

INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF POLISH URBAN PLANNING

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MEASURES OF SUCCESS

It is not easy to judge which examples of Polish contemporary urban planning might possess the status of works that achieved international success, and this includes creations in Poland as well as abroad. One needs criteria for assessment, but intuition suggests that even severe ones might be useless, while the selection of such criteria is not obvious. The number of citations, the frequency of publication of descriptions and photographs, the number of imitators and such like can of course be quantified, but against what should the resulting calculations be measured? One would need to produce comparative tables but in spite of the work done, these would never bring about convincingly objective results. On the other hand, assessments transcending simple awarding of points, such as admiration (or condemnation) of critics, academic analyses, colleagues' opinions, media reports etc, are obviously emburdened with the sin of subjectivism and thus should only be auxiliary material.

Secondly, the problem is that the value (in whatever way measured) of a work may change with the passage of time for reasons altogether insubstantial. This happens, e.g. with long-despised social realism, which revives at least as a theme for study, and urban designs from the time are considered worthy of visits, or even perhaps, of imitation¹.

At the same time postmodernism, which to many was also sourced among others in socialist archi-

itecture, becomes an embarrassing and irresponsible composition of not-quite-new designs arranged of toy bricks which should have been given to children, though sampling in art and music fares quite well meanwhile. Bearing out the proposition on dynamism of assessment of urban designs is also the acceptance of historicism, achieved some time ago and now well grounded, although the fashion for this is too proceeding towards a decline. Another confirmation is the development of neomodernism in many forms, even though critique of modernism itself continues, with the effect i.a. that modernist architectural realizations are being physically removed; for instance the demolishing, ostensibly because of frail condition, of department stores Supersam at Plac Unii Lubelskiej and Pawilon Chemii at Bracka street in Warsaw, or the railway station in Katowice, or adding on buildings, or painting in bright colours even renowned housing estates constructed between 1960-1980.

Thirdly, it is a fact that Polish urban planning and architecture never had any real introduction to the world information circuit, mainly because reports were few and far between, and also for language reasons because if anything did get published, as a rule it was in Polish. In Western Europe or in the USA any larger project (larger does not necessarily relate to quality) was extensively described in special editions of albums or books, usually in two languages, whereas in Poland nothing of the sort happened (nor does). Another real problem is the scant number of

¹ Between 24-25.09.2011 Warsaw's Society for the Preservation of Historic Monuments organised a symposium devoted to „Threatened relics of social realism” commenting thus: „Will the architecture of social realism disappear from the Warsaw cityscape, obliterated by a layer of styrofoam? Will complexes such as Plac Konstytucji, Mariensztat, Plac Hallera preserve their unique

character? What is in the future for the interiors of the Palace of Culture? ... The architecture and urban planning of social realism to a very large degree shaped the image of the city after World War 2 and nowadays more and more often attention is brought to the need for its protection.

periodicals. There are some dedicated to architecture but urban planning is sadly neglected. Generally, one or two publications survive on the market, when these disappear, replacements do not surface for a long time².

Fourthly, a grand majority of urban projects are spatial plans which are legal documents that, once adopted, no longer belong to their authors. They do not become monuments of urban planning, although if each corresponded to the layout of Barcelona, Brasilia, Chandigarh, etc, it would have the chance to be preserved in other ways than as provided by the instructions attached to the zoning laws. This opportunity presented itself to the new city of Tychy, built in the early 1950s in Silesia according to plans by Kazimierz Wejchert and Hanna Adamczewska (later Adamczewska Wejchert). Sadly, the methods of construction for Tychy, decreed by the political authorities, in the shape of amorphous groups of pre-fabricated, unified multi-family houses, which took the modernist idea to absurd proportions, ruined that chance.

Fifthly, an urban planning project will not appear where, as in Poland, urban designing has in fact been struck out as an instrument of space management, and public interest expressed in designing space in the third dimension is contested by parliamentarians who make the spatial planning laws, state administration, municipal authorities, local councils, investors and plot owners. Whereas in Western Europe and in the USA (also in countries to which these export their urbanist products) the number of projects concerning large city fragments and publications presenting them is on the rise, in Poland it would be difficult to find even a few such examples³.

Let this sad picture find summary in a review of efforts that had the chance to come into their own within European urban planning as its representative examples though only a few succeeded.

The beginnings were quite good. At the turn of the 20th century, in the early days of construction of European “modern cities” we had at least several high ranking representatives⁴. Out of the blueprints for cities in Poland, it is worth recalling the *competition plan for Cracow from 1910* and *The initial draft for the regulation plan of the city of Warsaw* prepared under Tomasz Tołwiński in 1916, which excellently solved, in the opinions of a number of European urban planners, the complicated problems of a metropolis in line with modern principles of its formation⁵. In free Poland, reunited after 1918, there was the *plan of Gdynia* by Roman Feliński and Antoni Kuncewicz from 1925, the construction of the *Central Industrial Zone* in the fork of rivers Vistula and San, and the representative *Marshall Piłsudski Quarter with Mokotowskie Fields and the Temple of Divine Providence in Warsaw*⁶. Each of these projects (completed or not) had a different origin. Gdynia with its liberal use of space, excellent compositional combination of uneven land and flat sea, modernist architecture with a maritime twist, lavish use of expanses of public space, to this day does not have many imitators of comparable status. The Central Industrial Zone, planted relatively far from the country’s borders in result of economic considerations as well as national security, was magnificently rational. This also concerned the industrial towns planned there such as Stalowa Wola or Skarżysko Kamienna, and architectural designing that was no worse than the popular example of Bata’s Zlin built more or less at the same time by the Czechs. Lastly, the Marshall Piłsudski quarter, designed in Warsaw in the late 1930s and never built because of the Second World War; having a „country’s leader” origin close in expression to Il Duce’s spacious fora in Italy. Perhaps this is not the best relationship, nonethe-

² Among the really scandalous is the decision by the National Chamber of Town Planners to refuse any assistance with maintaining the periodical „Urbanista”. Publications issued in limited numbers at schools of architecture do not have the proper circulation nor popularity to exist without support, in spite of their generally high scholarly standards.

