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# PATRIOTIC SITES IN THE SPACE OF A EUROPEAN METROPOLIS AT THE TURN OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY. THE EXAMPLE OF WARSAW

*Andrzej Stawarz*

The Museum of Independence, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract:

*This article looks at the possibility of undertaking more comprehensive research into the functioning and meaning of cultural patriotic sites in large cities. It takes the example of the largest Polish metropolis – Warsaw – in the period from the birth of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Poland to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It considers a patriotic site a site commemorating a historic event of importance to independence, a site symbolising an armed act, or a site immortalising the act or acts of a specific hero or group of heroes. The study is not aimed at conducting a comprehensive analysis of the spatial arrangement of patriotic sites within the Warsaw cultural scenery, but in this case it analyses the problem of historic remembrance and shaping historic sites.*

Keywords: *city: hero, victim, totalitarianism, communism*

In this outline, I wish to pay particular attention to the possibility of undertaking more comprehensive research into the functioning and meaning of cultural patriotic sites in large cities. In this case, I will use only one example, but it is typical. I will take the example of the largest Polish metropolis – Warsaw. As is commonly known, the capital of Poland itself, due to its unusual history, has for over two centuries remained an ‘untamed’ city, the symbol of heroism and the Polish nation’s struggle for freedom. Its space features an enormous

number of sites creating and documenting this symbolic aspect of the city,<sup>1</sup> growing between the fall of the Republic at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the Second World War to be ‘a nation’s sanctity’.<sup>2</sup> The sites were and are named differently, yet they can be given a common name – ‘patriotic sites’.

What do I consider a patriotic site? First, it is above all a site commemorating a historic event of importance to independence and (from the nation’s point of view) symbolising an armed act or immortalising the act or acts of a specific hero (or group of heroes). Not infrequently, even very frequently, these are sites related to the martyrdom of individuals or entire groups subject to extermination by the enemy; they are used to cultivate remembrance and respect for the fallen or murdered and are of fundamental importance for shaping the nation’s historic awareness and national identity. The sites adopt various forms such as a cemetery (including separate areas), a museum (historic and of martyrdom), a mausoleum, a monument, an obelisk, a commemorative plaque, etc. For the purposes of semantisation of patriotic sites, one should certainly allow for such sites which, performing above all other public functions (e.g. religious, educational, military, etc.), perfectly fit the category of remembrance sites, patriotic sites, e.g. churches, universities, schools, military bases, etc., within the premises of which – i.e., not only within the external municipal space – there are monuments, obelisks, commemorative plaques, etc.

The period from the birth of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Poland to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century brought about, both in Warsaw and in other cities of Poland, a significant change in the manner and extent of commemorating the Polish independence fight and repressions which the Polish nation experienced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, commemorations related to the period of the Second World War and the Stalinist period were dealt with. Indeed, as excellently exemplified by Warsaw, we deal with the social and cultural process of restoring remembrance and shaping a new historic awareness after nearly half a century of ideological indoctrination of the nation, expressed by instilling in Poles a one-sided vision of the latest history of Poland. Within the process, although a vital role is played by new scientific publications or documentary films, of greater

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<sup>1</sup> Back in the period of the People’s Republic of Poland), Kłoskowska (1983) paid attention to the possibility of researching the city as a value (axiological criterion) with reference to a wider complex of national culture phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> The expression was used – in connection with the capital reconstruction – by Cardinal August Hlond, Primate of Poland, in his sermon during the enthronement at the Saint John Cathedral in Warsaw on 30 May 1946 (see: *Katedra...*, 1998: 23).

importance for social awareness there appears to be a phenomenon commonly called ‘the fight with monuments’ (as well as ‘for monuments’) or ‘with symbols’. It can be noted that the phenomenon has so far been characterised by two phases. In the first, we mainly dealt with rejecting and eliminating from the city space, that is from its cultural scenery, but also from the collective memory, sites clearly and negatively associated with the ‘Commune’ (monuments to Dzierżyński, Nowotko, Gen. Świerczewski, the so-called ‘Ubelisk’ – commemorating ‘consolidators’ of the people’s authorities, etc.);<sup>3</sup> in the second, there were predominant initiatives to recreate and restore earlier destroyed patriotic sites and to commemorate to a greater extent the acts, events and heroes or victims of the regime which the Polish nation was supposed to forget forever. As part of the process, some memorial sites established in the times of the People’s Republic of Poland were preserved (e.g. the Mausoleum of the Fight and Martyrdom in Szuch Avenue, the Pawiak Prison Museum, the Museum of the Fight and Martyrdom in Palmiry) as, since the very beginning, they had the nature of patriotic sites or, regardless of the manipulations of intentions of the Communist authorities, performed such a role in the opinion of a significant part of Polish society. Still, only after 1989 could one attempt to remove from these sites those elements which falsified history<sup>4</sup> (Stawarz 2000: 165-177).

