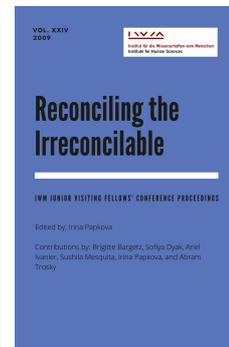


The Legacies of Others. Dealing with Historic Cityshapes in Soviet Lviv and Communist Wroclaw

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Introduction

In this presentation I would like address one issue and relate it to two cases. The issue is how a new image and city's identity is created after a radical change of authorities and population and what is the relation with built environment in such project. Two cases are both similar and different. Lwów/Lviv and Breslau/Wrocław changed its state affiliation due to the war and their population almost completely changed, because of Holocaust and post-war deportations. At the same time, Lviv cityscape survived extraordinary well. The material fabric had suffered little damage, while the population has changed dramatically. On the whole, Lviv has preserved in 90% undestroyed becoming rather an exception in the eastern and central Europe. In Wrocław destructions of material fabric varied from 90% to 40% depending on the area. The central part had about 70% of destruction. The city was almost completely repopulated after expulsion of German inhabitants.

Case One: Lviv

To begin with Lviv: the city was an embodiment of what had to cease to exist in the Soviet state, i.e. the bourgeois middle-class culture. Features used for negative description of bourgeoisie, especially petty bourgeoisie, with iconic image of petty shopkeeper in Bolshevik narrative, were applied to Lviv as a city.[1] At the same time Lviv was a city contested by two national projects from mid-19th century, Polish and Ukrainian. Therefore, as the Soviet conquer meant incorporation of Lviv into Soviet Ukraine and promotion of Soviet variant of Ukrainian identity for the city, Polishness of Lwów had to cease as well as Ukrainian but non-Soviet national concept of the city. As a result, all negative features of the city were delegated to its past. Thus, pre-Soviet Lviv was depicted in public discourse as a city full of petty bourgeoisie and a center of landowners of the region, alien both in ethnic and social terms, as Polish and bourgeois city.

Importance of built environment in case of Lviv was also sustained by the idea that exactly built environment has power of shaping Soviet man/woman. Therefore architecture and urban planning was not only about making urban life efficient and rationalized, but also about forming society where practice of everyday life is informed by such values. Therefore, the question of how Lviv cityscape should be altered or in what way it would alter its new inhabitants was an important topic of post war thinking about and acting in the city. The new Soviet vision of the city as industrial, scientific and cultural center of the western region of Soviet Ukraine embraced all parts of the city. The

industrialization concentrated in the city's outskirts was changing the look of peripheral districts, while the project of transforming the city into a soviet cultural and scientific center was bound to the city center.

Case Two: Wrocław

In August 1945 Bolesław Bierut, a leader of Communist Poland, publicly announced that Wrocław was going to be the second city in Poland after Warsaw.[2] Such forecast for a city destroyed in 70% was hardly realistic. Rebuilding of the city for 200 000 inhabitants, compared to pre-1939 almost 600 000, thus was accepted as a departing point and ideas of matching post-war reconstruction to the pre-war scale were neglected.[3] Such reduction shaped general idea of Wrocław moving it away from metropolitan image. The decision to reduce industry, one of pillars of the city's identity acquired since XIX century meant also a radical break with the Breslau remains. Thus, Wrocław was not planned as important industrial center in the all Polish scale but be a center of education, culture, and tourism. The constitutive parts of this non-industrial image for Wrocław had to become by their nature generators of Polish tradition, as Ossolineum Library, University, museums, and other cultural and educational institutions responsible for building up Wrocław as a city known for educational, cultural, and tourist spheres. While rebuilding of material fabric of the city took long period with moments of greater achievements and extensive stagnations,[4] the definition of Wrocław as city of education, culture, and tourism opened number of perspectives for animations of related institutions and milieus, creating new spaces and inscribing new meaning to places, buildings, and bringing them closer to newly arrived inhabitants. The city center was crucial to "Wrocław project," yet taking into account 70% rate of destruction the decision to reconstruct the city center appears indeed as a little awkward. Even more surprising was a decision to reconstruct the old city of Wrocław keeping references to a historic outlook of the city center.

Yet, as the reconstruction was considered an important tool in appropriating space of Breslau and turning it into Wrocław, the re-imagining became a part of one of the largest rebuilding projects in post-war Central Europe. In the same token, Lviv's survived cityscape had to be re-imagined to become an integrated part of the new image of Soviet Ukrainian city. With these two different points of departure but similar agenda of integrating cities which belonged to different state and national context and were built and inhabited by people who were forced to leave or die, in this presentation I will focus of strategies chosen and applied to achieve this aim.

Case One: Encountering Lwów, 1939/1944

Evaluation of Lviv was a first step to assess and make the city closer for and by newcomers from all around the Soviet state. While ideologically repeating emphasis on "failures" and "problems" of urban development of pre-Soviet period were employed to show and prove facts of Lviv's "underdevelopment," general impressions and opinions from newcomers about the city were rather positive. This has created conflict and uneasiness.

