artworks from Iranian and Syrian sites that can serve as irrefutable proof of the above conjecture (Kocój, 2006).

G. Balş and P. Henry (Iorga, Balş, 1922 and Henry, 1930) point to Balkan influences (the latter sees them first in the forms of architecture).[1] However, A. Grabar (1933) by shifting the examples given as proof of the truth of this thesis to a later date thus disproved this assumption. He pointed out that it is likely that the facade of the church of Mary Peribleptos in Constantinople had painted decoration and this, according to him, was the main source of inspiration for the Moldovan Orthodox churches (Grabar, 1968). He notes the iconographic similarities with the polychrome of the Orthodox churches of Macedonia and Serbia. He thus agrees on the commonalities with Balkan decorations, but does not think the similarities are unusual given the prevailing canon.

There is also a western hypothesis, originated by Ph. Schweinfurth, according to which West Tyrol played a decisive role in the genesis of the external polychromes (Kocój, 2006). However, painting of all exterior walls has never occurred in those area. Evidence supporting this thesis would be the depiction of St. Christopher, a saint popular in the painting of Tyrolean churches, on the Arbore church. Exterior decoration is also sometimes traced back to Transylvanian sites. V. Drăguț believes that the *al fresco* decoration around the portals of churches played a stimulating role. The depiction of the *Last Judgment* was particularly common in this area (Kocój, 2006). Nor can we exclude the influence of indigenous folk culture, which, after all, already manifests tendencies to decorate its products on its own.

A clear determination of the influences evident in the paintings could help resolve this issue, but, as one can easily guess, this too is a matter of dispute.

In the 16th century there was a resurgence of painting in Mount Athon frescoes (including the Protaton), so it would be logical to see

1 E. Kocój also cites the Romanian researcher I. D. Ştefănescu, who, despite tracing the influences present in the churches of Bukovina, argues stubbornly for the independence and uniqueness of Moldovan solutions, both iconographic and technological aspects (Ştefănescu, 1928).

connections with the flourishing of wall decoration in Bukovina at the same time. According to W. Podlacha, the mediating factor in the expansion of miniature and fresco painting was primarily monasteries (1912). *The Last Judgment* in the Bukovina frescoes shows iconographic similarities with Athonian but also Ruthenian works, the most notable of which is the Church of the Savior (Spas) on Nereditsa in Novgorod with a composition from the 12th century, in which all the essential elements of the depiction of this theme are present. Also V. Florea (1989) draws attention to the Byzantine orientation, considering Ruthenia, specifically the Duchy of Galicia, as an intermediary in the transfer of influence. I. D. Ştefănescu (1928) sees the Ruthenian influence only from 1580 onward and notes the multitude of details that differentiate the Moldovan depictions from the ones at Mount Athos, e.g., the clouds surrounding the chosen ones do not appear in the Moldovan redaction. He also has a different take on the Wallachian influence. He believes that W. Podlacha cited too few sources to support his theory.

According to A. Grabar (1968), the Moldovan paintings adapted an iconographic program that corresponds at the most essential points to Western Romanesque facades. The difference in techniques should not be an exclusionary factor here. Balkan influence has already been mentioned in connection with the genesis of the exterior polychrome. Local qualities also appear in the frescoes: attempts to dramatize the action and highlight the mental state (Podlacha, 1912).

The issue of authorship of the decoration also remains unresolved. W. Podlacha (1912) although he admits that there are no sources that can clarify the matter unequivocally, he leans towards the authorship of Greek or Wallachian masters, perhaps monks. He believes that Bukovina did not have the conditions to produce painting schools or art centers.

I. D. Ştefănescu (1928) believes that an art school was nevertheless born in Moldova, but does not consider this equivalent to attributing authorship exclusively to local masters. In the 16th century, artists came from Galicia and Transylvania to the Moldovan territories, admittedly mainly architects and sculptors, but I. D. Ştefănescu speculates that painters may also have been among them. He also

cites the fact of the Russian Tsar's complaint against the action of Stephen the Great, who stopped the Italian painters on their way to Moscow. There are parallels with Mediterranean art in the depiction of *The Last Judgment*, such as the depiction of the personification of the sea as a woman on two fish (Kruk, 2000). However, this may be due to a general familiarity with the works and motifs, and not necessarily to the artists' alleged Italian background.

Close ties with Poland and Transylvania in the 16th century allow us to assume that masters from there also took part in the work. There were claims that the painters could not come from Poland or Hungary due to religious differences. But after all, it should not be forgotten that there were Eastern Rite Orthodox churches in the eastern borderlands of the Commonwealth. To support his theses, I. D. Ştefănescu (1928) cites a painter's name, rare in Bukovina – Marc – which appears in Voroneț. However, based on restoration work carried out in 1960, it turned out that the painter was a deacon – a certain Ionaşco Chiril (Kocój, 2006), which, however, does not necessarily refute the views of I. D. Ştefănescu.

It is difficult to trace the routes by which the numerous influences visible in the paintings reached Moldova, and it is also difficult to clearly identify their authors. The genesis of the exterior polychrome thus remains a mystery for now.

History

Moldova flourished in the 15th and 16th centuries. Domestic strength and successful wars with neighbors were achieved thanks to the then-reigning *hospodar*, Stephen the Great (1457–1504). He founded the brick monastery church of St. George in Voroneț, in 1488, on the site of an earlier wooden church. This is confirmed by a stone tablet above the original entrance. Between 1547 and 1550, Metropolitan Grigorije Roşka added an enclosed porch to the church. It was also at this time that it was covered with paintings from the outside, which Archbishop Theophanes contributed to (Florea, 1989). The paintings are the work of several pairs of hands and one of the most outstanding monuments of wall painting in Bukovina. At the end of the 18th century, they underwent restoration work (Ştefănescu,

1928), and similarly in 1960 (Kocój, 2006). In 1993, Moldova's Orthodox churches were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Their state of preservation is so good that the 2013 Convention Concerning The Protection Of The World Cultural And Natural Heritage marks the satisfactory condition of the monuments[2].

Description

The composition of *The Last Judgment* covers the entire western wall and two buttresses. It is played out in five horizontal fields.

In the center of the highest field, in a circular *gloria* formed by the angelic choirs of the highest triad, there is a bust of the Ancient of Days with silvery hair, dressed in a white robe, making a blessing gesture with his right hand, holding a scroll in his left. This bust is flanked by two angels that open a door placed on either side of the *gloria*. Behind them stretches the sky depicted as a scroll, the ends of which are rolled by two groups of angels. The sky shows representations of the zodiac signs, sun, moon and stars.

In the second field, Christ the Judge sits on a rainbow in the center, with his right arm slightly raised, his left arm lowered and inverted, surrounded by a circular halo, with a representation of spinning Thrones at his feet and angels all around. On the sides of Christ are depictions of Mary in the type of Hagiosoritissa and St. John Prodromos standing on low footstools. Further away are long benches provided with backrests and footrests. On each side six Apostles are seated holding books or scrolls, while behind them numerous angels wielding spears can be seen.

In the third field, axially, is the throne of Hetoimasia with the Gospel placed on a red cushion and blue covering, on which the Holy Spirit is visible in the form of a dove. The whole is topped with a cross. On the sides of the throne kneel the aged Adam and Eve, extending their hands toward Hetoimasia. Eve additionally has her hands covered.

2 Convention Concerning The Protection Of The World Cultural And Natural Heritage 2013, https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2012/whc13-37com-20inf.pdf (25.10.2023).

Behind Adam, four groups of the Elect are visible: the Old Testament prophets and kings, the Church Fathers, believers and saints. They look and extend their hands toward Christ.

By the Chosen Ones is St. Paul, the codifier of Christ's teachings, with a roll unfolding. To the condemned placed on the opposite side – Jews, Turks, Latins, Armenians and Arabs (Saracens?) – their iniquity is pointed out by Moses. These characters are visibly more agitated.

At the bottom of the throne of Hetoimasia is a bowl with four nails standing on a footstool, from which directly emerges the *manus Dei* holding the scales of justice – thus moving us to the next field.

On the scales are rolls of good and bad deeds, in the center – the soul of a righteous man waiting for the result. Devils try to tip the balance to their side, but have to retreat pushed back by angelic spears. Behind the angels are a multitude of the Saved – because their fate is already sealed – they all have golden auras. Based on the costumes, or lack thereof, one can distinguish between St. Onuphrius – naked, with only a loincloth, the priests of the Eastern Church or Holy Virgins. This procession is heading to the gate of Paradise depicted below as a door with a visible lock. It is headed by St. Peter with a key, leading the first of the saints, probably St. Paul. Above the door is a representation of a Seraphim guarding it with two swords. In Paradise, against a white background with vegetation visible, sits the Mother of God, surrounded by angels adoring her and the Good Thief in a loincloth holding a cross. Further on one can see the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, holding the souls of the Righteous in scarves in their bosom.

On the opposite side of the fresco, the resurrection of bodies is shown. Against the backdrop of a rocky landscape, two angels blow their trumpets over the land and sea. In response, the dead wrapped in shrouds rise from their graves, and fantastic animals – naively conceived elephants or octopuses, spit out devoured limbs. At the top, on a stretched scarf, sits a personification of the Earth holding a tomb with a rising dead man. In the lower part, the personification of the Sea on two fish (dolphins?), holds a ship and a red-and-white flag. A fiery river spilling wide in the lower part of the composition originates at Christ's feet. The damned are being led there by the

devils. In the river, we can spot numerous figures, including Julian the Apostate and Caiaphas. The fiery river ends with a conventional depiction of Leviathan's maw.

There are also secondary elements in the composition, placed to the left of the river of fire. These include the death of a righteous man, whose guardian angel takes the soul clothed in white into his care; the depiction of David playing an instrument; and the death of a sinner whose soul is already awaited by devils.

The whole is characterized by elegant drawing and a rich color palette with numerous blues, yellows and reds. The composition is clear and thoughtful.

Analysis

In order to properly analyze and grasp the complex meaning of the representation, it is necessary to trace the development of the various motifs, to consider their creation in this particular case, as well as the question of the location of the composition itself.

Old Christian basilicas usually had an atrium on the west side, later transformed into an open courtyard, used for burying the dead.

Thus, the bodies of boyars, voivodes and prominent clerics were usually buried in the anteroom or vestibule. The placement of *The Last Judgment* composition on the west wall is understandable in this context (Podlacha, 1912). It is also important to remember the negative connotations of the west as a place where the sun "dies" every day, which brings associations with the realm of death and darkness. On the contrary, the Orient is the direction from which the day is invariably reborn giving new hope (Réau, 1946). Christ himself is also compared to the Sun rising from on high (Luke 1:78). The depiction of the end of the world or the west of life in this particular place is also a confirmation of the well-known and often quoted words of Maximus the Confessor: *It is a truly wonderful thing that in its smallness it [a church] can reflect the whole great world* (Dionysius of Furna, 2003, p. V – trans. KSD)

The composition of *The Last Judgment* was finally constituted in 11th-century paintings (two icons on Mount Sinai). Later, although it was enriched and slightly modified, its core remained the same

(Réau, 1956; Grabar, 1979). Characteristic of the depictions of *The Last Judgment* is the division into several parallel strips, which creates a structure of images placed one above the other. A. Grabar derives it from ancient triumphal representations on the bases of columns (Column of Arcadius), thus emphasizing its archaic nature. What distinguishes the content of the depiction of Judgment from other Byzantine iconographic formulas in the Middle Ages is the combination of various texts from the various books of Scripture in a single image. This is evidence of the theologians' initiative in this regard. There is a well-known 4th-century text by Ephrem the Syrian, which appears to be a description of a painterly composition of the *Last Judgment*. The existence of such an artwork in such an early period is by no means certain (and even highly doubtful), but the description itself suggests that the compilation of various texts on the final events occurred much earlier than the first pictorial representations that have survived to our time. The visions of St. Niphon of Constance and Ivan Peresvetov's *Complaint* were also relevant to the areas in question (Kocój, 2006).

The Voroneț scenes do not follow each other in chronological order, some are simultaneous, some immediately precede each other (the judgment and the effect of the judgment), and some take place outside of time at all (Adam and Eve before the throne of Hetoimasia). The placement of images corresponds to an irrational space in which directions in themselves mean nothing, and the determinant of placement is the moral order defined by the hierarchy of virtues. The Judge is placed at the top of the composition, and it is to His right and His left that the various representations are situated – some of a narrative nature and these are accessible to all, while others are abstract and thus clear only to the initiated.

The composition of *The Last Judgment* is developing in the West in the direction of increasingly dramatizing the action and making the psychological features more visible. The opposite happens in the Byzantine area of influence – Christ remains a gentle judge who *sine furore et ira* separates the sheep from the goats – which is how He is portrayed in Voroneț. The composition is dominated by the desire for an evangelical story – hence its narrative and epic nature (Podlacha, 1912).

In order to grasp the full meaning of the depiction, it is necessary to briefly analyze each scene. Angels rolling up the sky testify that time has been fulfilled. This is a motif taken from Isaiah (Isa 34:4) and Revelation (Rev 21:1). The image of the Ancient of Days corresponds to Daniel's dream vision (Dan 7:9–14), a foreshadowing of the Last Judgment. W. Podlacha wrongly equates the representation of the Ancient in the highest register with God the Father. Orthodox Eastern (Byzantine) art would never have ventured into this kind of equality sign. The only Person of the Trinity who became incarnate – who voluntarily assumed human form and thus (according to the post-iconoclastic interpretation) allowed His image in the fine arts – was the Son. It is also in Him that the fullness of the revelation about the Father takes place (John 14:6; John 10:30; Matt 11:26, etc.). He is the only acceptable and legitimate image of the Father. All representations of the First Person in art remain forbidden, while the epiphanies of the Old Testament are in fact epiphanies of the Son in His eternal being. This theologically only correct interpretation, the veracity of which is confirmed by numerous monuments, is shaken at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries on the ground of Ruthenian art (Szcześniak, 2023)[3]. In the icon from Novgorod (Tretyakov Gallery), for the first time, the figure of the Ancient of Days is identified with God the Father, and this is clearly evidenced by the inscription. From this point on, the blurring of the boundaries between the Father and the Ancient of Days from the prophetic vision slowly proceeds. It cannot be said with certainty that the Novgorod icon was the first work to blur this division. Tracing the origins of this new way of thinking, researchers often point to the Balkans as the area from which inspiration or specific representations of this type may have come. In the absence of conclusive evidence (artifacts), however, this concept remains only in the realm of hypotheses[4]. With the increasing popularity

3 This issue, along with the relevant iconographic material and literature, is discussed in the listed bibliographic item. Here, not wishing to repeat myself, I will only refer to the most important conclusions.