Most important in this fight for truth and remembrance were undoubtedly the following motifs (almost simultaneously developed by scientific research, investigations conducted, etc.): the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920, the Katyń Crime, the Warsaw Uprising (1944), great numbers of Poles in the East after 17 September 1939, and repressions against political prisoners of the Stalinist period in the years 1944–1956. Somehow earlier historic issues (e.g. Olszynka Grochowska 1831, the hills of the Citadel) remained in the background, although even these gained numerous advocates and did not disappear from the Warsaw remembrance map. It should also be stated that the capital gained new monuments to distinguished Poles with great difficulty. It is worth recalling, though, several of those erected after 1990, including the monu-

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<sup>3</sup> At the same time changes were made in the names of streets whose patrons were ‘badly’ associated with the People’s Republic of Poland (e.g. Nowotko Street was changed to Anders Street, Marchlewski Avenue was changed to Jan Paweł II Avenue, Świerczewski Avenue was changed to Solidarity Avenue, etc.).

<sup>4</sup> Changes to this type of objects in the 1990s were described in numerous issues of the ‘Past and Remembrance’ magazine published by the Council for the Protection of Remembrance of the Fights and Martyrdom as well as in the ‘Information Bulletins’ of the Main Board of the World Association of Home Army Soldiers or other periodicals.

ments to: Walerian Łukasiński (1988), Józef Piłsudski (3 realisations – 1990, 1995, 1998), Pope John Paul II (3 realisations – 1992, 1994, 1996), Stefan Starzyński (1993), Jan Matejko (1994), Father Jerzy Popiełuszko (2 realisations in 1996, the third in 1999), Maurycy Mochnacki (2000), Henryk Sienkiewicz (2000), Juliusz Słowacki (2001), Gen. Józef Bem (2002), Gabriel Narutowicz (2002), Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski (2002), Gen. Grot-Rowecki (2005), and Father Ignacy Skorupko (2005). In recent years, a Monument to Roman Dmowski was erected.

This study is not aimed at conducting a comprehensive analysis of the spatial arrangement of patriotic sites within the Warsaw cultural scenery, although undoubtedly development of research works in the last several years indicates such significant possibilities (e.g. Tyszka 1990; Grzesiuk-Olszewska 2003; Ciepłowski 2004; Dąbrowa et al. 2005). Still, it may be stated here that such analysis should be based on the adoption of the following criteria:

- 1) nature and chronology of the events commemorated
- 2) form of commemoration
- 3) localisation
- 4) functioning in the city inhabitants' space perception
- 5) functioning in the city symbolic culture

From the point of view of ethnology or cultural anthropology, the most important are criteria 4 and 5, whereas the earlier may be used to evaluate any disturbances associated with the establishment and functioning of patriotic sites. Observation of the sites in the past leads to a general conclusion: city inhabitants' care for and devotion to specific patriotic sites (including in particular only selected social circles – combatants and veterans, activists of organisations and associations or foundations caring for the sites commemorated, part of the youth – schools, scouting, etc.) may accompany both indifference and their being ignored by many other inhabitants and acts of aggression – i.e. vandalism, destroying to obtain raw material (metals) for profit, or 'program' profanation.

Greatest importance must definitely be attributed to patriotic sites of an institutional nature, accessible to inhabitants and tourists every day and often on holidays (churches, museums, mausoleums) and those monuments where official ceremonies are held on a regular basis (anniversaries, taps, readings of the roll of the dead, etc.) – national, municipal, district, or circle-related.