The first comments on Lviv are dated by 1939, when the Red Army marched into the city. At the next day special correspondent of Moscow newspaper “Pravda” and well-known Soviet writer Evgenii Petrov has arrived in Lviv preparing reportage about Western Ukraine. Moving deeper into the city center and reaching the office of Lwów regional government, later headquarter of the Lviv region authorities, for Petrov the city unfolded as a museum: “I had a feeling similar to visiting museums. Some people were living here a moment ago, they were somehow dressing, sitting on the chairs, and all these little things – ashtrays, press-paper ... today all these things acquired museum-like shape”.[5] Descriptions of another Soviet writer, journalist, and architect, Leonid Serpilin pay much attention to the physical outlook of the city and impressions it make. Published in 1970 these reflections from August 1940 describe Lviv and nearby towns of western regions in Soviet Ukraine as “clean, accurate, with obligatory square in the middle with tower of municipality, with streets of neat and friendly houses with lovingly elaborated flowerbeds.”[6] His impression from the city was framed by colleagues’ referenced to it as “Lvov! Do you know what a city? What one can say, this is powerful!” [Ty znayesh kakoi eto gorod? Da chto govorit. Sila!]. Indeed author’s impressions were very similar and expressed very concisely: “This city is amazingly urban” [Etot gorod kakoi-to udivitelno gorodskoi].[7]



Lviv, September 27, 1939, Views of one of the central squarer and the main city boulevard

Lviv was perceived as “European” city by newcomers, according to reports of the officials and representatives of the Soviet institutions in the first post-war years. Such descriptions could acquire both negative and positive meaning, depending on the context, but most of all on the place where it was written or voiced. In public discourse “Europe,” usually referred to old, bourgeois, and decadent world, an era which was in past.[8] And this was most obviously the past which Lviv had to overcome. Border with “Europe” was running through the city both in time and space. But in closed meetings of party obkom or gorkom/miskom one can, even if not often, find positive comments on Lviv’s qualities acquired when the city was part of “old Europe.” Lviv’s image in the Soviet state through following decades has remained largely informed by this perception. Lviv was defined as “European type” city where streets are narrow and curving, which caused additional problems with transportation, as the city was on the state border and moving army through it was an important consideration. Lviv has been seen as “chaotic” city, because such was location of industrial objects and even with decisive will to “make an order” of industrial space of the city, it was clear for new authorities that these plans will largely remain on paper.[9] The city was “tricky” because such was scheme of streets’ layout and

there were no transit and radial streets as well as no circular roads connecting the latter. But there were many small and irregular neighborhoods, very high density of population, and mixed living and industrial quarters.[10] These reflections on city's image and "character" after the war, when Lviv was for the second time conquered by the Soviet state were very similar to the comments of architects who came to Lviv in 1939, when the city was occupied for the first time. The main architect of Lviv in 1939-1941 Oleksandr Kasyanov, who came from Kharkiv, a city that used to be a capital of Soviet Ukraine till mid-1930s, stated that despite of high number of architects and many buildings "[Lviv's] culture [of building] has been acquired during the era of capitalism" and therefore "it is boring and lacking ideas".[11] The next associations generalized Lviv as a city of "parasitic character", where behind the "veil of European culture" one sees "capitalist barbarian". [12] New authorities responsible for urban development of Lviv were repeating similar opinion, which was mandatory both in 1939-1941 and after 1944 that the city had to change and to catch up with progressive urban planning of the Soviet state.[13]



Lviv, 1945, Views of the central city boulevard, the Opera Theater

On the other hand, buildings, especially in the central parts of the city, at the closed discussions were considered as examples of high quality construction and finishing of houses. Thus, in 1958 when Lviv was entering period of housing boom, the head of Lviv branch of Communal Bank summarized that "houses which have to be sustained and repaired are better than new houses." [14] Lviv belonged to "another" culture of building and thus style of life. This had an uncontrolled influence on and even attracted part of new inhabitants to the city. "Fascination with bourgeois architecture" was used as a formula of accusation to attack the main architect of Lviv in 1955.[15] Indeed, in Lviv such "fascinations" were as natural as they could be dangerous and were not permitted. Material fabric of the city was manifestation and reminder of the past and difference life of Lviv. Thus, this difference between material structure and official policy of evaluating and negating it, provoked a whole specter of different and contradictory emotions, from enchantment to rejection, from negative evaluation and simultaneous choice of precisely pre-soviet houses for living, from irritation and desire to do something that would overshadow existing elements of urban landscape to attempts to preserve individual image of the city.

Case Two: Encountering Breslau, 1945

As the city was destroyed averagely in 70%, with some districts going up to 90% and in some – down to 20-30%, Wrocław appeared to Polish newcomers first of all as a ruined city, the rests of the “Festung Breslau”. Nevertheless, many noted its metropolitan character visible despite of destruction. Moreover, the city was full of not only ruins but of goods. For many it was “Wild West” and “Klondike.” Thus, for Zygmunt Dżuganowski the first view of Wrocław focused on suburban areas with “ruins, burned sites...smell of corpses.” It was full of reminders about the war but also of war crimes committed by Nazi Germans: “On the road we spot an area of barded wires... [they] without doubts indicated the area of barracks, ... a camp of infernal extermination of people through hunger and work... a gate bore a sign “ Arbeit macht frei”... this was a greeting from Brockau (suburban area of Wrocław).”[16] Moving towards the center the author observed a city „which lost its metropolitan vividness, a city without heart, stripped off sounds, speed, movement ... still in boundless tragedy... in unnatural tranquility, trampled...”[17] On the other hand the metropolitan character of the city was still palpable and for post-war years image of Wrocław was informed by two mentioned concepts – „Wild West” and “Klondike.” Thus, for one of the settlers “the city was wide, rich... one could occupy an apartment, a villa, a house after a doctor, a banker, a general... this richness took a reason away from many people... even I, a person from a family of doctors was loosing my mind on the look of goods accumulated here for centuries.”[18] Wrocław’s Grundwaldzki Square, a huge space cleared from buildings to make an inner-city air landing zone during the siege in 1945, was probably the largest market in entire Poland, considered by many as “Mecca of *szaber*[19] people and sellers.”[20] For a short period of post-war years thus the city became a merchant place, where goods from entire metropolis were on sale.[21]