4 The conclusive evidence cannot be the representation from the Tomić Psalter, because there the identification of the Father and the Ancient of Days does not take place.

of depictions of God the Father, the theme of *Fatherhood* (*Paternitas*) even gains a place in the monumental program of temple decoration, eventually becoming canonical and acceptable (the oldest example known to me dates to 1561).

Voroneț depiction of *The Last Judgment* has no signs of identifying the Ancient of Days with God the Father. The entire composition is in harmony with the description in the Book of Daniel, while the figure of interest is unambiguously signed with the monograms *IC XC* indicating the Second Person, in addition to the fortunately exquisitely preserved inscription *Vetkhyi denmy*, written with abbreviation (cf. the inscription on the depiction of the Ancient of Days in the apse of the Church of the Savior on Nereditsa in Novgorod). The unambiguous depiction of God the Father in such a significant composition, occupying the entire western wall of the church, would push back to an earlier time when this type of image appears in monumental painting (this scene in Voroneț dates to 1550). It could also indicate the direction of influence and contribute to the discussion of both the genesis of the Moldovan paintings and the emergence of representations of God the Father in the program of Orthodox church paintings. In the case of Voroneț, however, one cannot yet speak of assimilation or the emergence of this phenomenon. A review of other paintings of the Orthodox churches clearly shows the still respected interpretation about the epiphanies of the Son (motifs in the *Tree of Jesse* on the south wall of the church and the *Celestial Hierarchy* to the east).

It is different at the Church of the Resurrection in Sucevița. There, a figure with golden robes and white hair, appearing among the plant tendrils of the *Tree of Jesse* is called, as far as the current state of preservation of the paintings allows, the Father. A certain anomaly in this representation is the Son, although placed in the upper register, above the Mother of God in the pose of an orant, in an aureole analogous to the Father (superimposed on a rhombus square) but seated on the left of the First Person. However, the paintings in Sucevița are later than those in Voroneț and, as it were, crown the era of painted monasteries of Bukovina (1596).

While the depiction of the Ancient of Days in Voroneț's *Last Judgment* scene is not identical to God the Father, so it does not allow

conclusions based on this premise, but it is unique in itself. The silver-haired Ancient was not included in the scene of the *Judgment* in the 16th and 17th centuries (John 5, 22: *the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son*). We do not meet him either in the Athonian frescoes or in the *Hermeneia* or other Bukovina frescoes. Thus, it is an intriguing element of the composition that anticipates the presence of the Ancient in monumental painting, without still being synonymous with the Father himself.

In the next strip, Christ, seated on a rainbow, judges humanity. His right hand is turned toward the viewer as a sign of acceptance of the Righteous, his left hand turned away – repelling sinners. Introduction to the composition of the two greatest advocates of people, Mary and St. John the Baptist creates the theme of *Deesis*. The uniqueness and merits of the Divine Mother do not require comment, and as for Prodromos, let us just point out that he was the link between the Old and New Covenants, the forerunner of Christ, about whom the Savior himself said: *among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist* (Matt 11:11).

The Hetoimasia motif has its origins in early Christian art. Its earliest developed form is found in the Arian baptistery in Ravenna. This motif is said to derive from the custom of storing holy books on the bishop's throne in basilicas, as well as the placing of a throne with the Gospels during conciliations among the assembled heads of the Church (Podlacha, 1912). Its function in depictions of the *Last Judgment* is linked to the preparation of the throne before the appearance of the Son of Man, it is a symbol of power and dominion. Adam and Eve symbolize redeemed their guilt, and they also provide a clear parallel of Christ – the second Adam, Mary – the new Eve (e.g. Rom 5, 18–19; 1 Cor 15:21–22: *For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive*).

As for the condemned, according to numerous researchers, the determining factor in placing these, and no other, nationalities was political and social, and only then religious. Bukovina frescoes feature Jews who were hated because of usury, Roman Catholics as a sign of dislike for the Roman rite, Turks plaguing Romania with numerous invasions, etc. E. Kocój (2006) believes that God would

judge not so much the sinners as the enemies of Romania, which in this arrangement actually becomes the chosen people. S. Ulea believes that the hallmark of Moldovan painting is its involvement. Theological and symbolic language sought to express freedom ideals, such as fighting the Turks (as in: Florea, 1989). As proof, in addition to *The Last Judgment*, he cites depictions of the siege of Constantinople, where the Persians were identified with the Turks, etc.

The theme of resurrection of bodies was taken from the Letters of Paul (e.g. *it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*, 1 Cor 15:44 and the entire 1 Kor 15:35–53). The depiction of Gehenna as a monster (the maw of Leviathan) in addition to the Bible (Job 41:11–13; Is 27:1) is based on tradition (the sources already mentioned) and folk beliefs, and is even combined with depictions of a defeated Hades (Skrzyniarz, 2002). The fiery river flowing out of the east is the ultimate test of a person's worth – the righteous pass through it unscathed, and the sinners will remain in it forever (Cf. Ml 3:2–3: *But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness*).

For a long time, there was a conviction, linked to a kind of Messianism associated with the Ceauşescu regime, about the folk origins of numerous elements of the composition. Examples include the supposed *trembitas* blown by the angels calling for the Judgment, David's bagpipe, the benches on which the Apostles sit, and even the scarves in which the souls of the Saved are wrapped. Today, however, this concept is being abandoned (Kocój, 2006, 2014).

To conclude, we should still consider the function of the fresco. Undoubtedly, it is a foreshadowing of Salvation, but also a warning of the fate awaiting unbelievers after death. The representation is not free of allusions to the political situation of the time and the dangers hanging over Romania. The placement of the composition outside the building is sometimes explained by greater accessibility – the faithful often had no access to the choir and transept (Grabar, 1968). The depiction thus also acted as an interpretation of the truths of the faith. A secondary function was assigned to the fresco in the

interwar period, when, under the influence of Romanian historiography, the painting was methodically detached from its obvious religious context and incorporated into the national mythology associated with the idea of the so-called Great Romania.

The present analysis was intended to briefly present the artistic issues related to the depiction of *The Last Judgment* on the western wall of the Voroneț church. It focused on issues related to the genesis, meaning and function of the representation, trying to highlight interesting aspects of the composition that have so far not fully resonated in the context of the research on the fresco. The expressive power of the composition remains great, thus provoking future generations of scholars to make in-depth studies of as yet undiscovered aspects of the work.

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Romania and Poland During the ’80s Crisis. Aspects of Romanian-Polish Economic Cooperation Between 1985 and 1987[1]

Abstract

In the first half of the 1980s, the Western sanctions against Poland led both to an increase in Romanian-Polish trade, and to closer political relations. With Gorbaciov’s reforms and Poland opening up to the West in the second half of the 1980s, the relations which had improved between 1982 and 1984 suffered a setback. The present paper starts from the premise that the

1 The present paper is the result of presentations made at international conferences, such as: „O relacjach polsko-rumuńskich na przestrzeni wieków w stulecie nawiązania stosunków dyplomatycznych”, between 29/08/2019 and 31/08/2019, where I talked about: *The Year 1985 and Its Importance for Romanian-Polish Relations*, a conference organised by Dom Polski from Suceava. The second conference was “Romania and Poland in the Forefront of European Security. Tradition and Continuity (1919–2021)”, between 24/06/2021 and 26/06/2021, organised by the General Staff of Defence through the Iasi Branch of the National Military Museum ‚King Ferdinand I’, where I gave a talk on: *Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Last Official Visit to Warsaw (1987) and the Decline in Romanian-Polish Relations.* Finally, the paper was also based on my PhD thesis, entitled *Romania and the Crisis of the Communist Regime in Poland 1980–1989*, where, in the third chapter, I discussed at length about the development of Romanian-Polish relations in the period 1985–1987.

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development of Romanian-Polish economic relations during the 1980s was influenced by the crisis which both countries were facing, as well as by changing international conditions.

One aim of the paper is to present the domestic situation in the two countries in 1985, in order to understand the context which fostered bilateral economic cooperation. The second aim is to analyse the development of relations between Romania and Poland after Gorbachev's coming to power and the implementation of his reforms. Here we shall mainly focus our attention on the regular summit meetings between the two leaders. Finally, we shall assess the impact of these reforms and the way in which they affected Romanian-Polish cooperation. In undertaking this investigation, we shall, first of all, use transcripts of the meeting between Ceaușescu and Jaruzelski, found in the National Archives, Foreign Relations Section, as well as the diplomatic correspondence of the Romanian embassy in Warsaw. The press of the time, in particular Scanteia – the official newspaper of the Romanian Communist Party [RCP], provides a general framework for understanding how the relations with Poland were represented by the communist regime.

Keywords

Jaruzelski, Ceaușescu, crisis, economy, cooperation, bilateral, communism.

In 1985, there was a dramatic change in the relations between the two superpowers. If at the beginning of 1980 the balance of power was ostensibly in favour of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR], this changed rapidly over the following five years. The weakening of Soviet hegemony, which began with the ‚Solidarity' crisis in Poland, when the leadership in Moscow refused to give military support to General Wojciech Jaruzelski, continued with the Western sanctions imposed at the end of 1981. The succession crisis, the deadlock in domestic and foreign policies, the international isolation, but also the technological decline weakened the international position of USSR

in the first half of the ’80s, when the Kremlin was confronted with ideological, economic and social stagnation. Change became possible with the appointment on 10th March 1985 as general secretary of CPSU of Mikhail Gorbachev, who made the thawing of relations with the West one of his top priorities.

This was facilitated by the Geneva summit, which took place on 19th–20th November. Even though no official document was signed during the meeting, the two leaders, Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan, had the chance to learn more about their mutual intentions and to speak openly about the peaceful continuation of competition between the two superpowers. Soon afterwards, one of Gorbachev’s closest advisors, Alexander Iakovlev, addressed to him a memorandum titled “The Imperative of Political Development”, in which he referred to a series of reforms necessary in the Soviet Union, such as: democratization of society, multi-candidate elections, a true separation of powers, as well as the obligation to respect human rights and liberties (Iakovlev, 1985). Iakovlev’s proposals did not pass unnoticed, but led Mikhail Gorbachev, several months later, to adopt his well-known reform programme, “glasnost” and “perestroika”, at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU]. The decision was a turning point for the subsequent evolution of the entire socialist bloc, because it would change the relations between Moscow and the satellite states, and also between Moscow and the way in which it projected its vision on Marxist-Leninism. The obligation to follow the Soviet model of development would be relaxed, which gave rise to cetrifugal movements within the Soviet bloc, especially in Poland and Hungary (Harman & Zebrowski, 1988).

The present paper starts from the premise that the development of Romanian-Polish economic relations during the 1980s was influenced by the crisis which both countries were facing, as well as changing international conditions. Thus, in the first half of the 1980s, the Western sanctions against Poland led both to an increase in Romanian-Polish trade, and to closer political relations. With Gorbaciov’s reforms and Poland opening up to the West in the second half of the 1980s, the relations which had improved between 1982 and 1984 suffered a setback. In undertaking this investigation, we shall,

first of all, use transcripts of the meeting between Ceaușescu and Jaruzelski, found in the National Archives, Foreign Relations Section, as well as transcripts of the meetings of Romanian-Polish delegations, found in the same Section. To offer an insight into the context and outcome of the meetings, we shall use the diplomatic correspondence of the Romanian embassy in Warsaw. Finally, the press of the time, in particular Scanteia – the official newspaper of the Romanian Communist Party [RCP], provides a general framework for understanding how the relations with Poland were represented by the communist regime.

The present study aims to answer the following questions: What was the stake of the relations with Poland for Bucharest? What was it for Warsaw? Were bilateral relations influenced by the changing international situation? If so, how? Did Romanian-Polish cooperation reflect a common political platform or rather specific conditions? Starting from these questions, one aim of the paper is to present the domestic situation in the two countries in 1985, in order to understand the context which favoured bilateral economic cooperation. The second aim is to analyse the development of relations between Romania and Poland after Gorbachev's coming to power of and the implementation of his reforms. Here we shall mainly focus our attention on the regular summit meetings between the two leaders. Finally, we shall assess the impact of these reforms and the way in which they affected Romanian-Polish cooperation.

Generally speaking, in Romanian historiography, the development of Romanian-Polish relations has been of interest in Romanian historiography rather in relation to the crisis in Poland, either in the early '80, or towards the end of the last decade. One of the historians who approached the early period of the crisis is Petre Opriș (Opriș, 2008), his work being one of the most complex on the in the state of affairs Polish People's Republic [PPR] from August 1980 to December 1981. As for the final stage of the crisis, in 1989, things were completely different. Nicolae Ceaușescu's "Appeal" on 19th August, for the use of any means necessary to prevent "Solidarity" from gaining control of the government, sparked off heated debates. Thus, discussions polarized the communist leadership, pitting opponents against the supporters of a millitary intervention in Poland (Deletant, Watts,

Burakowski & Kramer, 2016). While the first half of the ’80s attracted some attention, and there were a number of studies on the mutual summit meetings between Bucharest and Warsaw (Burakowski, 2015; Filip, 2019a; Filip, 2019b; Filip, 2020), however there are no studies on the 1985–1988 period. We aim to close this historiographical gap.

The Situation in Poland and Romania in 1985

In 1985, the socio-economical situation in Poland and Romania was absolutely dire. Regarding Romania, at the macroeconomic level, following the decision adoped in December 1981 to pay off the entire foreign debt, the balance of payments was in equilibrium, as the Romanian government had repaid half thereof, compared to Poland, whose foreign debt had reached 30 billion dollars, the highest in the Socialist Bloc. Romanians had the lowest standard of living in the socialist bloc with the exception of Albania, and there was an alarming slowdown in the industry caused by the leaders’ refusal to import the equipment required to keep factories running. By comparison, in the mid-’80s it became increasingly obvious that the general’s effort to stabilize Poland’s economy and crush the opposition after introducing martial law ended in failure.