*Churches.* Warsaw churches belonging to the sphere of the absolute sacrum have for many generations also been the mainstay of historic remembrance of the Polish nation (Varsavia Sacra 1996; Madurowicz 2002). Practically every church features commemorative plaques and epitaphs commemorating both martyrdom and the independence fight of the Poles (Tyszka 1990). Even during the era of the People's Republic of Poland, when there were no other possibilities, it was at churches that 'disloyal' plaques were placed, for instance commemorating the Home Army and other secret organisations, soldiers or priests who, 'for faith and homeland', lost their lives in the years of the Second World War, etc. The same churches often held masses for the souls of the fallen and murdered but also 'national retreats', including lectures by historians that were devoted to the 'white stains' on the national history; thematic exhibitions were presented; epitaphs were unveiled, etc.<sup>5</sup> Here in Warsaw we have churches which have become unusual national sanctuaries – above all St. John's Cathedral, the Field Cathedral of the Polish Army and Holy Cross Church, as well as numerous others. The exceptional sacral role of these churches performed over consecutive decades, even centuries, has been mixed with the history of Poland and the Polish nation. Hence, Warsaw churches, because of their crypts, tombstones and epitaph plaques, are unusual patriotic sites. It is sufficient to remember that at St. John's Cathedral there are the remains of several Mazovian princes, the last king of the Republic, Stanisław August Poniatowski, and the murdered first President of the Republic of Poland, Gabriel Narutowicz. Here are also the epitaph plaques of distinguished Polish statesmen – Józef Piłsudski, Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski (also his crypt since 2001) as well as of the indomitable President of Warsaw, Stefan Starzyński. But not only the history of Poland is 'incorporated' in the Cathedral interior. The Cathedral itself – just as Warsaw, reconstructed after destruction – was many a time a site of historic events. Most recently, one event was of an exceptional dimension: it was at this cathedral that, with far-reaching consequences, the first pilgrimage of John Paul II to his homeland started in 1979. Many years earlier, this magnificent building inspired the work of Henryk Sienkiewicz, a great writer who so excellently strengthened Polish patriotism with his work. Let us recall a fragment of our Noble prize winner's memoirs:

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<sup>5</sup> One of the first attempts to synthetically summarise such activities in the years 1947-1989 was undertaken nearly 10 years ago by one of the leading post-1956 independence opposition activists in the People's Republic of Poland – Wojciech Ziemiński (1998).

*Yet I do not know myself if because, from all these various mementos, these portraits, these monuments, these marble faces, there did not blow towards me the wind of the centuries past, fame, power, freedom – and did not bring these seeds which long were lying in my soul before my historical novels grew from them.* (Sienkiewicz 1916). It may be said that history, in a strange manner, came full circle: it is at Saint John's Cathedral that the Henryk Sienkiewicz crypt can be found (since 1924). There are many more such strange coincidences at this unusual place, thanks to which the Cathedral is part a national pantheon and on the other hand a site of utmost importance in shaping Polish patriotism for the next generations of Poles. And every epoch contributed something new, which intensified both the sacral and the patriotic and national dimension of the church.

If we investigate the history of Warsaw churches deeply, we will see the continuous connection of many of them to numerous historic events, including the Poles' fight for independence. During the era of the People's Republic of Poland, when entering the churches one might not only participate in the service but learn the national history or even discover it anew. And then, when the patriotic custom was actually withering due to ideological indoctrination and governmental bans, holy masses to the homeland or services on anniversaries of 'prohibited' national holidays were held in the churches. Many patriotic priests were repressed for this brave activity, from the Stalinist era (1944–1956) to the late years of the People's Republic of Poland. An unusual symbol of priests involved in the realisation of the 'God, Honour, Homeland' motto is Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, bestially murdered by a group of Security Service officers in 1984. Within a few years the grave and the monument (as well as the recently-opened museum) of Father Jerzy located within the premises of St. Stanisław Kostka in Żoliborz became exceptionally important elements of the new national sanctuary, a destination of numerous pilgrimages from the country and of Poles from abroad. As a living place of religious cult of patriotic values, the sanctuary is also probably strongest and most important in Warsaw as a symbol of the contemporary martyrdom of Polish priests as well as an unusual symbol of Solidarity struggling with the communist authorities.