Wrocław, 1945, Destructions in central part of the city

Depictions of Wrocław’s ruins, destructions, alienation dominated the image of the city in many texts, press, diaries, and reports. Just to comment the pictures lets take some examples. For a colonel arriving into still burning city, Wrocław was “massacred... not a city but rather a geographic notion.”[22] The city was destroyed and alien. Joanna Konopińska, an author of a well-known diary on post-war Wrocław, was writing in “alien

room of alien city... stumbling with each step on objects belonging to somebody else, testifying about life of others... people who built the house, lived in it... It is difficult to imagine how at some point in future I can tell that this is my home.”[23]

Wrocław’s destructions were so impressive partly because of the city’s size. It was not a question that Wrocław used to be an impressive and big city. One of the officials from the Academic Council for Regained Territories, Professor Stocki explicitly referred that even from a map Wrocław is a city equal to Warsaw, as it used to be a part of the state counting 70 millions inhabitants. Yet, in his opinion, it was difficult to rebuild the city on the same scale. Wrocław was to become similar to Krakow and Poznan, not Warsaw.[24] Indeed, Wrocław has regained its pre-war size only in the 1980s. At the same time the decision to reconstruct the city center, the Market Square was even if highly contested, finally approved by 1946. This project dominated city’s development for first post-war decade and defined city’s identity as well as identification of new inhabitants in following decades. The reconstruction was launched as it was believed by many officials, including urban planners and architects, that reconstruction will be the best instrument to promote Polishness of the city. Why reconstruction of the historic fabric of the city known as Breslau was interpreted in this way is the question I would like to address later in this paper.

Lviv. “Undestroyed City”: Appropriation through Re-Imagining

In 1939, when Lwów was conquered by the Red Army, it was emphasized that shaping the city’s built environment in a Soviet way was both “difficult and responsible task”, in which planning had a key role.[25] Soviet planners were one the one hand, presented but also perceived themselves as experienced cadres from the cities, where for two decades “great expertise has been gathered”, and on the other hand, as authority facing challenge of Lviv, a city lacking similar experience. “Talents and juvenile Bolshevik energy,” for the first main architect of Lviv Alexander Kasyanov, were able to change this old city, to sort out beautiful from ugly in the city, and in the end incorporate Lviv into Soviet urban realm. [26] The city had to get a unified and holistic image and loose what was seen by the new authorities as fragmentary character of the city, namely Lviv’s diversity, both cultural and social, reflected in cityscape. In 1944, when for the second time the Soviet authorities took a power over the city, the challenge of adapting city’s built environment remained the same, taking into account little damage from the war and occupation was visible in Lviv cityscape. After the Soviet re-conquest of the city the party-state employed two main strategies to deal with the alien image of the Lviv: rebuilding and re-imagining. The reconstruction of existing peripheral districts and building new ones were – apart from lack of funds, disorganization, and long delays – comparatively easy tasks, whose solutions were typical for the specific time of project planning and realization. Thus, in Lviv one can find districts with typically Stalinist or Khrushchevian residential architecture. Yet in postwar Lviv – similar to Soviet Leningrad, as pointed out by poet Iosef Brodsky – the characteristically Soviet suburbs never managed to dominate the city’s image and identity, which remained tied firmly to the city center.

It was precisely the central historic part of Lviv where the new Soviet authorities faced a challenge of adapting and integration Lviv cityscape, associated with legacies of other state and social system. The attempts to deal with this challenge were integrated into discussions and presentations of the first post-war master plan for Lviv. This plan reveals an attempt to combine the ambitious ideas of turning Lviv into industrial center and at the same time preserving the city's old part in its historical form. Adopted in 1956, it shows that despite of numerous ideas of rebuilding the city's central parts, the strategy of re-imagining rather than of re-making was chosen. Thus, in this case of practically undestroyed city, we see how with means of re-interpretation the task of "recoding" existing built environment with new messages was launched and realized. With few small interventions, Lviv central cityscape was preserved yet the stories and content of singular buildings were altered. This meticulous and decade-long project was defining and reflecting city's new image as Soviet Ukrainian city.

By 1947 the draft for the project of the detailed plans for Lviv [*detalnaya planirovka*] has been finished and first stage of composing the master plan was over.[27] The emphasis in planning for new objects in the first three years was on infrastructure part of which was regarded as elements of urban life in the Soviet Union, like stadium for workers' reserves [*Trudrezervy*], reconstruction of swimming pool for the branch of all-Union society "Health" [*Zdorovyie*], open market [*rynok tolkuchka*], housing for factories.[28] These projects were presented as significant steps in urban development of Lviv and organization developing them – Lvivproekt – perceived itself as an entity "playing a key role in urban transformation of Lviv".[29] The project also foresaw a construction of the new city center to the north of the Opera House in the direction of heavily damaged districts of the former Ghetto. By 1956 there was a consensus about location of the new city center. This is the topic of the separate discussion but what interests us is the emphasis of the project on the necessity to built new public buildings which provoked objections author of the 1956 Master Plan – architect Shvetsko-Vinetkyi. In his opinion such perspective for Lviv was inappropriate and distorted.[30] He insisted that Lviv had enough of public building and they were located in the center. The only issue is how to get them connected to other territories and probably introduce some changes in surrounding areas. Here we see reflection of the decade-long debate about the city center and Soviet image for Lviv generally. The spatial representation of the Soviet system indeed provoked different opinions. Main institutions were located in old buildings which belonged to another epoch and society. This in a way revokes a pre-war Soviet debates whether there is a necessity of new building form to express new order or a fact of possessing building and city generally makes them Soviet. In Lviv there were all preconditions for appropriating rather than rebuilding as existing buildings were ready for usage. At the same time architects and planners were interested in new orders and in Lviv it was not so easy.