³ A truly curious case is Plac Defilad square in Warsaw, the „heart of the city” as one would want to say, work on the drafts for which has been underway for twenty years, since 1992, in a variety of configurations of designing and organisational teams,

under a variety of titles, with regard to various functions, and nothing points to any optimistic resolution soon.

⁴ K.K. Pawłowski, *Początki polskiej nowoczesnej myśli urbanistycznej*, in: *Sztuka około 1900*, PWN, Warsaw, 1969.

⁵ J. Purchła, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow, 1990; T. Kotaszewicz, *Koncepcje przestrzenne rozwoju Warszawy w pracach Tadeusza Tołwińskiego 1916 - 1946*, series *Krajobraz Warszawski*, District Office for Warszawa Centrum borough, Warsaw, 1994,

⁶ M. Sołtysik, *Gdynia. Miasto dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, PWN, Warsaw, 1993.

less at the time we did not know the things about fascism that we do now, and that is why the National Museum could happen between 1926-1938, a modern edifice then, nowadays a backdrop for films from the fascist era, but still a grand, monumental building of ultra-high quality.

In the first years of the 20th century, very popular in Poland was the *idea of the garden city*. The above-said plans of Cracow and Warsaw were created under its influence. Nevertheless, the idea was more proper for projects not so big. In 1912, T. Tołwiński won a plotting competition for the Warsaw suburb of Żabki. He put forward a design for a garden city with all the Howardian attributes (as also did the laureates of the second and third prize). Another excellent example from the Warsaw suburbs is the design for Leśna Podkowa by A. Jawornicki from 1925, closely resembling Howard's diagrams by its circular plan. Certainly the same roots are had by 1920s designs for parts of the Warsaw district of Żoliborz: Żoliborz Oficerski and Żoliborz Urzędniczy. Enough to recall the green colonies on Górnośląska, Filtrowa, Wawelska, Chłopiczkiego and Żółkiewskiego streets, and also the districts of Czerniaków (Oskar Sosnowski) and Sadyba, all described as garden cities, to realize how strongly was this movement present in Warsaw⁷. Warsaw is of course an example here, garden cities and garden districts and suburbs were developed all over Poland.

Sadly, none of the cited examples, here studied and exploited as themes for academic considerations, has a permanent place in foreign literature nor is more widely known. What did rise to achieve such a place?

THE SCIENCE AND THE THEORIES

After the Second World War, much publicity went to *threshold analysis* conceived by Bolesław Malisz (1910-1995). Its principles were for the first time formulated in his postdoctoral dissertation titled "Ekonomika kształtowania miast", published by the Spatial Planning Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1963. The work was started because the law on spatial planning adopted in 1961 provided for plans spanning 15 years and more, alongside relatively short-term projects. The problem was, how-

ever, that for such extended periods there was no economic forecasting which should be at the fundament of spatial development projects. Bolesław Malisz concluded that long-term studies should be based on information that is given anyway, i.e. analysis of the physical features of the land. He reminded that a city, as it spreads onto surrounding areas, is met by existing obstacles, natural and artificial (e.g. railway lines). These obstacles are characterised by the fact that to cross them the city needs every time to put aside more funds for development, what is sometimes difficult. The obstacles thus become similar to thresholds, with the result that a city's development in fact proceeds by leaps. As a consequence, apart from the usual outlays on development, from time to time the city must call up threshold funds. Their extent, calculated from the studied needs, can be established, so is not random and can become an instrument of method for rational urbanist policy.

For the first time, threshold analysis was presented in 1964 in Moscow, at a meeting of the UN's Centre for Housing, Building and Planning. Malisz went there as the author of the book *Polska buduje nowe miasta (Poland builds new cities)*, translated into several languages and sent out to Polish embassies as information material - confirming the necessity to publish not only in Polish, if we want to promote our achievements. Soon afterwards he went to Greece as a UN expert, then - also on behalf of the UN - he took part in elaborating a plan for the region of the southern Adriatic, with the application of threshold analysis. It was the year 1968.

On a larger scale the procedure was applied in Edinburgh, in the years 1968-1969 by Jerzy Kozłowski, student and collaborator of Malisz, who drafted plans for two regions of Scotland at the same time developing the theory. In his doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of professor Percy Johnson-Marshall (Malisz was a reviewer), he precised the descriptions for the different types of thresholds, and before all initiated the use of the theory in computerised techniques. The doctorate was published, it was often quoted, and Scotland laid down a requirement for the method to be used. The author was invited by British universities and professional associations to lectures and implementing seminars. Later, also thanks to the postgraduate course for developing

⁷ The original of the plan by Jawornicki was never found, G. Grątkowski, *Architektura Podkowy Leśnej*, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Leśnej Podkowy, Leśna Podkowa, 1996; Ł. Heyman,

Nowy Żoliborz, Studia z Historii Sztuki, tom XXV, PAN, Instytut Sztuki, Ossolineum, Wrocław, 1976.

countries led in Szczecin by professor Piotr Zaremba, it spread to those countries and also appeared frequently in projects for European cities (i.a. Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Italy). Furthermore, via the works of Jerzy Kozłowski, working as a professor at the University of Queensland, Australia (currently again in Cracow), it spread worldwide. In its developed form it is now known as Ultimate Threshold Analysis and is part of a wider theory described as Threshold Approach.