In this context, Mikhail Gorbachev’s rise to power and his openenss to reforms would be welcomed by General Jaruzelski, who saw them as an opportunity. The first sign came as early as January 1985, when the leadership in Warsaw was apprised of Konstantin Cernenko’s declining state of health, as well as of his possible successor in the Kremlin. In the an annual report of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], entitled “The Key Objectives of the Foreign Policy of the PPR in 1985”, it was noted that the top priorities were “activities aimed at putting an end to Poland’s political isolation by the West, developing high-level relations, especially with officials in Western Europe” (Domber, 2014, p. 144). As far as economic issues were concerned, the MFA continued to focus on obtaining credits by “expanding economic relations with the West […] renegotiating the repayment of foreign debt, speeding up the process of Poland’s joining the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank, as well as removing discriminatory and protectionist measures

against Poland" (Dombe r, 2014, p. 144). Pursuing these objectives did not remain without effect, so that, as early as July an agreement was signed by Poland and 17 Western creditor states which "provided the rescheduling over 11 years of 12 billion dollars in unpaid quotas and interest payments over 11 years" (AMAE 1104/1985, 93). As a result, the PPR had no more outstanding debts.

As for the Social Republic of Romania [SRR], things took a different turn. While Poland was slowly recovering from the 'disease' which had turned it into 'the sick man of Europe' in the first half of the '80s, and in 1985 it revoked the remaining emergency provisions still in force, this disease seemed to strike Romania next. Thus, on 18th October, a presidential decree was published in 'Scanteia' which declared a state of emergency in areas where there were power stations and hydroelectric power stations, to which military commanders, whose names were not made public, were assigned to supervise them (ANIC 349/1985, 9). According to Paul Gafton's report for Radio Free Europe [RFE], it was the first time that a state of emergency had been declared, although no natural disaster had occured. In the author's view, some of the reasons for that decision included, first of all, Romania's failure to meet the energy production target for 1985. Thus, only 64,3 million tons of coal were mined of the projected 87 million, and coal imports increased from 700.000 tons in 1965, to 5,3 million tons in 1983. Likewise, in 1984, crude oil imports reached 12,5 million tons. The same applied to the electricity output, as, of the 4.000 MW per day projected to be produced by hydroelectric plants, a daily average of a mere 1.000/1.500 MW was generated because of the draught. Finally, Gafton noted that the measures taken by Romania were similar to the special regulations introduced in Poland in 1983, which were intended as a substitute for martial law. They provided for the military supervision of strategic economic units. (ANIC 349/1985, 10).

The Continuation of Romanian-Polish Negotiations in 1985

Apparently, in 1985, there was an "upward trend" in the official Romanian-Polish relations (AMAE 1090/1985, 1). They were marked by consultations between the foreign ministers of the two countries,

on 21st–24th May 1985 (AMAE 1100/1985, 35), the visit of the Romanian prime minister, Constantin Dăscălescu, to Warsaw, on 30th October (AMAE 1107/1985, 22–23), and, finally, that of General Jaruzelski to Bucharest, on 22nd November. Concomitantly, proposals were put forward by each side to mark different moments in the history of bilateral relations. Thus, on 7th August 1985, the Polish MFA indicated its wish to revive the custom of marking the re-establishment of relations with the Socialist countries, and suggested that on 13th August 40 years from the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Romania be celebrated on 13th August. To that effect, it was decided that between the foreign ministers of the two countries "greetings telegrams should be exchanged, the content of which should be reported in the press as a news item […] and the newspapers *Scînteia* and *România Liberă*, as well as *Lumea* magazine should publish articles covering the event" (ANIC 153/1985, 2). On the anniversary day, the newspaper *Życie Warszawy* ran a lengthy leader on the event, headed "Poland-Romania – an Advantageous Cooperation" (AMAE 1097/1985, 10–11). Meanwhile, an article came out in *Scînteia* under the heading "Under the Auspices of a Fruitful, Friendly Cooperation", with a mid-page subheading: "40 Years since the Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Romania" , by Alexandru Câmpeanu (1985, p. 3).

On the economic front, things looked differently. Following the breakdown of negotiations between the two leaders in June 1984 and Poland's opening up to the West, only 1.3 million tons of coal were contracted for, compared to 3 million tons of coal in previous years, (AMAE 1105/1985, 52, 57), and for the first time after 1982 there was a decline in trade (ANIC 397/1985, 25). That was also confirmed by the Polish ambassador in Bucharest, who stated that "there was a slower growth in Romanian-Polish trade when compared to previous years" (AMSZ 242-2-85, 12).

The reason for the standstill was, first and foremost, the demand by the Romanian side to double coal imports from the PPR, during the five-year plan period spanning 1986–1990. These data were presented during one-on-one talks between Ceaușescu and Jaruzelski, on the former's visit to Warsaw, in June 1984, when the RCP leader told the general that

> we would be interested in concluding a long-term contract or agreement for the import of coking coal. [...] We could consider a long-term contract divided into two parts: about 50% of the amount of coking coal would be paid for by a compensation, and as for the remaining 50%, we agree to pay for it in a hard currency. We are thinking around 4–5 million tons of coking coal annually. This would mean around 2 million tons to be paid for through barter, on commonly agreed terms, and the rest, about 2–2.5 million tons, in a convertible currency, as mentioned earlier. Along the same lines, we would like to settle the issue of a special long-term contract for the sulphur import. We are thinking around 440 000 tons (Filip, 2020, p. 193).

Ceaușescu told his interlocutor that "regarding coal and, if necessary, sulphur as well, Romania is prepared to participate in creating new production facilities" (Filip, 2020, p. 193).

The lack of an explicit answer from Warsaw, during the official visit in June 1984, led the RCP leader to approach the import question in a more decisive manner the following year. Thus, during talks between Manfred Gorywoda and Nicolae Ceaușescu in May, the latter clearly stated that "we regard this problem (the coal import s.n.) as a substantive issue in Romanian-Polish relations" (ANIC 397/1985, 9). Talks were resumed on 21st October, that time at a meeting between the Polish ambassador in Bucharest and Miu Dobrescu, a member of the Executive Political Committee [EXPC], at the former's behest. During the meeting, Bogusław Stachura pointed out that the projected doubling of foreign trade over the following five-year period was at a standstill because Poland "did not receive from Romania any proposals for commodities to serve as a consideration" (ANIC 483/1985, 1). At the same time, the Polish ambassador strongly emphasized that Poland was no longer interested in barter trade with Romania. Thenceforth, his country aimed to export coal only in return for "convertible currency", in order to pay off its foreign debt, which had already reached 30 billion dollars, as well as to acquire commodities which the Romanian side was not able to supply as a consideration, such as wheat, corn, aluminium blocks, carbon black, hot-rolled steel plates, due to insufficient stock. This emerges clearly from the mandate of Roșca Bujor, vice-president of the State

Planning Committee [SPC], at the meeting of vice-presidents of the central planning bodies in the SRR and the PPR, in Bucharest, 21st–25th October, one month prior to General Jaruzelski's visit. The mandate clearly shows Romania's demand for raw materials, as well as Poland's offer: of the 2–3 tons demanded by the SRR, the PPR only offered 0.8 million tons. The same applied to energetic coal, as, of the 1–1,5 million tons of coking coal required only 0,8 million tons were offered, and for coking coal, only 100,000 out of the 2–300,000 tons required could be delivered. (ANIC 481/1985, 3). Thus, the deadlock was both the result of the "stubborn determination" of Poland to obtain foreign currency and the inputs needed by its own industry, and by that of Romania, which lacked sufficient goods to carry on the barter trade. That would be debated at length during General Jaruzelski's second visit to Bucharest.

General Jaruzelski's Second Visit to Bucharest – 22nd November 1985 – and the Decline in Economic Cooperation

The earliest press account of Jaruzelski's visit to the SRR came out on 14th November, on the front page of *Scînteia*: "At the invitation of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski shall pay a working visit to our country" (*Scînteia* 14 no. 1985, p. 1). In contrast to the coverage of the 1984 visit, that time there was no update on the current state of Romanian-Polish relations (*Scînteia* 8 no. 1985: 5), but, on 22nd November, in the top right-hand corner of the front page it was stated that Jaruzelski would visit Romania at the invitation of the Romanian leader: "At the invitation of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski is coming to our country today, on a *working visit* (s.n.)", and below that, written in bold letters: "Welcome to Romania" (*Scînteia* 22 no. 1985, p. 1). The article does't provide too many details, but only a little biographical information on the Polish leader. Moreover, the newspaper doesn't seem to give wide coverage to the event, with the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee [PCC] of the Warsaw Pact, which had taken place in Prague the day before, being of greater interest. The outcome of the talks between Reagan and Gorbachev

in Geneva was discussed in the article, where the Soviet-American summit received extensive coverage (*Scînteia* 22 no. 1985, p. 6). It was a „working" visit, and, despite statements in *Scînteia* to the effect that it was "state" visit (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 3), it didn't go beyond that, purpose it was not a return visit after the one made by Ceaușescu in 1984, but it was structured in the same way as the 1982 visit. As to the way the meeting unfolded, it followed the pattern of previous meetings. In the first part, Ceaușescu had face-to-face talks with General Jaruzelski, and at the same time work groups held talks on political issues and on economical and technical-scientific issues and, in the end, the findings were presented and discussed in a plenary meeting. (AMAE 828/1987, 29, 34).

In view of the fact that for two years the two sides had been engaged in negotiations for the increase in imports of raw materials, Ceaușescu reversed the items on the agenda at the one-on-one talks, stating that "I intend to approach, first of all, the question of the economic relations – and *I would like us to come to commonly agreed conclusions* (s.n.) and afterwards, for each of us to make, either in direct talks or together with the delegations, a statement about the state of affairs in our countries and, possibly, about some international issues" (ANIC 630/1985, 2). Nevertheless, because Jaruzelski was the first to speak, he decided to tackle first political issues, in order to show Nicolae Ceaușescu that he was not the only one who was discontent with the development of bilateral relations. Thus, he compared the results of Romanian-Polish cooperation with a multi-storey building, showing that

> there are still storeys that need to be completed. It seems to me that much more progress should be made in the area of inter-parliamentary relations, those between governments, along party lines, as well as those between county and regional local authorities. Entreprises should also have direct relations, likewise our youth organisations should cooperate more closely (s.n.) (ANIC 630/1985, 3).

That is why, in the general's view, those issues needed to be addressed during the debates, because "when speaking of economic relations. we must observe that these too have to be renewed in the sense of

actual ahievement, not only looking at plans”, but also at the political bodies which implemented these decisions (ANIC 630/1985, 4).

Aware of the criticism that the Romanian leader was about to level at him. he showed that unlike Romania, “we cannot take radical cost-cutting measures, so that society makes big savings, because we are not able to impose a harsh rule that would enable us to lower the living standard of the population (s.n.)... the current political situation does not allow us to adopt radical, more drastic measures” (ANIC 630/1985, 4). At the same time, he showed that international economic restrictions caused a 15 million dollar loss to the Polish economy, and maintaining them would force Poland to import everything for “cash or raw materials”, to be able to supply the population’s needs. That meant that Poland could no longer accept the previous barter trade in machines and equipment, but only trade for foodstuff or hard currency, which Romania had also run short of. Thus, Jaruzelski continued, “we could take some measures to increase the export of raw materials to Romania if we had the long-term assurance that as a consideration we will receive goods which we have to import from the West – therefore obtain more aluminium, wheat, corn...” (ANIC 630/1985, 6).

Foreseeing, in his turn, the negative response of the Polish leadership, Ceaușescu came up with a new proposal, which had not been made before: “We propose that we import 1.5 million tons of goods under a clearing agreement, which also include some of the goods you mentioned. However we wish to import more coal from you for foreign currency – I am thinking of 2–3 million toms, but we insist for at least 2 million tons payable in foreign currency, apart from the 1.5 million under the clearing agreement. And, just so we are clear, we are prepared to make quarterly deposits, at the beginning of each quarter, in the account of Poland’s central bank, of the agreed sum, in dollars, for the delivery of the coal, of course, as well as the interest accrued to the date the coal is delivered. This, so that there is no doubt that the payment for the coal will be made, in a foreign currency. We are prepared to close a deal under these terms...” (ANIC 630/1985, 9). Still, the Romanian offer was put in too late, the general stating that Poland had already arranged deliveries to other countries and no longer had available resources to increase the export to the SRR.

As expected, the failure of the one-on-one talks was followed by that of the work groups, as it results from the briefing given by Miu Dobrescu that afternoon:

> Unfortunately… *the progress in trade is modest*. In any case, *it is below the rate of growth in previous years*… (s.n.). In recent years, there has been a considerable growth in economic relations with our Polish comrades and it was natural that we would continue to enjoy significant growth. At the indications of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, Secretary General of the RCP, we expressed the opinion that it would have been natural that the volume of trade doubled, or in any case, that we worked towards a doubling in the volume of Romanian-Polish trade, but very little has been achieved so far (ANIC 630/1985, 16).

Discontent with this setback, Ceaușescu asked to address the plenary stating that „compared to the agreements made a year ago, on the occasion of my visit to Warsaw, of course, this is going back on them … What is being proposed now (on raw materials s.n.) is virtually, a 50% decrease" (ANIC 630/1985, 17). To Jaruzelski's explanations that the exports of coal products by RPP would be reduced from 43 million tons in 1984, to 35 million tons in 1986, the RCP leader responded by emphasising that he did not understand why the decrease had to be made at the expense of Romania, "since Romania's share in this export was 4%… Thus, considering the relations between socialist countries, the decrease should be proportionate" (ANIC 630/1985, 18). Further, Ceaușescu showed,

> the proposed solution means an 80–100% reduction, in other words, by half – from two million tons of coal to 800,000 tons (sic!). *I am not an expert in planning, but any such planning, when it comes to the relations between socialist countries, is hard to accept and not consistent with the relations between our parties and with what we discussed a year ago* (s.n.) (ANIC 630/1985, 21).

It was the first time at that meeting that the Romanian leader had taken the position which he also expressed during the talks with Gorywoda in Bucharest. Despite these objections, the numbers could

no longer be changed, and the protocol on the coordination of national economic plans for the five-year plan period 1986–1990 were signed in that form on 30th November, in Warsaw, by the Romanian delegation headed by Ștefan Bârlea (ANIC 606/1985, 2).