While the plans of the Soviet authorities to reshape and change the city's image appeared to be radical in statements, the activities launched by city offices brought rather minor changes as they were of limited scope. The report of 1949 issued by the Office of the main architect of Lviv indicates that main activities were "restoration, painting, clearing of the territory and establishing green spaces, control over exterior decoration of buildings,

shops, etc as well as keeping order in so called small architecture”.[31] As the project of creating a new city center was in progress but with little visible results, the city authorities – mainly architects and communal services were busy with tailoring existing city center for new needs and demands. One can distinguish between minor plans which usually were implemented by the means of “narodnaya stroika”, in reality voluntary unpaid work of city’s inhabitants, and major projects which were usually postponed as could not be realized by the same means. To begin with projects which were realized in 1949, the first to mention is erection of the twenty press shields with all-Union, republican, and local newspapers on the main artery of Lviv – First of May Street. This was proclaimed as “Alley of Press”. Yet many project voiced in post-war years remained on paper and were revoked only in numerous reports.

But, the main issue of post-war discussions on Lviv cityscape was the absence of a spacious prospect and square peculiar for cities planned before the war and rebuilt just after it. This was considered as one of the major deficiencies of the city. There were different examples of how central parts of comparatively undamaged cities were dealt with. Eastern Berlin has been significantly rebuilt, Sofia also presents the case when almost undestroyed central part of the city was completely re-planned in order to serve as a site of political and cultural activities, while Prague is an example of comparatively little interference in the same years.[32] In Sofia there was a complete break with old “trading city”, while in Prague central parts of the city were turned into living quarters where inhabitants where of mixed incomes and in such way pre-Socialist social topography has been shaken, but material fabric remained untouched.[33]

Square or large prospect were considered an urban element which Soviet city had to have. Number of urban renewal projects after 1917 and later with the massive destructions after the Second World War aimed at creating such representative spaces. For example, the ensemble of new buildings at the several kilometers long prospect in Zaporizhzhya, which was linking an old part of the city where “most significant building was a prison” with a new part of the city with many houses, palaces of culture and plants was called an “urban achievement”. [34]

The only appropriate site to fulfill this crucial representational role in Lviv was a street leading from the Opera Theater to the monument of Adam Mickiewicz. The historically shaped 19th century boulevard on the site of the former city walls was turned into First May Street and was playing a role of the representational site hosting all demonstrations in Lviv for decades. Yet originally it was intended to be merely a temporary solution until the new city center would be built. Since the attempts to create the latter were not successful, the First May Street, later Lenin Prospect remained the place where all Soviet celebrations and rituals took place.



Lviv, 1944, Opera Theater facing the beginning of the First of May Street; the side of the First of May Street with Lenin Museum (the only site which was rebuilt in post-war decade), 1954

One possible explanation why, even if there were ideas about more radical intervention into the central streetscape, there were only few changes, which in fact fitted into a general style of the First of May Street. It is important to see that apart from the fact that Lviv center was so little destroyed, its architectural ensemble was dominated by the buildings from the 19th century with dominant buildings in historicizing architectural style informed by classical elements. At the same time, the perception of the main Lviv boulevard by new Soviet authorities was informed by a presence of elements from neoclassical style in architecture of the Stalinist Soviet Union.[35] So, with can plausibly assume that architectural setting of main Lviv street could have been incorporated into aesthetic tastes of new authorities and with minor rearrangements was considered to be appropriate enough for staging celebration and serving as representative space of the city. Yet adaptation and appropriation of the main boulevard in its historic and only slightly changed form took some time. Meanwhile, there were number of ideas where and how to create a public representative site in Lviv. Therefore, up till the end of the 1950s and with some later reintroduction, the idea of the Central Square with or without adjusted prospect were discussed and voiced.

The idea of arranging such square right behind the Opera Theater, i.e. just adjacent to the traditional center, was discussed for many years. The project, however, ended up with one hotel building, one residential building, a cinema and a scientific center. Only one of these buildings was finished in the 1950s while all others were finished only in the late 1960s and 1970s. Yet, the visions of their new city center occupied the minds of city planners as well as city council and party for several decades. In their opinion, Lviv had to change its image to correspond to/embody the changes in society that purportedly took place in the decade following the end of the war.[36]



Lviv, 1964, view of the beginning of the new city boulevard starting behind the Opera Theater; a square in front of the Opera with Lenin Monument

The range of options was limited by the given shape of the inner city. One of the main architects of post-war Lviv, Henrikh Shvetsko-Vinetskiy in 1947 stated that none of the existing streets could be reshaped or reconstructed in a way to fit the ideological and aesthetic needs of the soviet state and society. The main streets of Lviv all had a horizon terminating in some building imprinting their character and dominating the street.[37] Very often it would be a church. Therefore, the ideologically optimal choice for Sovietizing the outlook of the center would be to select a space not yet visually occupied by previously constructed buildings sending a message irreconcilable with Soviet ideology. In Shvetsko-Vinetskiy's view, the square behind the Opera, i.e. the former Krakow market just off center would be perfect.[38]