It seems that in a text on the achievements of Polish urban planning understood as a science we could not but mention Kazimierz Wejchert (1912-1993). Author of the theory of *elements of urban composition (EKU)* which he had taught since the nineteen-fifties at the Department of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, where it has remained a part of the curriculum to this day, he published his book on EKU too late, in the year 1974. At that time, for some fourteen years already the world had known Kevin A. Lynch's *The Image of a City*, published by MIT, with multiple editions in dozens of countries. It is the case when two authors independently of each other speak and write of a similar theme in a similar way, with the difference that one of them does it at a more prestigious venue and in the world's most popular language, while the other in a place which is removed from the opinion-making centres.

STUDIES AND DESIGNS

Urbanist theories are as a rule very close to study efforts, more: the nature of urban planning means that usually one cannot exist without the other. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this article, some studies can be isolated from some of the abovementioned theories.

Out of such works, most luck was had by *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, (*Functional Warsaw*), a project by Jan Olaf Chmielewski and Szymon Syrkus from 1934. This, similarly to the later *Linear Continuous System* by Oskar Hansen, a variety of linear city, the oldest concept for new settlements that appeared at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, was created in the CIAM circuit.

The proposal by Chmielewski and Syrkus was based on the assertion of the existence and empha-

sis of a linear character of settlement in the Warsaw area. Traditional East-West lines of transportation were intersected in the vicinity of Warsaw by lines of increasing transit movement between the Baltic and the Mediterranean Sea. Scaled down to city size, the picture showed that the region of Warsaw has a number of features which enable transference of linear thinking on a national scale to a local scale.

The authors realized that recipients of the project would want an explanation of the forms with which the lines would be developed. They write with a certain impatience that "if the reader must demand illustration, then he or she should imagine the capital city belt to be a sort of Corbusieran *ville radieuse* - the ultimate expression in functionalising the centre of a metropolis. Industrial belt? Perhaps a Milyutinesque *sotsgorod* - maybe one of the new industrial towns of the USSR." Today we know that the proposals missed their mark, but that is without consequence as we are only describing illustration to a project, the value of which depended on something entirely different. For the first time, to such scale was formulated a programme of spatial organisation of an "urbanized region". B. Malisz wrote that *Functional Warsaw* contained the fundamental elements of this model of settlement, promoted 30 years later, where the functions of a city were deconcentrated to the region⁸. Simultaneously it relied on the supposition that modernised transportation routes become the axes of social and economic development, industrialization and urbanization included. In fact when we read Peter Hall's lecture *City and Regions in a Global Economy* from the UN conference in Nagoya in 1991, the words of B. Malisz become *fully confirmed*⁹.

Why did the draft of Functional Warsaw find itself at the focus of interest of the Congresses of Modern Architecture? Not without significance was the share of Polish members of CIAM in its works (mentioned here should be Helena Syrkusowa, judging by literature, the person most strongly involved in the matter) but this did not determine success. What was important was the timing of publication of *Functional Warsaw*. This concerns the time period and atmosphere of great expectation in respect of positive changes to the nineteenth-century city,

⁸ B. Malisz, *Ekonomika kształtowania miast*, Studia KPZK PAN, vol.IV, 1963.

⁹ P. Hall, *Cities and Regions in a Global Economy*, UN Centre for Regional Development, Nagoya, Japan, 1991.

what contributed to reception and assessment of this concept¹⁰.

The *Functional Warsaw* project on the one hand began with the reflections and studies of Chmielewski on functional and spatial relationships of Warsaw, precisely speaking of any city, with surroundings, and formulating these in the form of planning concepts. On the other hand Syrkus, representing a group of architects collaborating with CIAM on the necessary transformations of cities, took Chmielewski's concepts to be answers to the expectations of the international planning community. A confirmation of this can be the letter of congratulations (London, 21 May 1934), sent by the International Committee for the Realization of Problems of Contemporary Architecture CIRPAC, that is the executive organ of CIAM, to President of Warsaw Zyndram Kościalkowski. The letter was signed, among others, by Le Corbusier, Siegfried Giedion, Walter Gropius and Jose Luis Sert. The letter, as well as carrying strong words of appreciation, is also an announcement of readiness to accept the draft by Chmielewski and Syrkus as "an example for similar studies, entrusted to various national CIAM teams on occasion of the 5th Congress".

Functional Warsaw was presented for the first time to an international body on 31 July 1933, on board of the vessel *Patris II* on a voyage between Marseilles and Athens, that is, during the 4th Congress of CIAM, held under the motto of "Functional city". More than 30 cities were presented during the congress. The discussion, which developed in various forms also after return from Athens to Marseilles, initially did not bring up any opinion on the particular worth or usefulness of the Polish project. Nonetheless, with the passage of time, it proved that the project contained many answers to problems presented in the Congress report as it was gradually compiled and published by Le Corbusier many years later, in 1943, as the widely known Athens Charter. In this light, the contents of the said letter are not surprising.