Although Jaruzelski had asked the Romania leader "not to let some minor problems regarding industry or any other economic sector to have an impact on our relations, influence them..." (ANIC 630/1985, 24), the Romanian leadership never for a moment hesitated to voice their discontent in the pages of *Scînteia*. Thus, unlike the previous visits, when the front page had been almost entirely devoted to that event, that time, in a box in the upper left-hand corner there was a statement that the Romanian leader had received the special envoy of the President of the United States of America [USA], Waren Zimmermann, who "gave a briefing on the point of view and considerations of the US President about the results of the recent Soviet-American meeting ...", which however were not mentioned (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 1). Underneath, there was the news item on Jaruzelski's visit to Bucharest, the headline being partly written in capital letters, "At the invitation of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu – and then in small letters – showing the common wish to develop good Romanian-Polish relations of friendship and cooperation, the working visit of Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski took place yesterday" (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 1), which is suggestive of the position held by each country, when it came to the foreign relations of the SRR. Even though the visit was described as "a new and edifying expression of the good relations, of the common wish to give new dimensions to the traditional relations of friendly cooperation, to further strengthen the collaboration between the two parties, countries and peoples" (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 1), the joint statement suggests otherwise. The fact that the results did not live up to the expectations of the Romanian leadership emerged from the following paragraph: "appreciating the cooperation of both governments and the activity of the Mixed Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation (sic!), it was indicated that efforts continue to be made to promote cooperation in production, collaboration for the rational use of resources of raw materials and energy resources in both countries (s.n.), particularly on the basis of modern technology" (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 3).

At the same time, in the accounts of the visit, enthusiastic appraisals of the outcome of talks were lacking, the latter being reported in a neutral, dispassionate tone. Another indication of failure is the length of the joint statement, smaller than in previous years, as the Romanian appraisals of the international situation were much more concise. While this was due to the fact that those aspects had already been discussed at the meeting in Prague, we don't believe that Romania would have missed the opportunity to restate its position on the international situation, as that went against established practices. Moreover, the same number of the paper included numerous comments and appraisals of the outcome of the Geneva meeting (*Scînteia* 23 no. 1985, p. 6), which suggests the refusal of the Romanian side to comment on the international situation next to that in Poland. One last indication in this respect is the article devoted to the event and published on 25th November. Headed "New Perspectives for the Development of the Romanian-Polish Friendly Cooperation", which contrasted to the optimistic tone of the accounts of the 1984 visit, the article simply stated that the visit was of "the utmost importance for the *operational analysis of problems which concern development* (s.n.)" (Tinu, 1985, p. 5), no mention being made of the upward trend in relations or of their being "fruitful". Unlike Jaruzelski who regarded the visit as "a continuation of our relations, of conversations which took place during the visit to Warsaw", for Ceaușescu it was merely "an expression of good relations of cooperation" (Tinu, 1985, p. 5). At the same time, the author mentioned that in the current five-year plan period the volume of trade nearly doubled, however he made no reference to the following five-year period, but only showed that "the demands of the economies of the two countries offer… vast possibilities for a closer cooperation… for the promotion of cooperation in production, for a more efficient collaboration for the rational use of raw materials and energy resources in both countries … (s.n.)" (Tinu, 1985, p. 5).

The failure of the visit was also signalled by RFE [Radio Free Europe], it being referred to in one of the reports as a "blitz" visit. The report indicated that for Jaruzelski the main reason for the visit was to enhance his image in the soviet bloc, after his election as Chairman of the Council of State, whereas for Romania economic

issues took priority. At the same time, according to the report, it was not only Jaruzelski who sought to legitimate himself in the soviet bloc, but also the Romanian leader, who, except for the meeting with Erich Honecker, had no other bilateral meetings with leaders in the socialist block, being actually the only leader whom Gorbachev had neither received in Moscow nor visited. Further on, the author wondered rhetorically "Romania-Poland an Alliance in Crisis?", noting that "after 1983, it seems that, Poland was the country which helped România – with raw materials – rather than the other way round" (ANIC 354/1985, 35–6). Even though he was not in possession of the transcripts of the talks between the two leaders, his observations were accurate, as he noted the lack of political affinity between the two countries, affinity which could have contributed to a lasting cooperation.

Nicolae Ceaușescu's Last Visit to Warsaw – 9th July 1987 – and the End of the Romanian-Polish economic cooperation

The last attempt to halt the decline in bilateral trade relations was Nicolae Ceaușescu's "working" visit to Warsaw, on 9th July 1987, in order to continue the Romanian-Polish negotiations with a view to concluding "The special long-term agreement (15-year agreement) on deliveries of coking coal from Poland in exchange for goods from Romania" (AMAE 827/1987, 31). Negotiations were arduous, because that year, it was the first time since the declaration of martial law in the PPR that only 91,4% of the projected volume of trade had been achieved (AMAE 817/1987, 56). Preparations for signing the Special Agreement started in May, when the 19th Session of the Romanian-Polish Inter-governmental Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was held, but those did not yield any tangible result, which was why issues would be settled during Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to Warsaw (AMAE 818/1987, 17).

Compared to Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to Warsaw in 1984, which was a "friendship" visit and lasted three days, the one in 1987 was a return visit after General Jaruzelski's visit to Bucharest in November 1985. Ever since the beginning of the year, the visit promised to

be fraught, an indication being the discontent of the Romanian side that the visit had not been made back in 1986, as previously decided (AMAE 808/1987, 23). The latter suggested that in the draft statement the visit be considered a mere "working visit", rejecting the Polish wording "friendly working visit" (AMAE 827/1987, 3, 6). Already during the morning one-on-one talks, the RCP leader renewed his former demands for coal made in November 1985 (ANIC 30/1987, 3), but the Polish side only agreed to electricity deliveries, also rejecting the SRR proposals for taking part in building a new mine and for increasing the export of coal products (ANIC 30/1987, 28–30). At the same time, unlike the previous meetings in 1982, 1984 and 1985, when the Romanian leader denounced the domestic situation in Poland, at the 1987 meeting, Ceaușescu began his speech in a different tone, justifying his refusal to implement reforms in Romania, on Gorbachev's model (ANIC 30/1987, 4). The meeting closed with a mere promise by the Polish side that in case there was any surplus coal available for export, it would be delivered to Romanian side. Therefore, the visit would reinforce the failure of Romanian-Polish economic negotiations in the last communist decade.

This was also clearly apparent in the joint statement, where, the assertion that the Romanian-Polish relations had consistently seen "an upward trend in the political, economic, scientific-technical, cultural area and in other areas..." (ANIC 377/1987, 100), was questioned in the following paragraph. It was stated therein that during discussions "the two leaders called for the continuous expansion and development of relations between parliaments, government bodies, trade unions, youth organisations and social organisations, and between counties and provinces in the two countries" (AMAE 827/1987, 49), and regarding scientific-technical and economic cooperation, the statement also refers to "the need to step up action for the consistent fulfilment of tasks embodied in the long-term programme for the develoment of economic and scientific-technical cooperation between the SRR and the PPR, the growth in the share, in bilateral trade, of products developed through cooperation and specialisation" (AMAE 827/1987, 50).

Conclusions

The development of Romanian-Polish economic relations during the period 1985–1987 is the result of a complicated international context, where the ways in which the leadership of the two countries responded to the recession led crisis led them in different directions. Thus, the new changes in the Kremlin, but also as well as of Soviet-American relations meant an end not only to the isolation of the PPR, but also of Romanian-Polish economic cooperation. This failure was noticed very clearly by the BBC correspondent for Central and Eastern Europe, Gabriel Partos, who summarised the development of Romanian-Polish relations in the 1980s thus: "the sober general seems to have little in common with the Romanian president who continues the stalinist tradition of the "personality cult", which the leaders of the soviet bloc have given up over the years. The differences refer not only to the personalities of the two, but also to the policies they pursue. Poland and Romania are, perhaps, the most diverse societies in the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw leader tolerates pluralistic society, with a strong Catholic Church, but also a wide range of views voiced in the state-controlled or unofficial press. No such tolerance exists in Romania, where the regime systematically violates human rights… What Romania and Poland have in common is their dire economic situation, marked by the shortage of goods, selective rationing and long queues before shops…" (ANIC 354/1987, 115). He further noted, a kind of "crisis alliance" was formed between Bucharest and Warsaw, after the imposition of martial law in Poland and the decision of Romania to fully pay off the foreign debt, which led both countries to conduct trade with members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [CMEA]. That brought "a big increase in bilateral trade, in order to substitute goods imported from the West… but as the economic sanctions against Poland were lifted, the importance of Romania, as well as that of CMEA, for Warsaw, on the whole, declined…" (ANIC 354/1987, 115).

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From the Ghetto to Auschwitz and Back – Transgenerational Trauma. The Case Study of an Oradea Jewish Family that Survived the Holocaust and of their Descendants[1]

Abstract

A city in present-day Romania with a multicultural, multiethnic and multiconfessional history, Oradea (Nagyvarad, Grosswardein, Varadino, Magnum Varadinum) has had from its very foundation an entirely distinct geopolitical reality, its century-long existence being marked by a wide variety and continuous differentiation, which penetrate deeply into every aspect of everyday community life. The Jewish community, actively present since the 18th century, carved out a place for itself and represented a hub of Jewish emancipation in the episcopal city, which was often a battleground for the hegemonic local forces, the reformed Transylvanian ones, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. After a long and relatively

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peaceful period of Romanian rule (1918–1940), following the Second World War the population of Oradea was shaken by racial laws issued first by the Romanian authority and afterwards by the Horthyst occupying forces (1940–1944) in Northern Transylvania, which concentrated Jews for deportation in the second biggest ghetto in Eastern Europe after Budapest. The demography of Oradea showed the loss of one third of its residents. Out of nearly 30,000 inhabitants, barely 2000 survivors returned, and the transgenerational trauma sent its echoes through time to the fourth generation, that of today's teenagers. Their grandparents and great-grandparents, returned from deportation, had to go through another trauma and persecution, with the communists' coming to power in 1948 and soon afterwards, that of the ‚red antisemitism'. The ways this trauma passed down across generations and deepened during communist totalitarianism, its masks during the postcommunit period, as well as the means of limiting and combating it are the ramifications of the topic which was examined not only theoretically, but by concrete examples of original case studies based on face-to-face interviews and microhistorical accounts received from the descendants of concentration camp suvivors. To these we shall add several examples from post Shoah memoirs of Oradea survivors and their descendants.

Keywords

Oradea, Holocaust, Jews, Transgenerational Trauma, Survivors

A Brief History of the Jews in Oradea

Oradea (Nagyvarad, Grosswardein, Varadino, Magnum Varadinum) has been from its foundation a multiethnic city, favoured by its position as a geographical and cultural border between two worlds. Throughout its history, except for some instances of radicalisation of different interest groups, particularly under Habsburg rule, which was markedly oppresive, there was a certain representativeness in the public service of all ethnic groups.

The earliest records of the presence of Jews date from the period of Habsburg rule in Oradea, from the late 17th century onwards, after the pashalic period (1660–1692). By and large, the Ottomans were tolerant towards the Jews, and at times of persecution and pogrom in Western history, the Ottoman Empire was preferred by Jews, as a temporary homeland and a safe haven. There are thus strong premises from which we can conclude that there were Jews in Oradea at the time, all the more so as both trade and crafts, prevalent occupations in Sephardic communities, were highly prized in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, as Tereza Mozes points out in her monumental *Monograph of the Jewish Community of Oradea*, "In order to understand the rate of Jewish settlement in Oradea, we have to go through the relevant laws and provisions in force at the beginning of the 17th century." (Mozes, 1997, p. 20)

The information on the first synagogue in Oradea and the satellite--villages is vague. It probably refers to a house of prayer. In 1772 the Sacred Brotherhood was planning to build a synagogue. There is an inscription *Juden Tempel*, next to the former church of the monastic order of the Clarisses in the Velența (Venice) district and, according to the data gathered by Balogh Jolan, in his volume *Varadinum*, there is also a reference on the occasion of the 1752 Conscription, from which it can be concluded that east of the house of worship of the Clarisses there was *Synagoga Iudaeorum*. (Balogh, 1982).

After the 1848 Revolution, Hungarian became the only language of instruction and intracommunity communication recognised by the authorities in Oradea. Jews went through a process of Magyarization out of a willingness to adapt, a desire to change their social status of accepted, tolerated, but also in order to achieve their social, economic and political aspirations (particularly the Neolog Jews). Oradea was predominantly Magyar, but the Bihor area was predominatly Romanian, with Magyar ethno-linguistic enclaves or, more recently, Slovak ones (in the area of villages Loranta, Pădurea Neagră, Voivozi, Șinteu).

After the great emancipation at the end of the 18th century, Jews became thus a stable and visible presence in all areas of activity in Oradea, mainly in the learned professions, but also in industrial entrepreneurship which, in the context of rapid urban development,

brought them prosperity and the desire for social advancement. In Oradea the number of Jews reached one-third of the total population. The urban planning and architecture of Oradea changed radically and definitively with the Jews' socio-professional ascent. Some of the most iconic buildings, mentioned in the case studies analysed in the present work, are Darvas-La Roche House, Sonnenfeld Palace, and we add Black Eagle Palace, Moskovitz Palace I and II, Stern Palace, Ullman Palace (which would have the unfortunate fate of housing ghettoized Jews), the two Adorjan Houses, Goldstein House, Rimanoczy Sr. Palace, Deutsch House, Pannonia Palace (currently Transylvania Hotel), Weiszlovits Palace, Müller Salamon House, which houses the "Ady Endre" Museum, the Freemansonry Temple which at present houses the Museum of Freemasonry etc., whose Jewish founders, most of whom were Reformed / Neologs, managed to achieve success after hardships and frustrations experienced for generations and began to settle in the central area of the city.

At the opposite end of the social scale, Jews could also be found in the old neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city, Velența and Seleuș, poor Orthodox families without prospects, from which, in order to cope with constant basic needs and social inequality, emerged forcefully, standing in contrast to religious parents, youngsters who embraced the already prevalent and very attractive Marxist ideology. These joined the ranks of illegal resistance fighters, against the bourgeoisie, the same bourgeoisie supported by and often including their co-ethnics. In the above-mentioned volume, the only complete monograph to date devoted to Oradea Jews, Tereza Mozes describes the struggle of Oradea Jews, some striving for assimilation and borrowed ideals (which would soon backfire on them terribly and irrevocably), particularly the Neologs, others involved in the class battle with an unflinching sense of self-sacrifice, others conservative, almost anachronistic, staunch guardians of a traditional lifestyle, like the Hasidic Jews led by the Rabbi of Vișnița, and still others, illegal communist activists. Therefore an extremely torn, divided community, in which even the more moderate Jews in the Status Quo Ante community did not manage to bring to the negotiating table and to reconciliation a huge variety constantly under presure, marked by radical divisions, the

result being emancipation, which brought with it truly democratic values, freedom of thought and a social and political effervescence without precedent in the history of the Oradea Jewish diaspora.