This option, although supported by many members of the Lviv commission for architecture and approved by the supervising authorities in Kyiv and Lviv, was criticized with several arguments. The lack of “competitiveness” of the new project with the old urban environment was the main – arguably: realistic – argument against the project of the new square behind Opera theater. As architect Skubchenko at a 1947 conference of Lviv architects pointed out “here [in Lviv and Western Ukraine] there will always be a comparison between new and old. Therefore if the new will be [because of current complications and problems] even a little worse [than the old], the perception will be wrong”. [39] Therefore – presumably to concentrate resources but perhaps also to decrease the opportunities for “being a little worse” – efforts should be focused on several main projects. These were the railway station (one of the few buildings that were heavily damaged during the war), the theater of Russian Drama (built on the basis of an unfinished construction of a Club of Polish Officers), and the Hill of Glory, commemorating Red Army soldiers and officers killed in the battle for Lviv in 1944.[40] Notably, none of these three projects was located in the historical city center or even directly adjacent to it. Here was a way of avoiding a lack of competitiveness by giving up on the competition, put differently – by capitulating. Thus an imagined competition took place between the new Soviet Lviv architects and city planners, on one side, and their Polish and Austrian predecessors, on the other. Thus for the architect responsible for the

reconstruction of the juncture of Red Army Street and the city center, the chosen criterion of success was to create something that neither Franz Josef nor Josef Pilsudsky had succeeded in achieving.[41]

This competition had to encompass the Habsburg Opera building since the building was designed to dominate its surroundings, including the end of the Lenin Prospekt, which bordered on Krakow market, thus the possible alternative center envisaged by Shvetsko-Vinetskiy, as well as on the site of the Lenin Museum, i.e. the only site on Lenin Prospekt that was rebuilt programmatically. Consequently, opinions ready to neglect this fact were rather exceptional. Yet the interesting point is the manner of Soviet planners and authorities to see this problem only to try to rationalize it away by anxiously – and tellingly – denying the importance of the Opera building in the city center. This refusal to acknowledge the obvious quality and rank of the building was the contradictory precondition for arguing that despite the presence of the Opera the First May Street/Lenin Prospekt could be made Soviet after all. Thus, one of the architects working in the city council in 1948 announced that the Opera did not have high artistic value and was a rather banal foreign reality. Therefore, the introduction of Soviet images and a general Soviet look into Lviv was not only required but also possible.[42] In the end, the agreed site for a new city center in a 1952 city plan, finally approved in 1956, was the so-called Krakow Market.[43]

The case of how the Opera Theater was appropriated symbolically shows main strategies of how historic cityscape was dealt with to be integrated into new city's outlook. Located at the end of grand 19th century boulevard the Opera was the most obvious element of Lviv cultural cityscape and a physical and symbolic center for the city. The very first step to incorporate the Opera building was in promoting this building as a site where "Soviet Lviv was born," i.e. as a place where the People's Meeting of Western Ukraine in 1939 took place to call for "Unification of Western Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine". But to assess the way how Opera Theater became integrated into the new image of Lviv, it is important to see what had to vanish.

The original idea of the Theater was to be a representative site of city's bourgeoisie, as the name of theater indicated, the Great City Theater (Wielki Teatr Miejski) and during the inter-war period, the Great Theater (Teatr Wielki). The theater was a symbol of city's position as a capital of the region, of the vitality of its community, and claims to stand for a role of modern city. The enormous effort to erect such representative building was shared by the city council and Lviv citizens through donations. Similarly, the competition for the best project became an important part of city life and discourse of the 1890s. The theater had to represent the city and in the competition announcement there was a passage indicating multiethnic character of the city's community. Thus, it invited "architects of Polish and Ruthenia ethnicity [architektów polskiej i ruskiej narodowości]." Though, the building was meant to stand as achievement for entire city, it was especially cherished by Polish citizens as embodiment of their efforts. The clearest statement of this can be found in the inauguration speech of the first director of the theater Tadeusz Pawlikowski, where he has put the agenda of the theater to be:

... the best national [Polish] scene, which is my aim not only for Lwów... but to share my work for Kraków, Poznań, and most of all for Warsaw. The art has also social duties. To fulfill these duties it has to democratize but in two ways: to lower what is high and to elevate what is low. The second democratization is present in Polish tradition with embodiment in the Third of May Constitution...

In Soviet Lviv this blend of bourgeois and national Polish representations in the theater had to vanish. It was a difficult task as the building was standing very centrally and even after the occupation had been practically undamaged. The first post-war attempts reflected tendency of negative evaluation for the existing built environment. Thus, the Opera was described as “is not such highly artistic building [vysoko-khudizhestvennoie proizvedenie], but [rather] banal foreign reality [deistvitelnost]” by one of the architects working in the city council in 1948.[44] But by the beginning of the 1950s the strategy of coping with this grand building standing right next to the Lenin monument was clearly different. There was no direct downplaying of the quality of the building or the centrality of the location in the city. Rather the opposite, the Ivan Franko Theater for Opera and Ballet was turned into an important site of tradition for new Soviet Lviv. The speech of the main local historian Ivan Krypiakievych, a director of the Institute for Social Science [Instytut suspilnykh nauk], was best example of such strategy. Thus, in his 1954 speech we can see Opera as a vehicle for commemorating a very special event for western Ukraine, the People’s Council declaration about Unification with the Soviet Union:

This Council took place exactly in the Opera Theater, in a hall, where we are now. From this tribune the best representatives of workers, peasants, and working intelligentsia gave speeches. I will never forget moving addresses of Lviv workers, peasants from Prykarpattia, and peasant women from Volyn. These were people fighting against the yoke of master Poland for decades... many of them were imprisoned, put into camps... Here from this place the deputies... have heard the speech of ... Khrushchev showing new perspectives for the region. Here historic declaration about the Unification was proclaimed.