The scheduled publication with a full set of plans as presented on *Patris II* never appeared. At the exhibition in Amsterdam in 1935 again only part of

the plans were shown but with the addition of some new ones. Out of these Le Corbusier distinguished his own design for Nemours in Morocco, claiming in later publications that it was the work best answering the "functional city" resolution adopted at the 4th Congress. Eighteen great blocks, parallel to one another, with a north-south orientation and situated in a sort of park that separated them from a motorway running on an overpass... This is how fast one idea superseded another in those times, in the heat of searches for the best. It is worth recalling that this was a time of quite tumultuous change. Groups of architects with leftist inclinations associated with CIAM had to split with the Soviet Union in which they had seen a country that could realize their dreams on modern (as they understood it) urban planning. In Germany, Hitler was dealing in his own way with modern art, town planning and architecture. Economic conditions after the world crisis were also not advantageous to large-scale conversion projects, such as those suggested by Chmielewski with Syrkus.

This does not mean that the two abandoned work on the project. By the year 1939 the impact of *Functional Warsaw* on regional planning in Poland was evident. After World War II the work was somewhat different. In 1946 Chmielewski presented a concept for the Warsaw City Complex but went back to working on linear development ten years later and a publication on the subject appeared in 1968¹¹. In the same year was published *Koncepcja kształtowania sieci osadniczej w Polsce według zasad koncentracji liniowej* (*A concept for shaping the settlement network in Poland according to principles of linear concentration*) authored by Marek Budzyński, Krzysztof Chwalibóg, Jerzy Górnicki, Jacek Janczewski, Andrzej Kiciński, Adam Kowalewski and Jan Rutkiewicz. One of the factors for concentration (or rather: readying living space for new city dwellers) was the advance of coming changes in employment in rural areas and the migration of the rural population to other occupations. Alas, the spatial arrangement is not particularly delightful: what we see in the drawings and models is an amorphous set of housing blocks, multiplied towards the horizon;

¹⁰ Źródła do studiów nad rozwojem przestrzennym Warszawy, Instytut Urbanistyki i Planowania Przestrzennego, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej, Issue 1, Warsaw 1981.

¹¹ A. Kotarbiński, *Jan Chmielewski - sylwetka twórcy i zarys działalności*, in: *Początki planowania przestrzennego w Polsce*,

Studia i Materiały do Teorii i Historii Architektury i Urbanistyki XV, PAN, PWN, Warsaw, 1979; J.O. Chmielewski, *Podstawowe problemy planowania przestrzennego obszarów odnowy i rozwoju sił człowieka*, „Problemy Uzdrawiskowe”, R. 1968, issue 1(38).

which in Poland has earned the popular deprecatory title of “blokowisko”. In this situation, a perusal of the descriptions of linear arrangement does not convince and ranks the whole proposal among the total projects. The opinion becomes even more strongly grounded after an analysis of other examples appearing at the time for the linear development of cities, to mention but Cracow or Warsaw (the development of the Warsaw City Complex elaborated by the Young Architecture organisation from the 1960s, repeated in 1973)¹².

A special place must here be awarded to Oskar Hansen (1922-2005). This architect, sculptor and painter, who studied and worked for Pierre Janneret and Fernand Léger, who participated in CIAM congresses in Bergamo and Otterlo, and CIAM workshops in London (1949), who authored designs for exposition halls in many European countries (as of the 1950s), could mark his presence in Europe on a more permanent basis thanks to his Open Form theory. In the meantime, he took his lecture on *Open Form and the Art of the Great Number* to the last CIAM congress in Otterlo in 1959, which closed with the conclusion that modernist (functionalist) ideas that had inspired European urban planning since 1928 must give way to new ideas, developing after World War II; and decided to stop using the title CIAM. And though *Open Form* stood in opposition to forms which CIAM had hitherto acknowledged, the end of this organisation drastically reduced Hansen’s prospects of promoting his idea on a wider forum. He did not rise to be a permanent attendee at meetings of “Team Ten”, which in some ways became heritor to CIAM, and being a resident of communist-ruled Poland was not conducive to promoting his concept abroad, in spite of appearances at congresses of the International Union of Architects and publication of his presentations thereat. It also seems that what Hansen identified as the Continuous Linear System (LSC), what was to be the translation of the Open Form to urbanist scale, did not go very far from the linear city idea that had been known for decades and thus could not start an independent existence. Two main attempts at implementing Hansen’s idea failed altogether: this was the Juliusz Słowacki estate of the Lublin Housing Coopera-

tive (from 1961) and Przychówek Grochowski estate (blueprint 1963, realization 1973) created at a time when the principles of LSC were attaining concrete form and intended as the first link in the chain of a belt of linear development. And though LSC had been devised as a response to the challenges of the “Great Number”, i.e. the growing world population, it did not gain much popularity, perhaps because of that catastrophic Przychówek realization. It is worth adding that Hansen’s statements contain some unresolved inconsistencies: on the one hand *Open Form* was an answer to standardization of architecture, on the other, as LSC, it worried with a total solution to problems where the “great number” prevailed, and not the focus on the individual which urban architecture had announced at the time along with the rise of postmodernism. The pattern of four lines of settlement, running through Poland in a north-south direction, i.e. supra-human “channels meliorating demographic surplus” as Hansen had written, could not simultaneously be a proposal of “method to shape the surroundings supported on an organic pattern, on a flexible and properly proportional dependence of service zones on served zones, situated side by side”. Such a description of LSC advantages did not much differ from the arguments “for” known since Soria’s time. Neither is there anything new in the author’s opinion that “As in medieval times a cathedral was the dominating element of a town and landscape, so a classless, egalitarian, non-hierarchic character of a social house form is to be the dominant feature of this system of settlement” - enough to read more writings by abovementioned linear city supporters from the nineteen-thirties, to find there similar sounding fragments, and all of it together confirms the thesis that LSC belongs amongst the demiurgic theories¹³.