The WWI saw a multicultural and multi-confessional Oradea, brought to life by the Jewish socio-economic ferment. Through the anti-Jewish legislation, the interwar Romanian rule set the stage for the great offence and offensive carried out with an iron fist by Miklos Horthy's troops, when, following the Vienna Diktat, Northern Transylvania was annexed by Hungary, and when the whole of Hungary was haunted by the Fascist Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilaskeresztes*). Nothing was ever the same after September 1940.

The Chief Rabbi of Cluj, Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger offers a painful explanation for what happened in Northern Transylvania, followed by a collective accusation embodied in the manifesto "J'accuse":

> If the Christian population in Cluj or any other Transylvanian city had opposed the setting up of the ghetto, if they had surrounded it and prevented with their own bodies its being emptied, if they had blown up the railway between Cluj and Huedin (or, we add, between Oradea and the Diocese of Bihor), then the German and Hungarian assassins would have been terrified and would not have been able to carry out their insane plan. In the places where the local population offered their help and did not watch passively as their fellowmen, elderly people and children, babies, were being forcibly moved out of their homes, the deportation of Jews did not take place. Romania also massacred many thousands of Jews, but did not give in altogether to German demands, did not permit the systematic deportation of the salekastner Jewish population, of Romanian citizens, to the extermination camps in Poland and thus over 300,00 Jews stayed alive. That's what happened in Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Austria, France. No Jewish community remained though […] where the local population not only witnessed passively the Jews' everyday suffering, their struggle between life and death, but almost rejoiced on becoming aware of these (Carmilly--Weinberger, 1994, p. 171).

The Romanian-speaking Israeli journalist Teșu Solomovici takes a more analytical and less idealistic stance:

> 191,125 Jews were living on 31th January 1941 in Transylvania annexed by Hungary after the Vienna Arbitration. The extermination of Transylvanian Jews, who had the misfortune of coming under Magyar occupation in 1940, is part of a tragic history of liquidation of Magyar Jewry.
>
> It is impossible to understand what happened to the Hungarians at the end of 1944. They were not too humane towards the Jews during the war years, but it was precisely then, in the summer of 44, as the Soviet troops were concentrated near their border, that Hungarian Fascists, showing an inexplicable zeal, hurried to liqudate the Jews. Only some insane maniacs, instead of worrying about saving their own skin, were able to organise the ghettoization of the Jews and their assassination.
>
> A bout of collective insanity rarely seen in history!
>
> Transylvanian Jews never believed, not to the very last moment, that something bad could happen to them under Hungarian rule. The traditions of the multiethnic existence of Austria-Hungary were still alive and many Transylvanian Jews considered themselves Hungarians, rather than Romanians.
>
> Hungary's official policy [...] towards Jews was hesitant, Transylvanian Jews, despite being subject to all kinds of antisemitic laws and restrictions, still had their existence assured. The Hungarian leaders hesitated to take brutal steps to eliminate the Jews, who played a significant role in the country's economy (one third of Hungarian merchants and half of the doctors were Jews) (Solomovici, 2007, p. 286).

In her autobiograpy, *Bloody Decalogue*, Tereza Mozes, herself a survivor of the Oradea ghetto and of the extermination camp, acknowledges that, despite the warning signs, no one got worried:

> Nevertheless – up to this day I cannot understand how something like this was possible, perhaps the instinct for self-preservation came into play – we continued our lives as we used to. We paid little heed to the unfolding events. We naively tried to convince ourselves that something like that could not happen here. I found the strength to seriously continue to prepare for the high-school graduation exam (Mozes, 1995, p. 12).

The leaders of Oradea Jewry tried to reassure the population, the current state of affairs remained tense, but stable and apparently unperturbed, in a humble, concerned everydayness, in the expectation of an imminent end of the war, when once again in the millennia-old history of the Jewish diaspora, another crisis would be overcome. The condition of life under pressure, of fortress under siege, and of perpetual crisis alternating with long periods of community well-being and even prosperity, forms part of a modus vivendi in Jewish culture, and is even mentioned in the sacred books. That time they did not expect or foresee the scale and gravity, the uniqueness of destruction. Resilience and submissiveness, the fear of escalating violence, those however were not a substitute for resistance.

> What could we do? We became aware that the danger lurked in the narrow circle of our close acquaintances. We became more vulnerable and more cautious, more circumspect perhaps, but never did it cross our minds that we could put up any opposition (Mozes, 1995, p. 11).

In the late spring and early summer of 1944, Oradea and its communities were the centre of the ultimate Transylvanian evil. Never before had the city been plunged into such moral darkness and self-destruction. A heartrending testimony is the autobiographical volume *Nine Suicases* by the journalist Bela Zsolt. The latter was married to Agnes, the mother of the famous Eva Heyman, the young girl who, just like Anne Frank in Amsterdam, kept a diary for six months, until ghettoization, then she was put on the last deportee train for Auschwitz. After she managed to spend a long time into hiding and escape the gas chamber, she was found in the hospital by Mengele himself and shared the ill fate of most of them. The diary was rescued by the family cook, a Hungarian, who, after the war, handed it to her surviving mother. Agnes Zsolt published it in Hungarian in 1948, in Budapest. The Romanian translation came out through "Tikvah" Association from Oradea: A*gnes Zsolt, Eva, My Daughter*, IInd ed., Hasefer, Bucharest, 2019.

Bela Zsolt gives testimony of the sharp and inexplicable cleavage of Oradea society around the time of the persecution and ghettoization

of Jews, in some of the most eloquent and emblematic pages of memoir ever written:

> At the other street corner, a syphilitic newsvendor was shouting in a hoarse voice the opening headline of the official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Nagyvarad: "The Jews got what they deserve! A Christian Nagyvarad is no longer a dream!"
>
> We were carried on a parade down the Big Street, the favoured ground of iredeemably corrupt abusers and obsequious minor nobles, of the pompous officer corps in all the splendour of their cruelty and stupidity, of wealthy merchants who mocked the Jews' lax business morals and of respectable middle-class ladies who were having their promenade. […]
>
> After the unforgettable clatter of the procession died down, silence followed… (Zsolt, 2022, p. 20).

Shortly afterwards, the Oradea Jews were moved into two ghettos, where concentrations took place starting from the 3rd May: a bigger ghetto, located around Ullman Palace, the Great Orthodox Synagogue and the Big Square, and bounded by the current Deported Martyrs Street, where around 27,000 Jews were packed in a tiny space, and a smaller one, virtually outdoors, in the yard of the Mezey timber factory, where around 8,000 Jews had been brought from around the county. The ghettos were emptied on 23rd, 25th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st May and on 1st, 3rd and 5th June by loading onto animal wagons around 3 thousand Jews, most of them women, children and elderly people (many of the men had already been deported to labour camps in the Ukraine, similarly with the ones considered stateless, who were deported and killed in Kamianets-Podilskyi) on 50-wagon trains, which left from Rhedey Park (Braham and Tibori Szabó, 2019, pp. 66–67), currently Nicolae Bălcescu Park. On the spot of the ultimate humiliation, Livia Cherecheș and Emilia Teszler, two sisters whose mother was deported to Auschwitz, erected, through „Tikvah" Association which they founded, a life-size bronze statue representing Eva Heyman, a girl with pigtails, sitting on a bench, waiting …

The way in which the Oradea ghetto operated and the tortures suffered by the Jews concerntrated there, especially the tortures inflicted on them in the Dreher beer factory, which was found on the

ghetto premises, presumably to force them to reveal where they hid their wealth (a pretext actually, since the same treatments which combined medieval fantasies with modern technology, such as the electroshock, were administered to 13–14 year-old girls, who could not have been suspected of having hidden treasures), were described at length by Antonio Faur, on the basis of testimonies in *The Trial of the Ghettos in Northern Transylvania*, IInd vol. *(Testimonies)*, *The Trial of the Ghettos in Northern Transylvania*, Ist vol. *(The Indictment)*, AERVH, Bucharest, 2007, *The Martyrdom of Jews in Romania (1940–1944)*, Hasefer, Bucharest, 1991 etc., in the dedicated volume: *The Oradea Ghetto (1944). A Brief History*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2022. Important sources such as those found in the digitised archives in Yad Vashem Museum shed further light. In the ghetto, many chose voluntary death, taking their own life, others died during tortures or as a result of the ordeals to which they were subjected, from disease and physical debilitation. The ghetto existed for only six weeks. On the last days of May and at the beginning of June, Oradea was losing, defintively and tragically, one third of its population, that which had helped it grow and turn into a modern metropolis at great personal sacrifice, aligning it with the progressive West (Cf. Alberto Castaldini, *The Mimetic Hypothesis. On Jews and the Origin of Modernity*, Ratio et Revelatio, Oradea, 2023), which however caused them an unsuspected and irreparable harm.

Oradea was liberated from the Fascist occupation on 12th October 1944. The first Jewish citizens of Oradea were those still incarcerated in forced-labour camps in the city or nearby. Several families that had gone into hiding in Vineyards Hill came out, followed by others from neighbouring villages and some of those who had fled to Romania. The deportees started to arrive and there was a frantic search for survivors in order to reunite them with their families, Red Cross trains arrived, lists were being drawn up, people went to the railway station everyday waiting for the arrival of their family members, for whom careful preparations were made to welcome them back by setting up, within their financial means, canteens, sanitary accommodation, hospital beds etc.

Resuming their lives was extremely difficult, not solely because of the traumas and the realization that nothing of their pre-war

possessions was left, but very soon the Romanian Workers' Party, subsequently renamed the Communist Party, developed the Soviet-inspired, red antisemitism' – ethnic cleansing mainly directed towards the Jews. Many Jews were dismissed from their jobs, expelled from the Party, trumped-up charges were brought against them and summary trials were staged, they were convicted of high treason, sabotage, liaisons with foreigners and espionage, and served heavy prison terms, were tortured and even went missing without a trace, a situation documented not only in Romania, but in the entire communist bloc. The Jewish religious diversity was concentrated in the generic "Mosaic Religion", the controversial Moses Rosen serving as Chief Rabbi thereof from 1948 to 1994. The new persecution, the uncertain social status of the Jewish minority in communist Romania, with the different manifestations of its totalitarian rule, created a desire to emigrate to Eretz Israel. Waves of emigration – subject to the whims and foreign interests of the communist authorities – were possible after the creation of the State of Israel, and the 'sales' of Jews, particularly during Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorship, are famous.

At present, the Jewish community of Oradea consists of merely several hundred people, most of them undeclared Jews, assimilated through language in the Magyar minority, and having an aversion to anything coming from the past or anything reminding them of their own experiences or those of their families. It is not easy to find any more avowed Jews in Oradea, to identify them as such and to talk to them. The aged Jewish community looks back into the past, being rather "survivors of their own parents" returned from deportation, with a huge baggage of traumas which, no matter how much they wished to hide, were passed on "through the mother's milk", as stated by Maria, one of the nieces of survivors Ilona and Marton Berger. The most severe trauma is undoubtedly, that of the Holocaust, and at the microhistorical level, that of the repeated experience of daily antisemitism and of betrayal by the hegemonic Magyar community which the Jews traditionally supported. The consequences of these are not only a post-traumatic syndrom, but also a state of uncertainty and identity ambivalence: the Oradea Jews are mostly Hungarian-speaking by tradition and choice and assimilated in the Magyar community, which however at a time of major

crisis not only did not defend them, but rejoiced and contributed to their collective tragedy, greedily appropriated their possessions, of which no restitution was made on the return of the few survivors. Antisemitism and the feeling of betrayal are therefore two transgenerational traumas which left their mark on the Jewish community of Oradea. In the case studies we carried out, the survivors' children and grandchildren, who identify themselves as survivors, even if indirectly, feel themselves to be the bearers of a historical transgenerational trauma and some of them also remember the 'Magyar betrayal', although they are all native speakers of Hungarian.

The Bergers – A Case Study

In the present paper I have chosen to describe the case of the Bergers which, out of the real-life cases gathered and analysed for my PhD Thesis in History, which was completed in 2023 at the Doctoral School of International Relations and Security Studies at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, is the most illustrative of the phenomenon of transgenerational trauma, not solely historical and collective, but also intra-family transgenerational trauma.

I had met Maria on a number of occasions in informal, convivial situations, at some friends' house. Nothing betrayed such a dramatic family history in any way. Later she acknowledged that that type of dissmulation was common in her family. After several casual encounters, when we discussed about my interests and research, Maria dropped a hint. "My grandparents returned from the concentration camps". We started to meet regularly only for this purpose. To search together in the family's past.

Maria Berger (married name Lontiș), an economist by profession, born in 1976, in Oradea, in a family whose native language was Hungarian, is married to Dacian, a Romanian ethnic, entrepreneur, and they work together in the family business and have two daughters, Bianca and Sofia. Maria owns release papers from the camps and "notebooks" which contain handwritten accounts of the experience of internment in the concentration camps Auschwitz-Birkenau and Mauthausen, which she inherited from her grandparents. The "notebooks", as she calls them, contain some pages which

are yellowed and worn thin with age, written painstakingly, by hand, in Hungarian, as her grandparents were simple people and not highly educated, who came from poor Jewish families. Maria struggled to understand them, read them carefully and translate them into Romanian. It was slow going though, not only because of the spelling which was unreadable in places, the intricate phraseology, the heavily colloquial style, but especially because of the emotions which overwhelmed her constantly and uncontrollably and which only allowed her to go through and translate only a few lines at a time, in short and poignant sessions, during which she was crying and felt physically and emotionally ill, similarly with her daughters, who helped her and offered translation suggestions. She needed to take breaks for several days between translation sessions in order to rework the text so that the depth of emotion came across. The author felt haunted by the events in the translated fragments, relived the experience of deportation of her family, especially her grandparents, to whom she was very attached, who loved her and gave her a happy childhood, despite the crushing emotional baggage, which they carried quietly. Today the amount of effort put in digging up an extremely traumatic past in their writings, so as to hand down a rich spiritual legacy, is all the more obvious to her.