Thus, the Opera was turned from bourgeois and Polish pride into the site, from where Soviet Lviv began. It was appropriated as a site, where workers and peasants chosen new epoch for the city and the region. In this case there was no need of de-evaluating quality or marginalizing the location of the building. In its new role, it was again a focal representative site, but in new context and with new meaning.

Wroclaw. Destroyed City: Appropriation through Reconstruction and Re-imagination

It was clear from the very beginning that rebuilding of destroyed Polish cities might last well into the 1980s. Moreover, the rebuilding of the cities in post-war western regions of Poland was foreseen as exceptionally difficult because, in words of the major expert in housing Adam Andrzejewski, it was clear that Wroclaw is going to be a center of area where the level of urbanization there will be higher than average in Poland.[45]

Destructions were high but they also opened a possibility for new plans and creativity, allowing, according to urban planners, to “make built environment healthier with better communication, and in case of the center, to link it to the Polish tradition.”[46]



Wrocław 1945 and Wrocław 1955: Destroyed and rebuilt Market Square

While, after the war one of the most spectacular reconstructions in post-war Europe was launched on the site of completely destroyed the old city of Warsaw, the case of Wrocław had indeed a different context. Old center of Warsaw had a particular symbolic meaning for post-war reconstruction as well as establishment of Communist regime. Destroyed by Nazi Germans as a revenge for the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, the old city, *Starówka*, became a symbol of Polish losses and sufferings during the occupation. Thus, the decision of complete reconstruction, disregarding established rule of preservation, was made with the argument that

monuments were destroyed as symbols of our [Polish] past... therefore we will rebuild them from foundations to pass to the future generations if not authentic but at least exact form of these monuments, still alive in our memory and available in materials.[47]

Such statement from the main ideologist of the Warsaw *Starówka* rebuilding, at the first look appears to be not applicable to the case of Wrocław old center, as this city was part of the German state and consequently its built environment had little symbolic meaning to Polish national culture. Yet, the decision was different: Wrocław Market Square was to be rebuilt. In following paragraphs I will discuss this reconstruction project, which seemed to be unlikely for the first glance, but in the end effective instrument of appropriating and re-imagining Wrocław as a Polish city.

Two major elements defined success of this rebuilding project as Polonization instrument. First was about choosing in a shape for rebuilding. The second was a statement about whose who had destroyed the city center. Thus, to begin with the latter, the destruction of the city as “Festung Breslau” was presented as a “symbol of barbarianism.”[48] With such context, rebuilding was treated as a symbol of “love and dedication” to the city, this time Wrocław.[49] Thus, while in 1945 it was Nazi Germans who “in barbaric way” destroyed own city, including its historic center, the post-war reconstruction was presented as re-appearance of “Polish Wrocław as anti-thesis of German Breslau.”[50]

Much more complex was the issue of how and what to rebuild. In immediate post-war decade the image of emerging Polish Wrocław as more cultured, developed, and advanced city was to show a higher level of culture in Polish state. This also served as a legitimizing device in explaining why Polish state had all reasons to claim the city as its own not only due to ancient historic roots but also to higher cultural level. Thus, the head of Wrocław Old Center reconstruction Emil Kaliski in 1946 straightforwardly claimed that “roads will not cut the old city center in nonsensical way as they do now but gently will surpass it in significant distance. Old Wrocław will be a center of culture and monuments, with museums, academic societies, libraries, in solemn silence of Gothic cathedrals.”[51]

The appearance of Gothic cathedrals in this statement is very telling as it was exactly these elements of Wrocław cityscape to which Polish character of the city was ascribed. Gothic style became a symbol of Polish beginnings of the city, when the ruling dynasty was Piast and the city belonged to the old Piast Kingdom, considered to be a pre-Polish medieval state.[52] Leaving aside the discussion of how much Wrocław Piast tradition can be considered a basis to claim Wrocław a Polish city, it is more interesting to see how in Communist Polish state the reconstruction of Gothic cathedrals tuned out to be a priority for budget funding. But in following paragraphs I will focus on another element of reconstruction as Polonization of the cityscape, i.e. how it happened that the ensemble of the Market Square, having almost no signs of Gothic style was rebuilt and claimed to reflect Polish character of the city.



Wrocław 1945: Destroyed Gothic Cathedral of St. Elżbieta

Wrocław Market Square before it was destroyed during the siege was a result of numerous rebuilding. Founded in 13th century as a trading site it was steadily built through the Middle Ages, later rebuilt in 17th and 18th century in Baroque and Classicism style with the next transformation at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, when two-thirds of buildings were destroyed to make a space for offices and department stores in style of Historicism and Modern. The main twist in post-1945 reconstruction was to fashion it according to the way the Market looked at the end of the 18th century. The irony was that the main material and sources of such endeavor were based on the research of German architect Rudolf Stein in the 1930s.[53] This project was to become not merely a rebuilding as a reconstruction of material fabric as before it was destroyed. It was planned to become “Polish anti-thesis” to German city.[54] The project succeeded and the Old City was indeed a different one, both in shape and in functions.