COMPETITIONS

It must be said that in the years following World War II, the Society of Polish Town Planners and the Society of Polish Architects achieved much, organising international competitions with participation of colleagues from abroad, as well as facilitating the participation of Polish designers in foreign contests.

¹² K. Chwalibóg, *Ewolucja struktury zespołów mieszkaniowych*, PWN, Warsaw 1976; W. Seruga, A. Wyżykowski, *Zespół osiedli Ruczaj-Zaborze w Krakowie*, „Architektura”, Year 1976, no 10; *Pasmo Wielickie*, „Architektura”, Year 1980, no 4; *Krakowski Zespół Miejski*, „Architektura” Year 1980, no 6; K. Seibert, *Plan*

Wielkiego Krakowa, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow 1983; A. Kowalewski, *Warszawa. Problemy rozwoju*, Książka i Wiedza, Warsaw, 1981.

¹³ O. Hansen, *LSC. Linearny System Ciągły*, „Architektura”, Year 1970, nos 4-5.

In respect of typically urbanist competitions, only two teams carried away any noticeable successes. Both teams won first prizes and were commented on widely, although the reasonably expected application of results in practice did not really happen. Some reasons for this, paradoxically, were that - as it often happens with competitions - both works were far ahead of their time and were not fully understood by the organizers.

The first of these examples is the competition for a new administrative centre of Espoo township, situated west of Helsinki. Today we would say that the design fell within the scope of ecological solutions, but the issue here is not straightforward “green planning” or “environmentally-sound architecture”. We have many of these. More interesting is a variety of ecologic town planning which considers the life of a town or building, and their relationship with the landscape. Nowadays, in respect of solutions for towns melting into regions, this is thought to be obvious or even vital. Moreover, nowadays many buildings which once used to be raised in town centres are located far outside. Sometimes this other place is a brown field, an area ruined by industry, railway, military, but sometimes it is a so-called green habitat. This was the case with Espoo. The local authorities defined the issue well and precisely: because the westwards dispersion of Helsinki had been observed, it was decided that Espoo would become the crystallizing element for a new urban development, close-knit and in this way counterbalancing the tendency for dispersion and contamination of the surroundings.

The competition was resolved in 1967. 171 works had been entered. Among the jury members were Giovanni Astengo, Georges Candilis, Zbigniew Karpiński and Aarno Ruusuvuori. First prize went to Warsaw architects Jan Maciej Chmielewski, Janusz Kazubiński and Krzysztof Kuraś with their team. The impact of their design was such that the jury placed far behind the time’s popular and much-promoted mega-structural solutions, even though this was the apogee of the fashion for “Metabolism” with cities in the air and multi-level marinas on the sea. Secondly, the jury noticed and appreciated the unity which the design awarded to landscape and town, highlighting its features: the mountain peaks with clusters of buildings, the valleys which concealed

communication routes, the forests which framed the taller buildings, stone lake shores where the rocks became multiplied by the rising walls of public utilities. Thirdly, when we now look at the design for the Espoo central district, we can easily discern the wonderful expanses of public space with buildings, that other architects have only now gained the courage to realize. For instance the Espoo concert hall takes one directly to the much-awarded building of the Opera in Oslo, opened in 2008 to a design by the company Snohetta - enough to compare the forms of the hall and the opera. And so, Espoo was green, balanced development, progressive - to a degree that the Finnish investor failed to understand and built the way things were built everywhere, without much consideration for the publications that appeared in top professional periodicals of world renown.

The other example is the international competition for the structure improvement of New Belgrade, a new, partly-realized quarter of Belgrade for some 200 thousand inhabitants. The competition was announced by the Belgrade City Council in 1986. The jury was presided by Bogdan Bogdanović. 94 works were entered and first prize ex equo went to Krzysztof Domaradzki, Olgierd Dziekoński and Zbigniew Garbowski with their team. Most generally, it was a proposal to introduce into an amorphous space taken up by a mass of common, enormous prefabricated housing blocks, of new construction, forming an urban structure which defined places, limits and areas, to constitute an uninterrupted system of public spaces. According to the authors, the “spaces” were to be city interiors, created in line with the principles of urban composition and not the technological specifications of housing factories. The borders between public space and areas of development that were to become spaces for group use (social, in the words of the authors of the design), were created by clearly outlined frontages of streets and squares. Finally, developed areas were not conceived as islands in the city but to be connected into a whole with an arrangement of public spaces, streets, piazzas, as well as a system of open green spaces.