***Museums and mausoleums.*** Already existing buildings of this kind (the Polish Army Museum – 1920, the Mausoleum of Struggle and Martyrdom – 1952, the Pawiak Prison Museum – 1965, the 10<sup>th</sup> Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel Museum – 1962, the Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Palmiry – 1980)

were joined at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic by the Museum of Independence (1990), and, after slightly over 20 years of collection and organisation works, by the Warsaw Uprising Museum (2004). These institutions systematically conduct broad educational and popularising activities (museum lessons, lectures, documentary film projections, meetings with combatants, etc.). In the second half of the 1990s there were introduced – upon the initiative of the Museum of Independence – special series of meetings allowing ever greater social circles (including teenagers' groups) to acquaint themselves with the history of struggle and martyrdom of the Poles: The Pawiak Prison Remembrance Days<sup>6</sup> and Warsaw Citadel Days (May). On the other hand, the Warsaw Uprising Museum is both the main place of meetings of the Uprising fighters and their families and an institution ever more successfully applying modern forms of familiarising the young generation with historic issues, in particular those related to the fate of Warsaw and Poland in the years of the Second World War. It is worth emphasising here that the building where the Warsaw Uprising Museum was located, although not historically related to the Uprising in any special way, apart from strictly museum functions, has been provided with symbolic attributes (the Park of Freedom with the Remembrance Wall featuring several thousand names of the Uprising fighters who lost their lives fighting the invader) and a sacral object (a chapel). The Warsaw Uprising Museum is the latest example of creating a modern museum to perform the role of an institution implementing the historic policy of state authorities (as proven by, among others, the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising) but also to become a very important place in the capital city symbolic space, a place of important patriotic values comprehensible to all the inhabitants and visitors. It should also be noted that the development of the Museum is part of the almost continuing series (begun in 1945) of commemorating the vastness of the martyrdom and unusual heroism of Varsovians during the German occupation. The city cultural scenery still lacks an institution expressly presenting and symbolising Polish victories, such as in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920 or the 'road to freedom' of 1980–1989. Nonetheless, there are more and more frequent exhibitions and educational events in the leading Warsaw museums: The Polish Army Museum, the Historic Museum of the capital city of Warsaw, and the Museum of Independence.

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<sup>6</sup> Originally, the Pawiak Prison Remembrance Days were held in April and for some years now have been organised in the last week of September, connected with the Warsaw surrender anniversary and beginnings of the Polish Underground State (1939).



**Monuments.** Monuments that were erected, from the point of view of their patriotic role, should be divided into three categories:

- monuments to the fights for independence,
- monuments commemorating martyrdom,
- monuments to specific historic characters – heroes, freedom fighters, creators of the national culture.

Warsaw monuments have their own most complicated history. Beside several long rooted in the city cultural scenery (in fact, it is hard to imagine Warsaw without them), such as Sigismund's Column (the oldest European monument of laic nature), the monument to Adam Mickiewicz, the monument to Chopin in Łazienki, the monument to Copernicus in front of the Staszic Palace, or the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the vast majority appeared relatively recently – i.e. in times remembered by the living generations. Remembering here the recent history of Warsaw monuments one must know that many of them would not have been erected but for the determination of individual social committees and organisations. Very often the many years of hardship were worthwhile despite the aversion of the authorities (especially in the years of the People's Republic of Poland) and trouble collecting relevant funds. Monuments become gradually rooted in the capital scenery despite sometimes clearly bad localisations, scandals associated with competition results (winning designs sometimes were not realised), and despite lack of interest of the city authorities in restoring certain monuments to their original locations.<sup>7</sup> Some monuments have often faced the risk – after 1989 – of devastation, such as the Mermaid Monument designed by Konstanty Hegla (which was eventually finely restored and placed in 1999 – just as before the war – in the centre of the Old Town Square), symbolic crosses on the hills of the Warsaw Citadel, or the Traugutt Cross. Other monuments sometimes sank into oblivion, decayed due to lack of care and maintenance, or the space around them was appropriated for purposes not having anything to do with the nature of the monument (e.g., for several years now teenagers have been skateboarding at the Monument to Wincenty Witos in Three Crosses Square).