Rebuilding Wrocław Old Town as it used to be before 1800 hit two aims. First, it was a reference to a period when the city was part of Habsburg, and not Prussian state. Secondly, in its outlook it became closer to the way Warsaw and Poznań old towns looked like, both from the 18th century as well. Almost a decade of rebuilding resulted in a complete ensemble of historicizing buildings, looking like old but not being such. Indeed the overall impression was that the complex belonged to 18th century. While, it indeed looked different than it used to before the destructions in spring 1945, the reconstructed Square was not a close replica of the 18th century model, even if all the materials were available. To save the costs of rebuilding, structures of houses built at the beginning of the 20th century were kept. Historicizing facades were added but with significant distortions in shape.[55]



Wrocław 1955: Rebuilt Gothic Cathedral

Another difference, this time deliberately planned, was a major shift in functions of the Market Square. As the Market Square was defined by its trade and service functions, the rebuilt new Old Town in Communist Poland was assigned to be predominantly a housing area. The internal layout of apartments thus was defined not by historic consideration but by official guidelines concerning volume of living space per capita.[56] This was also determined by practical consideration of turning city center into an area where several Wrocław plants and institutions received housing quotas. Moreover, such shift was wrapped ideologically as a counterweight to consumptive image of “pre-war bourgeois German city.”[57] Only two reconstructed houses were designed to serve as an office space and one more became a head-quarter of the House of Creative Associations. The Market Square became central housing quarter.[58] Yet, this incorrect replica with changed facades and function indeed became a symbol of Polish Wrocław and turned to be a place with which Polish inhabitants of the city identified themselves often.[59]

To conclude, in both cases we see how historic or historicizing cityscapes were endowed with new meanings and messages to correspond to a radical change of both cities’ belonging. Moreover, the post-war years were time, when Lviv and Wrocław as well as many cities throughout Europe changed their appearances in a process of destroying signs indicating unwanted past.[60] Wrocław went through meticulous, yet not complete, even if very much wanted, de-Germanization. Similarly, Lviv experienced large-scale, but also unrealistic, project of de-Polonization of the city. Both processes embraced inhabitants, deported to respectively Germany and Poland, and material fabric, erased, destroyed or moved away from the city. The initiative to erase all signs of “otherness” and “alien features” of the city, coming from eagerness to establish new image both for Lviv and Wrocław, failed to succeed.[61] Vigilance of early years, often in words and less in deeds, indeed changed majority of inscriptions, signs, monuments, and other elements of urban

fabric associated with preceding Polish period or German period. Yet, as Germans and Poles were expelled and it was more and more clear that both cities were turning into Polish and Soviet Ukrainian, first of all demographically, the initial preoccupation was getting less strong.[62] Inability to purge the city completely was supported by reinventing new stories for sites, monuments, and places, and as we have seen for entire districts. Such “gaps” in purging the city turned into reservoirs of the memory of “otherness” in the city. At the same time, we can not overestimate the meaning of such “gaps,” as the knowledge about different versions of the cities’ pasts was kept outside of the official narrative.[63]

Thus, in the case of Lviv there was a decision of preservation and/or limited intervention into existing cityscape, which was a direct link to the city’s previous history, labeled as a decadent, negative, and alien. Yet, with the means of intensive change of usage as well as inscription of new meanings the old structures, even if awkward to the Soviet reality, the old meanings gradually, even if not completely, were vanishing, especially as few pre-war inhabitants stayed in the city. In the case of Wrocław, despite of large-scale destructions, the same aim of erasing city’s past and, at the same time, appropriating its physical structures by newcomers was achieved precisely though a grand project of rebuilding and reconstruction of the center. Indeed, in both cases, the old city centers remained to be points of reference for identification for new inhabitants. At the same time, this importance of the historic centers, be it old-looking replica or authentic urban fabric, for local identification became a stimulus to learn more about the pre-war history of Lviv and Wrocław by the end of 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, when Soviet and Communist system collapsed opening new perspectives for development of these cities.

Notes:

1. On Bolshevik narrative about bourgeoisie and its cultural context of Europe during first decades of the 20th century see Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 19f.

2. Gregor Thum, *Obce Miasto. Wrocław 1945 i potem*, Wrocław: Via Nova, 2006, p. 185.

3. Marcin Bukowski, “O początkach,” in Jacek Zasada and Andrzej Zwierzchowski, *Architekci Wrocławia 1945-1995*, Wrocław: SARP, 1995, p. 121.

4. Thum, *Obce Miasto*, p. 186f.

5. Petrov, „Piat dnei”, p.23.

6. Leonid Serpilin, „Lvovskie vstrechi. Iz putevyh vpechatlenii”, *Raduga* (Journal of the Union of Soviet Ukraine Writers), no. 4, April, 1970, p. 119.

7. Serpilin, “Lvovskie vstrechi,” p.119.

8. Negative attitude to “Europe” was uniting in a strange way both avant-garde and academic circles in pre- 1917 and post-1917 Russian Empire and Soviet Union, and perception of the Bolshevik state project as opposition to Europe was becoming a leading idea of the new system. See, Clark, *Petersburg*, 161.

9. Tsentralnyi Derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchych organiv vlady Ukrainy (TsDAVOU), f. P 4906, op.1, spr.5007, p. 8.

10. TsDAVOU, f. P 4906, op.1, spr. 792, p.32.

11. “Slavni rokovyny”, *Architektura Radianskoi Ukrainy*, no.9, 1940, p.1.

12. Oleksandr Kasyanov, “Sotsialistychna rekonstruktsia mista Lvova”, *Architektura Radianskoi Ukrainy*, no.9, 1940, p.8.

13. See Kasyanov, “Sotsialistychna rekonstruktsia mista Lvova”, p.8.

14. Державний архів Львівської області (партійний архів), далі: ПАЛО, ф. 4, оп.1, спр.774, с. 107.

15. ЦДАВОВУ, ф. P 4906, оп.1, спр.5095, с. 15.