The authors, who were also behind a strongly (and incomprehensibly) attacked project of new garden cities in the western belt of Warsaw’s development; in the Belgrade one managed to excellently and creatively summarize the discussion that at the

¹⁴ W. Baburow et al., *Architekt i urbanista*, „Architektura”, Year 1948, no 11-12.

time was underway in Poland: whether and how to change the structure of hundreds of estates raised by housing factories. A considerable share in the discussion was had by participants of competitions known as the International Warsaw Confrontations, results of which, though significant for the said discussion, went absolutely unnoticed abroad. Similarly unnoticed was a competition important to urban development, a design for the Poznań district Owińska (1981), where all the winners of awards and commendations rejected the model of the district as a peripheral of Poznań, instead proposing a new town, linked with the metropolis by efficient transport. Moreover, that is when appeared a partially realized project for Owińska as a Federation of Small Towns, prepared by a team headed by Jerzy Buszkiewicz, at least a year earlier than Seaside, Florida, where New Urbanism was born. The same can be said of Leon Krier's Poundbury in Dorchester. But while Seaside, Poundbury and tens of other realizations of this type are known worldwide, the development Zielone Wzgórza (Green Hills), part of the Federation, exists without any wider information about its genesis, forms, etc. A pity... We do not have our own representative in the discussion on counteractive measures to the dispersement of cities, even while for fifty years the Department of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology has taught, after Kazimierz Wejchert, urban design within the curriculum of Elements of Urban Composition, and our colleagues at the Department of Architecture of the University of Technology in Cracow teach the same within the course on urban and architectural design. It is a situation that leads on to a reminder about the antecedents of Elisabeth Plater-Zyberk, if only to comfort hearts...

So, if Espoo rather remains forgotten, then New Belgrade sometimes returns. And so, in 2008 Ljiljana Blagojevic, professor at the Department of Architecture of the University of Belgrade and author of a book on New Belgrade published in 2007, recalled the competition at a conference in Delft. Although the main subject of her presentation was an analysis of a text by Henri Lefebvre, attached to a work sent in to the competition by other participants, the very fact of "reviving" the competition points to its importance and, at the same time, to the importance of the award received by the Polish team. The lecture by L. Blagojevic de facto focused on issues undertaken by the Poles in their entry. The author believed, that in Yugoslavia, neo-rationalism and postmodern-

ist historicism, about which she wrote, putting them in a certain opposition to "authentic socialist" urban design, had more chance of realization than in other countries of the former socialist bloc. Whether she was right or not, her presentation confirmed the correctness of assumptions adopted by Domaradzki, Dziekoński and Garbowski.

At the end of this chapter it is worth recalling that the biggest of the Polish competitions lost to the world is the competition for Plac Defilad square in Warsaw (1991). Everything had been going as it should be until the moment when the results were to be put to use, that is until 1992. Plac Defilad remains empty. Summing up the reasons for this condition, one could say that there was no agreement and no accord how to turn the ideas devised for the competition into reality, nor was there awareness who owned the relevant land plots. What dominated was nonchalance on the part of all the main actors in the process. Official letters were written and various initiatives launched mainly to support the taken decisions, controversial from the point of view of the art of developing cities. Ideas changed incessantly on what the competition's laureates, Andrzej Skopiński and Bartłomiej Biełyszew, are to do (even the official naming of the area in question changed several times), actions were duplicated, there was no knowledge of the state of possession, while amending of "Varsovian legislation" which regulated the scope of competences of the plot's administrator increased the general confusion - those were the main transgressions on the side of the city authorities. There are too critical remarks aimed against the competition laureates, their ignorance of the surroundings in which they worked (surroundings as understood in a variety of meanings), they demonstrated an inflexible stance when logic would have advocated otherwise or vice versa, they suddenly changed attitudes. For instance in 2004 they abandoned without a word of explanation defence of a circular boulevard around the Palace of Culture and Science in the middle, a key spatial element of their design, and began drafting a chequered design of intersecting streets, following a sketch from the office of the Main Architect of Warsaw! Question is: if so, then why for many years, struggling to preserve the circular pattern on their plan, did they blockade that same solution as suggested to them in the guidelines to the plan from October 1999, for instance? Because of their obstinacy (considering their about-turn one is entitled to call their actions so) Warsaw lost out

some years of its better future. Going even further, one might say, that although in Warsaw in the 1980s and later nobody dared to implement postmodernist decisions officially on paper, they did happen. These are fragments placed here and there in peripheral districts of Warsaw, with a particular indication of Kabaty - Ursynów. A pity, because maybe a great postmodernist development could have updated the urbanist theories of K.Wejchert, including the words on crystallization of the city plan, highlighting the significance of street and square as the most important elements of an urban composition. Pity, because that would have confirmed the presence of our urban design in the world discussion on the nature of a city, on the advantages that come from composing its tissue, positive or negative.

THE PARADOX OF SOCIAL REALISM - LIFE AFTER LIFE

Quite paradoxically (from today's point of view), the retreat from the amorphous modernist city began along with the appearance of the doctrine of social realism. That is why, whatever might be our attitude to it, a reminder of erstwhile principles of creating urban complexes is a must.