What is indeed remarkable is the joint effort and at the same time the individual effort of the two survivors, Ilona and Marton, to decide, at an advanced age, to write, each of them in their own notebook, without reading each other's notes and influencing one other, about the tragic events from the time of deportation until their homecoming, to Oradea. Undertaking to expose themselves to the painful (re)living of the past, through (des)cription has an explanation which coincides with the testimonies of their descendants: the sense of duty and the love for those who would come after them – ideal readers, directly targeted and named, of this virtually assymetrical dialogue, actually a one-way and monological communication. From the manuscripts, it emerges that the experiences were distilled, reworked throughout their lives, the authors managing to filter, through a synthesis dictated by the ‚stream of consciousness', a concept developed by Virginia Wolf, and by a mnemonic effort, doubled by one of lexical choices, to encapsulate and at the same time bring to the surface of the present

and to the targeted recipients' capacity of reception (and acceptance), details of the dehumanizing experience of the Holocaust.

The dialogue with the descendants shows that, although they had some knowledge of the subject – for example, the explanation for the tattoo on left forearm of grandmother Berger, which showed number 76418 and a triangle over number 4 (the grandfather had no tattoo, because in the forced labour camps and different transit camps where he had been interned, including the one at Mauthausen, no tattoos were done) – the topic was never discussed, and when it came up, it happened spontaneously, accidentally, or as a result of an involuntary narrative ‚slip', as in a ‚valley of tears', for instance at some gatherings of women in the neighbourhood, attended by Ilona Berger and her daughter-in-law, who offered us details in an exclusive interview conducted for our research project. In the Bergers' house, people kept silent for a long time, half a century, and only the granddaughter Maria, the third generation, started to speak and delve into the family past. Their son, Adalbert (the first born after Mircea, the child lost in the gas chamber at Auschwitz) still keeps silent today – the interview with him was forced, almost disowned. Nobody discussed about what happened during deportation for generations, either out of shame, post-traumatic reserve or out of fear not to cause a turmoil in the quite life of the famiy or perhaps there was also a silence around the subject which was imposed by the authorities throughout the communist period and involuntarily accepted by the population and even by those directly concerned. Even after the fall of communism, a certain unease about raising the subject of the Holocaust publicly, irrespective of the regime, persisted and thus the silence dragged on and is also preferred today. It seems the Holocaust bothers and one wants to have it downplayed, assimilated with other types of ethnic genocide, and anyway, to see it as having been "brought about", "triggered" somehow by the Jews themselves.

Writing a number of pages by the two direct survivors was the necessary compromise, breaking the silence, in silence… Stylistically, both texts are characterised by an involuntary expressiveness, which stems from the informality of language, also accounted for by the limited formal schooling. The narrative is simple, informative, graphical, descriptive, ordered diachronically, with emotional flashback

reflections, due to the writing in stages, depending on the available time and the mood. Few comments are made on the events, they remain closely linked with the personal microhistory, events are not described and possibly the author lacks information on the macrohistorical context, but the rhetorical questions show emotional involvement, which is however repressed probably in order not to lose credibility or perhaps to overcome more easily the anxiety of reliving the past by means of a self-imposed writing pace, set by chronogical marks, as reference points in the uphill journey of autobiographical exploration. We do not know whether these writings also had a liberating or therapeutical effect. We are inclined to believe that they did not to a great extent. It was already late for them, the writings being elaborated some time in the 80s. By then they would have used other coping mechanisms. The time gap only helped in the decanting, ordering of thoughts and in gaining control over the chaos of memory, so that the textual fabric was culturally and historically intelligible without disrupting the recipients' lives, to which the authors were emotionally attached, trying to find a balance, diminish the impact of the trauma and at the same be authentic.

The texts are thus aimed at the direct descendants. The authorial intention is clear and obvious in the dedication: ‚For my grandchildren, in memory of grandma Ilus' (the grandmother's notebook). Throughout the text, especially in Ilona Berger's manuscript, the appellative ‚grandpa' is reiterated as a deictic for her husband, thus indirectly identifying her interlocutors – the grandchildren and, only by extension and supra-significance their peers or, further on, the generations to come (we mention that granddaughters Bianca and Sofia never met their grandparents).

> On 9th April 1944 the Magyar Police (Magyar Kiralyi Rendorseg) arrested us, Reich Bacsi, Mancika's father-in-law, myself, Mancika and her mother-in-law, together with the two children, and on 26th April they took us to Pesta. In the morning of 27th April we arrived at TOLONC HAZ (concentration camp), there they separated the Jews from the Hungarians and interned us in separate rooms. On the following day they handed us over to the Germans and took us to the railway station, there another transport from Tarcea arrived and we got to be

> around 2,000 people. **Our only fault was that we were** JEWS (from Ilona Berger's notebook).

We do not know if, after the Holocaust, the Bergers intended to be happy or only wished to continue to survive. We know that the most important thing for them was that they were together again. They were among the few survivors, husband and wife, who were reunited after the Holocaust in Oradea. We do not know if they felt gratitude for the new and painful chance to be among the few survivors of their family and to their great distress, to have survived their only child, the first born Mircea (born 1938 Oradea – died 1944, Auschwitz). From their descendants' recollections, it appears they chose to live a life immersed in a sometimes rigid normality, not overtly religious (we lack first-hand information about their inner faith, only the accounts of their son and daughter-in-law), based on a daily routine, punctuated in places by festive moments in family life, every daily gesture being part of a set of unwritten and unspoken, implicit norms. They elevated normality derived from norm, not just etymologically, to the level of perfect happiness. They built a home where they had other children, went to work, joined in celebrations, went about their business day after day, and went on with their lives step by step, in spite the post-traumaic stress from which they never recovered and with which they coped through daily discipline. However their social life is affected, the unresolved trauma is brewing beneath the surface. They have few friends, most of them coming from the ranks of the old illegal activists and several survivors, coreligionists. It is a closed circle, there is a limited desire to socialise, life continues inconspicuously, discreetly, within the family. What surfaces is a loss of trust in one's fellow human beings, neighbours, a collective "others", who rejoiced and benefited from the drama of their family and community or took no action to show compassion and empathy when the Jewish population was ghettoized in Oradea and deported on animal wagons.

In the interview with the son, the daughter-in-law, the granddaughter and the grand-granddaughters, one can feel the disappointment not just with society, but with the ideology which they had embraced and through which they had hoped to find social harmony, equality and dignity, a safe tomorrow, under the communist regime

which both had supported. Even the abuses suffered, the demotions and the humiliations endured in the workplace, are mentioned, a testimony to the 'red racism' unleashed in the 50s-60s in Stalinist Romania. Trauma upon trauma! But this was overlooked, as nothing was more serious than the experience of the Holocaust and the daily encounter with death in the concentration camp.

Upon being released from the concentration camp Ilona agreed to be taken by the Red Cross to a hospital in Sweden, where she received care and treatment for almost two years, as she was seriously debilitated. Her return to Oradea was difficult and only happened in the autumn of 1946. The letters to her husband show an intense longing and a strong wish to return home, to Oradea, where Marton had put up a new house, using rescued furniture, as they had nothing left and had to start from scratch. Marton waited for her and arranged a little house to welcome his beloved wife whom he had no longer hoped to see again.

> I began to look for a house, so we would have a place to stay when she came home. We had to start over. I found a house on 22 Jokai Mor Street, with a room and a kitchen and I was very content. I received some furniture from one of my cousins. Everything was in place, only my wife was missing from home.
>
> Time went on and the spring came. I was assigned to a vineyard as a caretaker. The vineyard was called Demetrovici. I liked it there, because I was working outdoors, in the fresh air.
>
> I forgot to mention that, after I received a letter from my wife and I had her address, we began to correspond and I kept writing to her to come back home as soon as possible.
>
> The time finally came when she returned home, at the beginning of October 1946. I was very happy that she escaped from hell. (from Marton Berger's notebook)

After their passing (Marton, in 1992, and Ilona, in 2000), after a long and active "career" as parents and grandparents, the great-granddaughters were born – the fourth generation of survivors, each of whom was, knowingly or not, the bearer of a silence, if not of

a "transgenerational post-traumatic stress", which their mother, Maria, is talking about.

"Father Berger" kept silent even more than "Mother Berger". He silenced his words and suffering, which he replaced with a very elaborate Sunday routine, as, on his day off, smartly dressed and wearing cologne, he would go out for a walk. With an air of respectability and a smiling face, he would take his favourite granddaughter, the same Maria, by the hand, and strode along the streets of the city where his family members had been marched to the ghetto, to nowhere, amidst the indifference and mockery of the passers-by, as described by Bela Zsolt in his autobiography. We do not know if he ever felt safe and truly free and at home again in the city where, without warning and through no fault of his own, he suffered such great vexations, however the fact is that he chose not to leave the city, but to refound there an entire Berger family, which morally and physically defeated all predictions and aims of Nazi ideology as well as communist constraints.

His surviving descedants exclaim: "It is inconceivable that being a Jew or part of any ethic or social group is a fault in itself and anyway it cannot be a reason why a human being should feel empowered to murder another human being. It seems incredible even today that, aside from some accidental gesture, by a fanatic with diagnosable behavioural and psychological disorders, there could exist a state policy to annihilate an entire population group! This aspect and the thoughts on the family history during the Holocaust, were the topic of the common interview with Bianca (18 years old) and Sofia (13 years old), daughters of Maria and Dacian, the grand granddaughters of the family's (re)founders, Marton Berger and Ilona Berger, the fourth generation of survivors. Bianca emphasizes that something like that should never happen to anybody, irrespective of the ethnic, racial origin, political views or sexual orientation. The right to life and dignity is inviolable. Sofia reinforces, by her approving gestures, her sister's statements. I asked them if they believed that history could repeat itself and if the risk scared them. Bianca answers that at present or in a predictable future it probably does not, but yes, human beings can always have or adhere to an aberrant behaviour or ideology. (Therefore a certain state of alert was passed on). Both

of them asserted, reassessed and completed their own identity by bringing to light these manuscripts and the accounts of their mother and grandparents. It is difficult to foresee the manner in which each of them will choose to relate to this part of their family and kin identity, assuming it, at least in part, is however certain.

In an informal interview, recorded and transcribed for research purposes, Maria Lontis mentioned, while recounting dialogues with her daughter occasioned by their watching the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, at "Queen Mary" Theatre in Oradea: "Sofia asked me: «I wonder if life was as terrible for my grandparents as it is for us today when we hear about it? When you talk to me about communism, it sends a shiver down my spine! Did you feel just as intensely about it back then?» I answered that I didn't, because my mother did everything in her power to ensure that we didn't see the ugly side. She cooked as well as she could, she knitted, she did all sorts of things so that I lacked nothing. So I literally felt communism! And she said: «It is likely that if I tell my children about the pandemic, they will suffer more than I actually suffered myself!» Each generation carries the baggage of trauma of the previous one, to which it adds its own direct traumatic experience. Finally, in this family, the equation of the transgenerational trauma is at present confined to the level of memory of the Holocaust + Communism + Sars-Cov2 Pandemic... More recently, we experience a new fear for our family members who emigrated to Israel and of the global resurgence of anti-semitism, following the massive terrorist attacks recently launched on Israel, as well as of the looming spectre of a new regional war or world war with anti-semitic roots."

The Bergers' case illustrates the way in which the historical transgenerational trauma in an Oradea Jewish family leads to tensions and problems in intra-family and social communication, to social isolation, distrust, suffering which in spite of constant efforts they cannot hide and which is passed on through cultural and family determination to the descendants, who become perpetual witnesses and martyrs on the shrine of this suffering. The case of the Bergers, its members' testimonies and the "notebooks" of spouses Ilona and Marton Berger are in the process of being published in a volume, by Ratio et Revelatio Publishing House, under the title: *From Oradea*

to Auschwitz and Mauthausen and Back. With love, Mother Berger and Father Berger, for those who will come after us. Accounts and testimonies of four generations of survivors.

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Raluca Lazarovici-Vereș – a graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy) in 2004, with Magna cum Laudae, she completed specialisation courses in European Studies at Universiteit van Amsterdam and in International Law at Sorbonne (Paris), earned a Master's degree in The Didactics of Italian Language at Univ. "Ca Foscari" in Venice and a PhD in Philology / Romance Languages at Università degli Studi di Torino (2009). Upon returning to Romania, she founded in Oradea, in 2013, together with her husband, a classicist, the Ratio et Revelatio Publishing House, for which she translates, coordinates the Literature, the Philology and the History series, edits volumes, is an author and an independent researcher. In 2023 she defended the PhD thesis in History at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. She taught at different Italian and Romanian universities. Areas of interest and research: Romanian literature during communism, the literature of Romanian exile and emigration, the history of the Jews, the Holocaust, the history of Italy and of the Italian diaspora, the history of minorities in Romania, the didactics of foreign languages.

Review

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A Library-Like Volume

Babeți A., Fotache O. (eds.) (2022). *The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central-European Novel*. Iași: Polirom.

Abstract

The present review aims to present a volume published is 2022, the completion of a project launched nearly three decades earlier: *The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central-European Novel* (Iasi, Polirom Publishing, 755p.), compiled from 255 novel reading notes, coordinated by Adriana Bebeti, who is also the author of the extensive introductory study, which could have formed a book in itself. The members of the 'Third Europe' foundation (name which refers to an intermediary space between the East and the West, based on intersections and the recognition of constancies), literary researchers in Timisoara, as well as prominent figures of the national and international academic world participated in creating the dictionary. Central Europe appears as a cultural space with a chequered history, an unsettled world ruled by instability and devoid of security, but enriched by multiculturalism and multilingualism. *The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central-European Novel* may be regarded as a natural sequel to the anthology volumes in the 'Third Europe' series, coordinated bv Adriana Babeți and Cornel Ungureanu: *Central*

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Europe. Neuroses, Dilemmas, Utopias (1997) and *Central Europe. Memory, Paradise, Apocalypse* (1998). By its scientific rigour and compelling style, the dictionary proves to be not only a useful working tool for academics, researchers and students, but also a possible handbook for any student of literature.

Looking back and retracing the genesis of the project, *The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central-European Novel* has its roots in two anthology volumes published in the late '90s and coordinated by Adriana Babeți and Cornel Ungureanu: *Central Europe. Neuroses, Dilemmas, Utopias* (1997) and *Central Europe. Memory, Paradise, Apocalypse* (1998); both anthologies begin with a Foreword authored by Babeți and conclude with an Afterword by Ungureanu.