16. ZNiO, Dział Rękopisow, 46/2004/1, Zygmunt Dzuganowski, *Wroclawska szansa*, Warszawa, 1980, p. 34.

17. Dzuganowski, *Wroclawska szansa*, p. 86-87

18. Jan Kurdwanowski, „Odzyskiwanie miasta,” *Karta*, nr. 6, 2000, p. 116-120

19. From German Word „schaben”

20. Gregor Thum, *Obce Miasto. Wrocław 1945 i potem*, Wrocław: Via Nova, 2005, p. 164

21. Thum, *Obce Miasto*, p. 167.

22. Ryszard Majewski, *Dolny Śląsk 1945 Wyzwolenie*, Warszawa-Wrocław: PWN, 1982.

23. Joanna Konopiska, *Tamten wroclawski rok*. Wrocław, 1987, pp. 36, 40, 53.

24. AAN, MZO, sygn. 2224, II Sesja Rady Naukowej dla Zagadnień ZO, 19 czerwca 1946, p. 106

25. Kasyanov, „Sotsialistychna rekonstruktsia”, p.8

26. Kasyanov, „Sotsialistychna rekonstruktsia”, p.8

27. TsDAVOU, P-4906, 1, 1359, ark.31

28. TsDAVOU, P-4906, 1, 1359, ark.32

29. TsDAVOU, P-4906, 1, 1359, ark.32

30. TsDAVOU, P-4906, 1, 792, ark. 96
31. TsDAVOU, P-4906, 1, 1433, ark.2
32. Heineberg, Heinz, "Service Centers in East and West Berlin", in *The Socialist City. Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*, ed. by R.A. French and F.E. Ian Hamilton, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1979, 305-334 and F.W. Carter, "Prague and Sofia: an Analysis of Their Changing Internal City Structure", in *The Socialist City. Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*, 427f
33. Carter, "Prague and Sofia", 428-429
34. G.Golovko, *Arkhitektura Sovetskoi Ukrainy. K 50-letiu Velikogo Oktiabrya*, *Arkhitektura SSSR*, nr 8, 1967, pp. 1-12, p. 1
35. On similarities in treating neoclassical style in architecture by Preservationists' circles of the late Russian Empire and by Stalinist architects in the 1930s see Clark, *Petersburg*, p. 73
36. TsDAHO, 1, 31, 335, p.82
37. DALO, P-1657, 1, 14, 4
38. DALO, P-1657, 1, 14, 4
39. P-1657, 1, 15, 37
40. P-1657, 1, 15, 74
41. P-1657, 1, 15, 86
42. DALO, P-1657, 1, 26, 70
43. DALO, P-1657, 1,116, 1
44. DALO, P-1657, 1, 26, p. 70
45. AAN, MZO, 2223, III Sesja Rady Naukowej dla Zagadnien ZO w Krakowie, 16- 19 czerwca 1946, p. 58
46. AAN, MZO, 2223, III Sesja Rady Naukowej dla Zagadnien ZO w Krakowie, 16-19 czerwca 1946, p. 268
47. Jan Zachwatowicz, „Program i zasady konserwacji zabytkow,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury*, z. 1-2, cited after Marek Zybura, *Pomniki niemieckiej przeszłości. Dziedzictwo kultury niemieckiej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych Poslki*, Warszawa, 1999.
48. Gwido Chmarzyński, „W aureoli gotyckich kościołów,” in *Dolny Śląsk*, ed. by Kirył Sosnowski and Mieczysław Suchocki, vol. 2, Poznań, Wrocław: 1948, p. 44f
49. Ibidem

50. Olgierd Czerner, *Rynek Wrocławski*, Wrocław, 1976, p. 98f
51. Emil Kaliski, „Wrocław wrócił do Polski,” *Skąpa Warszawska*, nr. 9, 1946, p. 1-2
52. More on discussion about evaluation architectural styles in Wrocław, beginning from Gothic through late 19th century historicism see in Thum, *Obce Miasto*, parts “Sakralizacja gotyku,” “Tolerancja dla baroku,” and “Odruch antypruski.”
53. Thum, *Obce Miasto*, p. 391
54. Thum, *Obce Miasto*, p. 390
55. Detailed descriptions of adjustments and inconsistencies in rebuilding the Market Square see in Czerner, *Rynek Wrocławski*, 131f, as well as analysis and discussion of the project in Thum, *Obce Miasto*, p. 394-396
56. Michał Kaczmarek, “Nowe funkcje Rynku Wrocławskiego w latach powrotu miasta do ustroju samorządowego”, w: *Wrocławski Rynek. Materiały konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Muzeum Historyczne we Wrocławiu w dniach 22-24 października 1998r.* pod red. Marzeny Smolak, Wrocław: Muzeum Historyczne, 1999, p. 269
57. Marian Morełowski, „Walka z burżuazyjno-spekulanckim oszpecceniem Wrocławia,” *Słowo Polskie*, December 24-26, 1950, nr. 354, p. 4
58. Kaczmarek, “Nowe funkcje Rynku Wrocławskiego,” p. 269
59. See sociological survey study of Wrocław inhabitants from the 1967, *Związani z miastem*, ed. by Bohdan Jałowicki and Janusz Goćkowski, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków: Ossolineum, 1970
60. For example, for Munich Gavriel Rosenfeld singles out term “urban denazification,” see Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*, p. 80.
61. On the “failure” to erase the signs of Nazi past in Munich and its function to preserve, evoke, as well as confront the Nazi past and its legacies, see Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*, p. 83
62. In following decades the need to purge the city was occasionally activated. For Lviv this would happen in the early 1970s, when Polish Military Cemetery was bulldozed in 1972, partly as a reaction to social unrests in neighboring Poland.
63. Moreover, memories of Lwów and Breslau were also outside of the countries.

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