The picturesqueness of pre-socialist towns was to be replaced - in the new quarters and cities, immediately finished - with other values. In place of layers of history there were to be unified urban complexes, composed as a whole, with determined boundaries. To a central arrangement were subordinated hierarchically lesser fragments, architectural scale included. As far as the street problem was concerned the general inclination was for corridor style. A street was perceived as a unified complex in part or section. The effect of this were long and compact interiors, contrasting to the open spaces of squares and housing block insides. Visible are symmetric layouts, rhythms of strong, repeated accents, multiplied facades. Symmetrical layouts were not based on the classic balance of mass but mirror-images of buildings, considered the simplest way to achieve an impression of monumentalism. Square and street attained a unique position in the city structure, resulting from the fact that they did not serve to connect far-flung points of the city but citizens in collective living. They were the places along the march towards a better future and because of this (with irony now) they may be called "tomorrow's streets"¹⁴. The irony also because in 1992 we began to feel in Po-

land that social realism had returned to Polish urban planning. We knew of the discussions carried on in the West about the formal similarities of post-modernist works to those of social realism but not until the conclusion of the competition for development of Warsaw's Plac Defilad did the problem become fully obvious. The Palace of Culture and its surroundings, a patent symbol of almost fifty years of an impaired statehood, in the awarded draft by B.Biełyszew and A.Skopiński received the stature of a keystone in the arrangement. The authors achieved such an effect operating according to the canons of postmodernistic urban design a) regulated the chaos of minor urban tissue, drafting a formal layout with the help of an axis, b) preserved the peripheral block with all consequences of the decision, c) complicated the building designs enough so as to make evident their provocative attitude towards the modernist past, d) endowed streets and squares with symbolic meaning. And if they (formally) approximated their effort to the constructions of social realism, then we could see an example of how close can be the enthusiastically naive hyperurbanism of the postmodernist era to hyperurbanism by decree with a crafty, social engineering manipulation on a big scale in the background. But, as it has been written, Plac Defilad was not redeveloped according to the plans by Biełyszew and Skopiński.

We are writing of social realism because it is now enjoying extraordinary interest on the part of „urban tourists". Perhaps, we long for the above-described spatial features of a traditional city, which social realism did not spare, and we want to remember them. And because modernism which has dominated in the past fifty years has done away with streets and squares, the stage on which a city's life was lived, in searching for these we visit MDM in Warsaw and Nowa Huta, Poland's best and one of Europe's best examples of social realist urban planning.

POLES ABROAD

Among the Poles working abroad, moving into first place is Maciej Nowicki (1910-1950), who thanks to his decision not to return to Poland, which he left for the USA in 1945, and thanks to a happy coincidence became the author of the design for Chandigarh in India, before his tragic death in an air accident. Nowicki did not have the licence to design in the States on his own, and so he collaborated with top class architects such as Clarence Stein, Eero

Saarinen and Albert Mayer. The latter offered to Nowicki to join him on a planning contract for the city of Chandigarh, which was to be the new capital of Punjab. They started work and Mayer was astounded by the many ideas which Nowicki drew up for the new city, including a concept of the whole plan. A similar, excellent opinion was voiced by the Indian authorities, who suggested Nowicki take over the entire project and manage it in the rank of minister. He agreed and was going to return to the USA for a brief time but his plane crashed as they were flying over the Libyan desert on 31 August 1950. The project was taken over by Le Corbusier.

In the *Encyclopaedia of urban planning* published by McGraw-Hill in 1974, C.S. Chandrasekhara, the author of the Indian entry does not mention Mayer or Nowicki; for him the author of Chandigarh is solely the "famous architect Le Corbusier". Fortunately, the more important authors, such as Lewis Mumford, convey more knowledge.

According to Mumford, Nowicki managed to introduce to the designs for new housing complexes an old city atmosphere, which helps the residents identify more quickly with the new place where they move from their old homes. Mumford compares these complexes with Le Corbusier's proposals, anonymous, displaced, requiring people to live there as they might in Marseilles, Rotterdam or New York. This ignores the fundamental human needs, altogether differently to the sketches by Nowicki.

Mumford also believed that Nowicki was the architect, who at the time, in his drafts for Chandigarh, best solved the problem of combining function and architectural expression. He understood, wrote Mumford, that a building, even ultra-modern, must speak to people in a language they understand. And so, coming from the West to India, Nowicki did not bring ready-made architectural stereotypes (as Le Corbusier did later) but thanks to unique intuition translated the Indian lifestyle to urban planning and architecture. He was able to copy the richness of this life to his city plans in whole and part, in a way to make them at the same time vernacular and modernist. It was owing to Nowicki's talent that Chandigarh could be simultaneously organic and functional, abstractly rational and personal. Then came along the great Le Corbusier and the ideal form of a modern city drafted by Nowicki disappeared somewhere.

Of course not only Maciej Nowicki drew city plans outside Poland. It is worth to recall at least the most important cases.

In 1963 an earthquake ravaged Skopje. Some weeks later Adolf Ciborowski, then Head Architect of Warsaw, already led a Polish delegation there. As a result, a year later, the Urban Planning Workshop of Warsaw prepared a plan for the country's reconstruction which was accepted by the UN. Ciborowski became the director of the draft plan, among others working together with Stanisław Jankowski, Janusz Wilski, Olgierd Kaczyński, Olgierd Kuncewicz, Kazimierz Marczewski, Maria Niemczyk, Janusz Cierpiński, Stanisław Furman, Bohdan Wyporek, Stanisław Proniewski, Zbigniew Galperyn, Bohdan Jastrzębski and Zygmunt Pióro. They collaborated with the company of Constantinos Doxiadis, which dealt with housing projects, and with Kenzo Tange; with Arata Isozaki, Yoji Watanabe and Yoshiro Taniguchi working on a detailed draft of the city centre. For the Poles this meant work with a team of extraordinary authority. Its success later gave A.Ciborowski the position of the head of the UN project, plan for development of the Adriatic coast (with J.Wilski and St.Furman), where also Bolesław Malisz was employed as a UN expert.