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<sup>7</sup> Such was the situation with among others, the Dowborczyk Monument which in the 1930s was erected in Powiśle and during the years just after the war was removed by the Communist authorities. Several years ago the monument was recreated but the city authorities did not agree to its pre-war localisation. As a result, the monument was placed ('temporarily') in front of the Polish Army Museum



Capital city monuments, as well as a vast majority of patriotic sites, document, commemorate and symbolise the outstanding role of Warsaw in the fight of consecutive generations of Poles for freedom of the Homeland. It is interesting that the contemporary city space is currently dominated, due to their localisation, shape and dimensions, by patriotic sites related to the fight for independence during the Second World War. Sites commemorating uprisings (of 1794, 1830–1831, 1863–1864) are in general located beyond the very centre but, significantly, at historic sites to which they are related. Unfortunately, the dynamic urban growth of the city, its suburbs and new districts, but also the activities of the communist authorities aimed at wiping out the meaning of many commemorations (if certain monuments could not have been removed totally), resulted in gradual removal of these sites from the inhabitants' memory. Recently, 'Generations' Associations demanded commemoration of part of these sites (let us note – how selectively however) (the Warsaw Commission of the Youth Movement History) issuing a special paper<sup>8</sup> (Dąbrowa et al. 2005).

It should also be added that some kind of 'fight for monuments' is still continuing. Recently founded social committees and associations have been endeavouring to realise further monuments, but have not been meeting with either appropriate social atmosphere, interest of the media, or a friendly attitude of governmental authorities. The most spectacular examples indicate that most probably Warsaw will still have to wait at least for the erection of monuments to: Józef Wybicki (author of Dąbrowski's Mazurka – the Polish national anthem!),<sup>9</sup> Tadeusz Kościuszko – one of the greatest national heroes,<sup>10</sup> as well as a monument (initially planned as a triumphal arch) commemorating Polish victory near Warsaw in August 1920 over the Red Army, or one commemo-

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<sup>8</sup> The authors of the publication demanded in it commemoration of the leftist activities of the Polish Workers Party, the Związek Walki Młodych, the People's Guards and the People's Army from the time of the Second World War. What is interesting is that as 'forgotten' places (contradictory to the actual state of affairs) the authors classified both the Pawiak Prison Museum and the 10<sup>th</sup> Pavilion Museum (including the Execution Gate), which were perfectly incorporated in the city historic space as well as in the memory of the inhabitants.

<sup>9</sup> The foundation act was officially built in Gen. Jan Henryk Dąbrowski Square in 1997 to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary Dąbrowski's Mazurka.

<sup>10</sup> Appointed on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kościuszko's death, the committee did not manage during the Second Republic to have a monument of the famous Commander in Warsaw, which was managed by social activists and authorities in many cities of the country even before 1939. For some years now, the Committee for the Erection of a Monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko in Warsaw presided over by Professor Marian Marek Drozdowski, PhD, has been trying to solve the grave situation.

rating the victims of the Warsaw concentration camp. But, on the other hand, social activists managed (initially still illegally) to commemorate the victims of the Katyń Crime and maintain and develop the monument in Olszynka Grochowska (gradual realisation of the Alley of Fame) which in the Communist era had been almost totally destroyed (Melak 2004: 79-98).

Monuments belonging to patriotic sites considered an important element of municipal symbolism reveal, above all, the Polish nature and our attitude to commemorating history, at the same time defining and maintaining the legend of Warsaw as an undefeated, unbroken city. This symbolism is strengthened by both remembrance of events important to the fate of the city and the frequently dramatic lots of those very monuments. Examples of monuments well rooted in city symbolism certainly include the unusual Mermaid Monument realised in 1939 by Ludwika Nitschowa. The monument, unveiled during a modest ceremony and without publicity just before the outbreak of the Second World War, survived the hard time of the German occupation, becoming one of the few symbols giving strength to the inhabitants returning to the devastated and bloodless city. But knowledge of the history of this monument enables us (although today only an insignificant part of Warsaw inhabitants fully realise it) to appreciate the somehow dual symbolism of the Mermaid Monument. Not long ago, Małgorzata Baranowska referred to it (1998: 95):

*The model for Ludwika Nitschowa's Mermaid was a young poet, Krystyna Kraheńska (1914–1944), who died in the Warsaw Uprising five years later. She fought for that bronze maid and for herself. The mermaid remained, just wounded, and its various symbolic meanings also include that of having the face of a participant in the Warsaw Uprising. Neither invaders nor anyone else realised it. The Germans were less afraid of it so it escaped the fate of deliberately destroyed Warsaw monuments.*<sup>11</sup>

What is very important is that this monument of such interesting and strong symbolism does not have surroundings matching its importance (thus confirming the continuation of the strange ‘city turning its back to the river’) nor ‘does it participate’ in the patriotic custom of Warsaw inhabitants. Nonetheless, as one may believe that, based on numerous publications, it retains its leading position among numerous mermaid images depicting the capital city emblem (Grochowska 2000: 84-103).