Central Europe. Neuroses, Dilemmas, Utopias inaugurated in 1997 the 'Third Europe' series, giving Romanian readers with an interest in history, philosophy of culture and political science access to texts previously unpublished. The volume, made up of sections *A Concept with Variable Geometry*, *Between Cultural Identity and Political Illusion* and *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, brings together articles by writers such as Tony Judt, Jacques Rupnik, Timothy Garton Ash, Jacques Le Rider, Claudio Magris, Vladimir Tismăneanu, Michel Foucher, Mircea Muthu, André Reszler, Radu Enescu, Endre Bojtár, Jaroslav Pelikan, Virgil Nemoianu, Andrei Corbea, Mircea Anghelescu, John Willett, Milan Kundera, Mircea Eliade, Eugène Ionesco, Czesław Miłosz, György Konrád, Danilo Kiš, E. M. Cioran, Michael Heim, H. C. Artmann, Péter Eszterházy, Claudio Magris, Miklós Mészöly, Adam Michnik. This is not a juxtaposition, but a dialogue (implicit or explicit).

A year later, *Central Europe. Memory, Paradise, Apocalypse* returned to the topics addressed in the earlier anthology, this time as reflected in autobiographies, journals, memoirs, correspondence and revolving around the notions of centre, province, harmony, neurosis, agony, identity, vulnerability. Confessional writing revealed new facets of some of the authors present in the previous volume, other leading writers being added (including Stefan Zweig, Elias Canetti, Miloš Crnjanski, Lucian Blaga, Illyés Gyula, I. D. Sîrbu, Andrzej Kuśniewicz,

Arthur Koestler, Witold Gombrowicz, Dominic Tatarka, Franyó Zoltán, Italo Svevo, Joseph Roth, Miroslav Krleža, Livius Ciocârlie, Robert Musil, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Kafka, Ioan Slavici, Karel Čapek, Bohumil Hrabal, Cora Irineu, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Alma Mahler-Werfel, Ivan Klima).

The idea of a dictionary of the Central-European novel, which originated as early as 1992, took shape through the activity of the 'Third Europe' foundation, which was founded in 1997 and gave its name to the above-mentioned series. The foundation brought together literary researchers from the West University of Timisoara: professors Adriana Babeți, Mircea Mihăieș, Cornel Ungureanu and doctoral students Daciana Banciu-Branea, Dorian Branea, Gabriel Kohn, Marius Lazurca, Tinu Pârvulescu, Sorin Tomuța. In 1999, an NGO institutional structure was established, which paved the way for national and international collaborations; the scale of the latter may be inferred from the records of the prominent literary figures on the scientific committee: Sorin Antohi, Timothy Garton Ash, Daniel Chirot, Livius Ciocârlie, Andrei Corbea, Paul Cornea, Slavenka Drakulić, Irena Grudzińska, Miklós Haraszti, Pierre Hassner, Ken Jowitt, Tony Judt, Gail Kligman, Konrád György, Jacques Le Rider, Mircea Martin, Adam Michnik, Vladimir Tismăneanu, Ivan Vejvoda, Catherine Verdery.

This history, necessary for understanding the evolution and objectives of the project, is presented in great detail by Adriana Babeți, the DCEN coordinator, at the beginning of an extensive introductory study, which could have formed a volume in itself: nearly 100 pages – and the number would have been considerably higher, had it not been for the small type used in printing.

To start with, the critic decodes the significance of the foundation's name: an intermediary space between the East and the West, based on intersections and the recognition of constancies. Secondly, the variable geometry of the notion of Central Europe, which eludes precise demarcations by its very paradox-generating ambivalence, occasions a review of the terms *Mitteleuropa*, *Zentraleuropa*, *Zwischeneuropa*, *the New Europe*, *Eastern Europe*, *Median/Middle Europe*, *East-Central Europe*, *Central and Eastern Europe*, *Central and South-Eastern Europe*, not forgetting Robert Musil's *Kakania*.

Central Europe appears as a cultural space with a chequered history, an unsettled world ruled by instability and devoid of security, but enriched by multiethnicity, multiculturalism, multilingualism and confessional plurality. The complex relations include clashes and intersections, the contrast between urban and rural ways of life, cosmopolitanism and national tradition. If geographical boundaries were repeatedly redrawn and revised, the individual was under the pressure of internal frontiers, which conceal or reveal the identity crisis.

The dictionary's authors avoided a rigid framework in the selection of texts, proceeding instead in two directions, as Babeți points out:

> On the one hand, starting from literature (through the comparative reading of dozens of Central-European novels, as well as of the most important literary histories in the region); on the other hand, from the notion of Central Europe and the tumultuous history of the countries therein (by the selective use of an extensive bibliography). Two areas stand out from the convergence and overlap between the two histories (a mainstream, geocultural one and another muted, geopolitical), from their mutually shaping influence: one area of the general concept as it was reworked and adapted to our project, and another one represented by Central-European novel, viewed both in its unity and equally, in the plurality of its facets. Consequently, when we favoured a certain understanding of Central Europe we proceeded according to the spirit of the place, as if the Central-European model, characterized inter alia by ambiguity and ambilavence, had left an indelible imprint on us (p. 27).

The answer to the question – a rhetorical one, undoubtedly – whether there is a Central-European novel, supports the presence of *a pattern, an ethos* or *a thinking and behavioural soft* peculiar to individuals and communities

> which the novel – as a specific literary form, through its proteism, assimilates most visibly. Even while stereotyping, they develop a set of distinctive characteristics of Central-Europeanness determined by a largely common past, which generated a unique sensitivity to the

> challenges of history and a specific attitude towards the major creative paradigms of modernity (p. 51).

Apart from the *Introduction*, DCEN includes *Tabula gratulatoria*, the list of novels, novel reading notes, author notes, the chronology (the ordering of novels according the date of publication), the introduction of contributors (the authors of the reading notes, as well as theoreticians and translators), the general bibliography, an index of authors and works, an index of names, a table of contents.

256 novels correspond to the 251 reading notes, a difference which derives from the inclusion in four notes of two volumes, which were deemed possible sequels published under different titles and in different years. The novel notes and the author notes have a structure proposed by the dictionary coordinator and devised in consulation with experts in the field. The list of novels (whose authors are mentioned between square brackets) is acccompanied by succint accounts of the contributors' activities: Adriana Babeți, Balázs Imre Jósef, Olga Bartosiewicz, Grațiela Benga, Alexandru Bodog, Ioana Bot, Corin Braga, Daciana Branea, Dorian Branea, Alexandru Budac, Ruxandra Cesereanu, Laura Cheie, Cristina Chevereșan, Mateusz Chmurski, Alexandra Ciocârlie, Livius Ciocârlie, Afrodita Cionchin, Ștefana Oana Ciortea-Neamțiu, Cosmin Ciotloș, Simona Constantinovici, Ioana Copil-Popovici, Andrei Corbea, Adina Costin Szőnyi, Sorin Radu Cucu, Sabra Daici, Anca Diaconu, Roxana Eichel, Oana Fotache, Xavier Galmiche, Constantin Geambașu, Gabriela Glăvan, Andreea Heller-Ivancenko, Ilinca Ilian, Alina Irimia, Kazimierz Jurczak, Melania Kaitor, Gabriel Kohn, Koronka Csilla, Cătălin Lazurca, Marius Lazurca, Jacques Le Rider, Mircea Martin, Mészarós Ildikó, Călin-Andrei Mihăiescu, Voichița Năchescu, Octavia Nedelcu, Alexandru Oravițan, Antonio Patraș, Radu Păiușan, Cristian Pătrășconiu, Ioana Pârvulescu, Tinu Pârvulescu, Ioan Radin Peianov, Dana Percec, Florin Corneliu Popovici, Vasile Popovici, Ana Pușcașu, Radu Pavel Gheo, Magda Răduță, Roxana Rogobete, Ion Simuț, Szekernyés János, Călin Teutișan, Dumitru Tucan, Claudiu Turcuș, Mihaela Ursa, Vallasek Júlia, Libuše Valentová, Ciprian Vălcan, Smaranda Vultur. The name lists serve a useful purpose: apart from the ‚big picture', they highlight the participants and the transcendence of local and national borders.

The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central-European Novel was conceived not only as a working tool for academics (literary historians and theoreticians, comparatists, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, historians, geographers) or students. "First and foremost", Babeți states,

> it would be interesting to see how useful the Dictionary would be to those who study literature in its multiple relations to history. These were given precedence not because the theme of history (usually, a «bad» history) is one of the most popular in Central-European literatures, particularly in novels. But because the connection of a DCEN-like working tool with history-related subjects […] is a strong, substantive one (p. 82).

Moreover, we believe that DCEN could constitute, by its scientific rigour and compelling style, a possible handbook for any student of literature.

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Wanting the Unwanted. "Heritage Wanted, Heritage Unwanted" by Lucyna Rotter and Piotr Legutko (Review)

Rotter, L., Legutko, P., (2023). *Dziedzictwo chciane, dziedzictwo niechciane* [*Heritage wanted, heritage unwanted*]. Krakow: Avalon.

Cultural heritage is one of the most important aspects of our history and identity. It is a treasure passed down from generation to generation that shapes our view of the world and influences our daily lives. We admire with pride what our ancestors built, we observe with curiosity what the representatives of other cultures have built – we try to understand each other, sometimes fascinated we find our origins in the elements of our own heritage so we begin to understand some of the emotions, the reflexes, the sense of beauty. All these elements breathe goodness, set us creatively and positively towards our surroundings, and yet they do not exhaust the forms in which we come into contact with the past we have come to share. There are also elements that we would not like to see, that our compatriots or fellow citizens did not want to see either. Objects which became traces of a tragedy inflicted on a supra-individual scale – on communities or nation. We treat unwanted heritage as 'ballast' or 'burden' that represents a unique challenge for many communities. This heritage, which arose from circumstances beyond our control, can affect our

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lives in a variety of ways. While many of its elements are in material form, visible in space, its impact manifests itself primarily on an emotional level. This kind of legacy may require time and effort to understand and work through, in order to avoid transmitting these problems to future generations (Schulberg 1997, 324). It is also possible to adopt an attitude that tells us to get rid of forcibly imposed elements that remind us of a past marked by suffering or freedom deprivation. To remove and build anew, without the burden of trauma, without complexes and thorns. However, this is not always possible. For many people, struggling with such a legacy can be difficult, but at the same time it can be an opportunity for learning and personal growth. It is worth emphasising that whatever unwanted legacy we inherit, we are in control of how we react to it and the steps we take to influence our lives and the lives of future generations.

A pair of contributors combining academic and television experience have taken on the task of bringing readers closer to the diversity of cultural heritage using the Polish example. Lucyna Rotter is a professor at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow and has been working for years on the symbolism of dress (Marecki, Rotter, Giza, 2022) and space (Rotter, 2003; Rotter, 2016; Marecki, Rotter, 2016), also devoting attention to cultural tourism. Piotr Legutko is a versatile journalist, with practical and managerial experience in press, radio and television, and the author of studies on the craft of journalism (Legutko, 2007) and the politics of memory (Legutko, 2014). The authors of the book try (combining their respective temperaments and perspectives of interest) to take the reader on a journey through time and space, showing not only cultural beauty but also the importance of heritage elements for tourism development. This is a popular book, but not devoid of a scientific apparatus. Its sections smuggle in statistical analyses, theoretical considerations and practical experiences of media exposure of heritage elements surrounded by narratives about places and customs.

The authors argue that any heritage 'can be wanted', even one associated with a tragic or unattractive past. The secret lies in nurturing the story and building the right narrative around it to attract an audience that wants moving, interesting stories. The book is based on precisely this idea, both methodologically (driving the

heritage narrative) and teleologically (convincing the audience of the importance of narrating heritage elements).

The structure of the publication includes, apart from the introduction and conclusion, four substantive chapters, highlighted in colour. It is the colour scheme, the extraordinarily rich layout and the illustrative material (including specially selected photographs by Włodzimierz Płaneta) that create a story that focuses on the attractiveness of the message without abandoning such traditionally unattractive elements as the bibliography or footnotes.

The authors chose to reflect on the cultural code to open the publication. They highlight how complex and multidimensional the cultural code is in the context of the perception of a region's cultural space, showing its impact on the identity, perception and heritage of a place. Here they focused on the significance of cultural artefacts, pointing out that they often have the meaning of a symbol or sign properly understood only through analysis in a chronological, geographical and cultural context. This shows that people and societies function in a universe of signs with variety of research applications. They also highlighted the influence of tradition on the perception of a region by reminding us that the multi-layered tradition of a region, including historical, social and cultural aspects, influence the way a region or city is perceived. This perception is also influenced by economic, political and religious changes, indicating the complexity of the elements that shape a region's cultural code. Each region has its own distinctive cultural code, which is shaped and continues to shape the heritage and cultural landscape of towns, villages and the region as a whole. This code forms part of the narrative of a place and is integral to its identity.

The book also emphasises that non-verbal communication has developed different forms and modes of expression throughout history. The meaning of a sign depends on the context and situation, and its perception and understanding is not immutable. A sign is something only for someone, which indicates the subjectivity and conventionality in the interpretation of cultural symbols. Hence, an important section is devoted to the analysis of intangible heritage. The definitional considerations and the analysis of the impact of intangible heritage on the cultural code lead in the authors' view to

emphasise its importance for the branding of the region: intangible heritage, understood as a set of symbols and signs, is the foundation for the branding of a city or region. The use of these elements in the branding process makes it possible to build a unique identity and differentiate the region from others. Through its unique cultural characteristics, traditions and symbols, it is a key element in shaping a region's brand, giving it depth and authenticity, which is extremely important in the context of tourism and cultural promotion.

In the coexistence of wanted and unwanted heritage, Rotter and Legutko highlighted buildings associated with the era of industrial development. This is a well-known approach in the literature (Dąbrowski, 2017; Kisiel, 2019), although the first association with the term 'unwanted heritage' is most often associated in Poland with buildings of the German occupation period (e.g. Building 5 at Wawel Castle, the castle in Przegorzały) aiming to turn Krakow into the Nuremberg of the East referring to connections with the city on the part of Dűrer and Stwosz (Schenk, 2013, p. 80). There has also been a broader look, pointing to Wawel Castle as a troubled heritage due to the significant changes in the development of the hill from the period of Austrian annexation and later German modernisation (Purchla, 2016). There have also been works showing, using this term, the policy of the communist Polish authorities towards monuments in the lands obtained by Poland after World War II, for example in Lower Silesia (Merta-Staszczak, 2018), not to mention the monuments and architecture of the communist period. Rotter and Legutko focused on softer forms, as if to harmonise with the positive overtones of the whole publication. They emphasize creation, restoration, and reuse rather than accentuate difficulties or negative aspects.