In 1970 the situation repeated itself. An earthquake in Peru destroyed several cities. Polish urbanists in a similar lineup as in Yugoslavia drafted plans for the reconstruction of the city Chimobote. Again these were compiled according to a method worked out in Yugoslavia: a plan drawn up for some time in the future cannot be an obstacle to current rebuilding.

In the years 1977-1984 an international team of planners (as of 1979 led by Bohdan Wyporek), comprising i.a. J.Cierpiński and A.Kowalewski, prepared a Plan for the Spatial Development of Libya. The Wadeco team, together with the Bureau of Planning for the Development of Warsaw, was responsible for the region of Tripolis and designing the plan for the city itself. Other significant achievements are the designs by Tadeusz Sumień for Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Zbigniew Jakobsze for the new capital of the country Dodoma and perhaps the most interesting and most important projects, though their existence is completely forgotten, was the plan of Singapore carried out under the direction of Krystyn Olszewski and the plan of Damascus by the group of Krystian Seibert. With the latter are also connected plans for satellites of Damascus, on which Polish planners worked until the early nineteen-eighties. Similarly in Nigeria and Iraq, and one should also mention the great share of Poles in the works of Habitat, the

UN agenda. Sadly, all of these efforts have remained mainly in the memories of their authors, although - on the other hand - even if the inhabitants of Singapore, Tripolis, Damascus etc do not know who designed their city, memory remains in the shape of realized plans.

It seems that these successes of Polish planners abroad were the result of their professional experience, gained during the reconstruction of Polish towns and cities after World War II. It is worth remembering that the reconstructed Old Town of Warsaw, the collective effort of the Bureau for the Reconstruction of the Capital, was mentioned in the book by Charles Jencks, listed among the prototypes of postmodernism, in the strain of *straight revivalism*.

CONCLUSION

The list of successes of Polish urban planning in the 20th century would be very short if we did not add on all those works, which in favourable circumstances could have become widely known. Is there an opportunity to expand the list in the future? Knowledge of many Polish planning documents suggests

that chances are minimal. Almost none feature e.g descriptions of prospective streets and squares, those interiors that form the substance of city space. There are motorways, express ways, fast routes, main, collective, but this is a classification connected with traffic which certainly is not the essence of city existence. We have the main centre, the zone centres, various belts and areas, but no visible streets.

Once more let us remind that Warsaw, planned in 1916, its garden-city districts, post-war reconstruction, socialist realism episode and amorphous estates built of prefabricates had their ideology (doctrine) that took the city towards another "tomorrow". Is the repeated like a charm and never expanded idea of continuous development such an ideology (doctrine), sufficient to attaining tomorrow's success? Probably not, because simultaneously we have subordinated urban design and planning to the economic neoliberal doctrine, which does not allow for the creation of a vision of a future city, a vision of its image; we need New Planning. It would seem that today we are in a void with respect to ideas, although this may be just a transitional, subconsciously undertaken, decadent escape in hard times from all things great.

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MIĘDZYKARODOWE OSIĄGNIĘCIA POLSKIEJ URBANISTYKI

STRESZCZENIE

Nie jest łatwo ocenić, co z polskiej współczesnej urbanistycznej twórczości jest osiągnięciem na skalę międzynarodową. Potrzebne są tu kryteria oceny, ale nie będą one nigdy dostatecznie oczywiste i zaaprobowane przez wszystkich. Stąd lepszy jest po prostu przegląd dzieł, uważanych za polskie ikony urbanistyki i stwierdzenie, czy są znane za granicą. Dla lepszej prezentacji można wprowadzić podział zgodny z definicją mówiącą, że urbanistyka to nauka i sztuka budowy miast. Tak więc w dziedzinie nauki osiągnięciem jest wprowadzenie do powszechnego stosowania analizy progowej przez B. Malisza i potem J. Kozłowskiego (1963). Jeśli chodzi o prace studialne z pogranicza nauki i projektowania, to bezsprzecznie wymienić trzeba projekt Warszawy Funkcjonalnej J.O. Chmielewskiego i Sz. Syrkusa (1933). Zauważeni laureaci konkursów urbanistycznych to J.M. Chmielewski, J. Kazubiński i K. Kuraś z zespołem, autorzy projektu miasta Espoo w Finlandii (1967) oraz K. Domaradzki, O.

Dziekoński i Z. Garbowski z zespołem, autorzy przebudowy Nowego Belgradu w Jugosławii (1986). Do sukcesów można także zaliczyć pracę wielu polskich urbanistów w agendach ONZ i przy projektach choćby takich miast, jak Singapur (K. Olszewski), a także odbudowę Starego Miasta w Warszawie, uznaną przez Ch. Jencksa za jedno ze zresztą licznych źródeł postmodernizmu. Nie jest to wiele. Szczególnie żałować trzeba, że nie przebiły się do świadomości świata: teoria elementów kompozycji urbanistycznej K. Wejcherta, przedwojenna budowa Gdyni i Centralnego Okręgu Przemysłowego, powojenna akcja planów uproszczonych na Ziemiach Odzyskanych czy Linearny System Ciągły O. Hansena. Czy dziś mamy szansę wejścia do annałów urbanistyki światowej? Może to być trudne, zważywszy na fakt lekceważenia pracy urbanistów, najlepszych znawców urbanistyki jako nauki i sztuki budowy, przez tych wszystkich, którzy odpowiadają dziś za kształt polskiej przestrzeni.