In a similar vein, examples of local phenomena (mine culture), the contemporary reproduction of minority heritage (Jewish culture) are discussed. This does not mean that the authors are completely blind to the problems of caring for and using cultural heritage. However, they treat them as a challenge, as shown in particular by the considerations collected in the last chapter, devoted to cultural tourism in Krakow and Lesser Poland (Malopolska). Here they point out the acute problem of "overtourism", tourism beyond its means, a serious problem in many places around the world, dramatically

affecting some of them (Séraphin et al., 2020; Dodds & Butler, 2019). "Overtourism" had already become an issue in Kraków in the years leading up to the pandemic. Writing about the 'touristification of cities', the authors mention negative effects such as the overcrowding of city centres with tourists, leading to the need for a strategy to manage and properly understand cultural heritage. They signal problems resulting from an excessive focus on tourism, such as residents moving out of city centres due to the annoying proximity of entertainment venues and the excessive number of souvenir shops and low-quality food outlets. As identity and cultural code are at the heart of their concerns, they do not shy away from these aspects either, pointing out the threat of losing the historical and cultural fabric of a place under the influence of mass tourism, especially in permanently inhabited places such as Krakow. The growing tourist pressure also leads to the use of heritage resources in an unrestricted way and often incompatible with the tradition and cultural code of the region, deforming the image of the place.

The final chapter contains quite a few statistical summaries from which the profile of tourists visiting the region and its capital city emerges. Among foreign tourists visiting Krakow, people from the UK make up a significant proportion, amounting to around 25% of foreign visitors. The dominant age group among tourists visiting Kraków and Malopolska is between 30 and 45 years old. This trend continues among both domestic and foreign tourists. The majority of tourists visiting the region have a university degree (53%) or secondary education (44%), which together account for 97% of the total tourist flow. The vast majority of tourists coming to Krakow describe their material status as good or medium, with the dominance of the affluent (about 70% of the tourist traffic stream). Among tourists visiting Kraków, the largest number are economically active people, accounting for more than 58% of the tourist traffic stream. Students take second place with a share of around 21%, and pensioners are the third most numerous group.

While giving away the main strengths of this publication, one cannot avoid pointing out possible weaker sides. It is surprising – given the authors' professional experience – that there is no separate

section of the publication with a strictly media or even media studies reflection. Both authors have not only the aptitude for this, but also access to sources and experience that would enrich the reader with knowledge and insights that are difficult to obtain elsewhere. Being aware of this, one cannot help but feel unsatisfied – this is part of the untapped potential. It is all the more noticeable when one notices, in the selected material, the authors' fascination with (among other things) their work in the media – Zamość with its festival, in which Piotr Legutko contributes significantly every year, the open-air locations of Krakow appearing in Lucyna Rotter's TV series – one would like to read more from such a combined perspective. The second dissatisfaction is related to the title of the book and the "unwanted heritage" contained therein. The actual 'unwanted heritage', understood as 'unwanted heritage' with a proposal to use it in tourism or media activities, is hardly touched upon. These are rather incidental threads, and the 'unwanted heritage' in the title of the publication refers here more to the effort required to promote the brand of each material trace of the past – even the most impressive and attractive ones. The extremely attractive edition, which encourages one to reach for the book and allows one to smuggle in the content present in the scholarly literature in a way that is friendly to a non-academic audience, is not without minor glitches, proofreading oversights. One example is the amusing mistake about 'fellow foothillers' (Rotter, Legutko, 2023, p. 115), where a spelling error creates new content.

Rotter and Legutko's book is an interesting hybrid of forms and styles – there is a noticeable scientific and theoretical underpinning, which, however, does not deter or dominate (although the bibliography contains some 200 items). The abundance of photographs and the graphic design are reminiscent of promotional publications and elaborate tourist studies. This is the kind of publication that can serve as an inspiration to look a little differently at places one is happy to visit, or sees so often that one no longer recognises its uniqueness.

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Salvijus Kulevičius, *In the Traps of the Soviets: Soviet World War II Military Burial Sites in Lithuania. The Genesis*

Fig. 1
Dismantling of the Victory monument in Šiauliai, 1991
Photo by Juozas Bindokas
Source: Povilas Višinskis Šiauliai County Public Library,
https://www.epaveldas.lt/preview?id=C150000451765.

Fig. 2
Soviet military burial site in the district of Šiauliai, circa 1945
Photo by Stasys Ivanauskas
Source: Šiauliai Aušros Museum, ŠAM Neg. No 14918,
https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/805391/349699535? digitalObjectId=349699559.

Fig. 3
Reburial of the remains of Soviet soldiers and partisans at the Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Biržai, 1945
Source: Biržai Regional Museum Sėla, BKM 10025-1.

Fig. 4
Transfer of the remains of Soviet partisans to the Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Salakas, second half of the 20th century
Source: Zarasai Regional Museum, ZKM F 2668,
https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/806097/91188696?digitalObjectId=91188749.

Fig. 5
Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Antakalnis, Vilnius, 1950-1970
Source: Register of Cultural Property, object code 15286,
https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-detail/DD4D65A5-744B-46E0-A9F9-DA3E4EE1D3FF.

Fig. 6
Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Utena, circa 1960
Source: Museum of Utena Regional Studies, UKM F 1431,
https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/806001/656852780?digitalObjectId=656853748.

Fig. 7
Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Šiauliai, 1945
Photo by Stasys Ivanauskas
Source: Šiauliai Aušros Museum, ŠAM Neg. No 14530,
https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/805391/5007608?digitalObjectId=5517520.

Fig. 8
Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Joniškis town square, 1950-1970. On the left – the destroyed Lithuanian Independence monument (erected in 1928)
Source: Joniškis Museum of History and Culture, JIKM F 1266, https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/805590/198231005?digitalObjectId=198234771.

Fig. 9
Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Raudonė Castle Park, 2007
Photo by Salvijus Kulevičius
Source: Personal collection of Salvijus Kulevičius.

Fig. 10
Red Army Day commemoration at the Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Šiauliai, 1948
Photo by Stasys Ivanauskas
Source: Šiauliai Aušros Museum, ŠAM Neg. No 15652, https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/805391/150000033406921?digitalObjectId=150000033406951.

Fig. 11
Victory Day commemoration at the Soviet Great Patriotic War military cemetery in Skuodas, 1966.
Source: Kretinga Museum, KM IF 9883,
https://www.limis.lt/valuables/e/805661/511762050?searchId=20928131.

Fig. 1
Moscow, skyscraper on Smolensk Square
Source: Architektura ČSR magazine 12, 1953, No. 3–4, 51.

Fig. 2
New York, Manhattan Municipal Building, 1909–1914
Source: Hegemann, W. (1925). American Architecture & Urban Design.
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Fig. 3
Prague-Dejvice, Hotel Internacional, 1952–1956,
Source: Architektura ČSR magazine 9, 1957, 465.

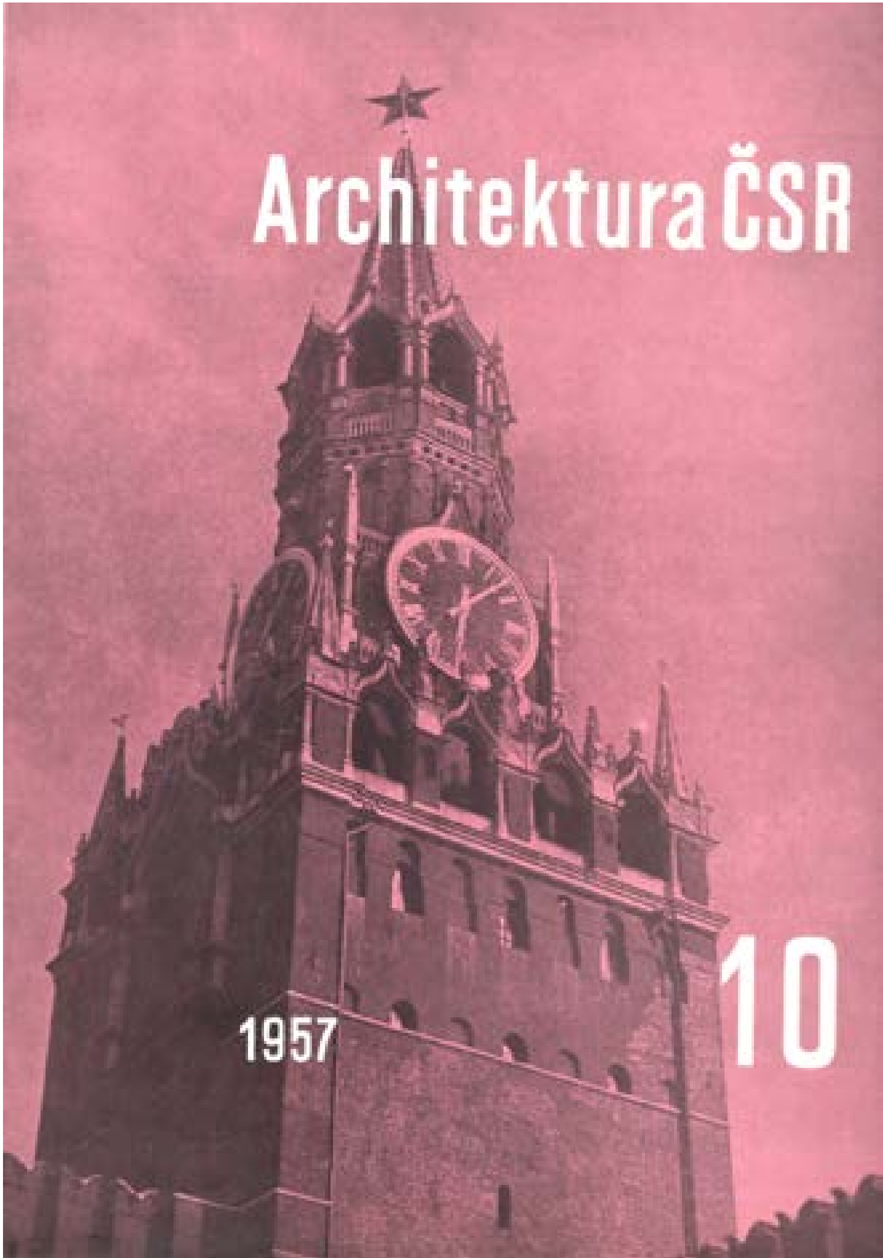

Fig. 4
Cover of the *Architektura čsr magazine* issue dedicated to Soviet architecture

Fig. 5
Ostrava Operation Memorial in Hrabyně,
Source: Silesian Regional Museum, inv. no. 14ic_IV B_3962_02.

Marius Tărîță, *Ideological and Local Influences on the Urban Area in SSR Moldova (1944–1990)*

Fig. 1
Central Chisinau after the Red Army retreat, June 1941
Source: Brunnergraber, extracted from National Digital Archive, 2-1686, *Chisinau. The ruins of the city* (aerial photo).

Fig. 2
The Schwartzman shop in Chișinău (postcard). It was to be named Schechter in the interwar period and lost during the World War Two
Source: Old and Rare Book Service of the BNRM (Chișinău).

Fig. 3
The Greek church in Chisinau (postcard)
Source: Old and Rare Book Service of the BNRM (Chișinău).

Fig. 4
The parade of a Red Army military unit in front of the Imperial Gates situated in the centre of Bucharest. Possibly August 1944
Source: Collection of Arts and Maps, BNRM (Chișinău).

Fig. 5
Reconstruction of Chisinau in 1947. Propaganda campagin from the 1970s–1989s
Source: Collection of Arts and Maps, BNRM (Chișinău). On the opposite side there is the passage building, which sustained significant damage, and further away the dome of the National Theatre „Mihai Eminescu".

Fig. 6
The statue of Lenin, situated in the center of Chisinau, dating back to the postwar period.
Source: Collection of Arts and Maps, BNRM (Chișinău).

Fig. 7
The building of the Academy of Sciences of the SSR Moldova, at the end of the Lenin Boulevard (nowadays Stephan the Great). Inspired by the State Security Comitee building in Moscow
Source: Collection of Arts and Maps, BNRM (Chișinău).

Fig. 8
1899 building, not yet restored
The eclectic style and evident improvisation in the planning of the area nearby the Pușkin and București Streets crossroad in Chisinau. Photo credits: the author, August 2017.
Source: the author, August 2017.

Fig. 9
The Romanian Embassy in Chisinau, located across the street from the building in Fig. 8, carefully maintained by the Romanian authorities
Source: the author, August 2017.

Fig. 10
The back entry of the „Licurici" Theatre, on the left of the Romanian Embassy. Typical example of the SSR Moldova postmodernism. Since the 1990s, it has been used as a children's theatre, with the entrance on a nearby street (the 31 August 1989 Street). Some offices of the Chisinau town hall, as well as many clubs and bars, are also located within the building
Source: the author, August 2017.

Fig. 11
Tiny villa from old Chisinau (across the street from the building in Fig. 10). The view is blocked by advertising and in the neighborhood there is a cubist building
Source: the author, August 2017.

Maria Szcześniak, *The Image of "The Last Judgment" on the West Wall of the Church in Voroneț – Genesis and Message*

Fig. 1
The Last Judgment, western wall, Church of St. George, Voroneț, 1550
Source: Wikimedia, Judecata de apoi, Voronet.jpg (02.11.2023).

Fig. 2
The Ancient of Days (Antiquus Dierum), fragment of *The Last Judgment*, Church of St. George, Voroneț, 1550
Source: Wikimedia, Română: Mănăstirea Voroneț (02.11.2023).

Fig. 3
The Ancient of Days, Church of the Savior in Nereditsa in Novgorod, 1199
Source: www.pravenc.ru (02.11.2023).

Fig. 4
The Tree of Jesse, fragment, eastern wall, Church of Resurrection, Suceviţa 1596
Source: Wikimedia, Sucevita_murals (02.11.2023).

Fig. 5
The Last Judgment, fragment western wall, Church of St. George, Voroneț, 1550
Source: Wikimedia, Last Judgement/Hell (02.11.2023).