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<sup>11</sup> A fine biography of Krystyna Kraheńska was published by Maria Marzena Grochowska and Bohdan Grzymała-Siedlecki (1996).

One patriotic site erected in a prestigious place because of its close relation to national history and national functions performed is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Piłsudski Square. The characteristics of the tomb were most aptly recently defined by Wiesław Jan Wysocki (2000: 7):

*... This form of a soldier's tomb – the Homeland Altar – features evidence of a soldier's oath fulfilled, a sign of loyalty to the Republic, and at the same time symbolic identity with each soldier's tomb and war cemeteries from so many battles of our thousand-year-long history. It was erected to glorify Sacrifice and Heroism, which are known and named, yet remain nameless. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is also evidence of the moral rights of the state to freedom and life in a sovereign state...*

Therefore, it may be said that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier symbolises fully Polish armed action in defence of the state and the fight for independence during the nation's enslavement. All the other patriotic sites refer to defined periods of our history (e.g. a complex of buildings associated with the Warsaw Citadel, the Pawiak Prison Museum), events (e.g. the Monument to the Heroes of the Warsaw Uprising), facts of mass repression of the nation (e.g. the Umschlagplatz Monument, the Monument to the Fallen and Murdered in the East, the Monument to the Martyrs of the Communist Terror in Poland in the years 1944–1956), or, to finish, historic characters. Among numerous patriotic sites appearing in Warsaw public space, I would like to mention only two sites which, featuring exceptionally strong symbolism, are of unusual importance now for shaping the contemporary liberation ethos. One of the sites functions in the sacred sphere (Tomb – Monument to Father Jerzy Popiełuszko at St. Stanisław Kostka Church in Żoliborz), the other – the Monument to the Polish Underground State and the Home Army – in the profane sphere but in a very important, prestigious part of Warsaw, just next to the Sejm buildings [For You, Homeland 1999].

Within the remembrance sphere, of exceptional nature are the monuments and commemorative plaques documenting the fight and extermination of the Jewish community. At the moment, at over 60 sites (mainly in the district of Muranów), we can read about the great tragedy of the Jews (Ghetto... 1999: 155-171); most meaningful is the Route of Remembrance of the Fight and Martyrdom formed by 19 memorial sites marked with black syenite blocks.<sup>12</sup> It

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 169-170. The route was created according to a design by Z. Gąsior, S. Jankowski and M. Moderau in 1988 – on the 45th anniversary of the ghetto uprising.

should be noted that in the next few years, along the Route, opposite the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, a Museum of the History of Polish Jews will be erected.

***Patriotic custom – ceremonies.*** Numerous ceremonies associated with historic anniversaries are held at patriotic sites. Mere presentation of the schedule of these ceremonies held in Warsaw would require a significant volume of this publication. Generally, almost every month in the capital may play the role of ‘national remembrance month’, from January (anniversary of the start of the January Uprising) to December (anniversary of the first mass execution during the German occupation, anniversary of the martial law of 13 December 1981). Undoubtedly however the following holidays and anniversaries feature extremely extensive agendas and are certain of mass participation of Warsaw inhabitants. 1 August (anniversary of the start of the Warsaw Uprising), 15 August (anniversary of the ‘Miracle at the Vistula’), 1 September (anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War) and 11 November – Independence Day. Let us see which patriotic sites are included in the scenarios of celebrations of only one of the holidays – Independence Day. Gradually since 1989, Independence Day has been enjoying ever greater popularity; not only do state and military authorities observe it in an appropriate setting (Independence Day..., 2003: 77-95, 125-135) but also individual city districts celebrate it more and more widely. Apart from masses, patriotic song concerts, exhibitions, Independence Day races and rallies and swimming competitions, there are marches to monuments and other patriotic sites. And so, in 2004, apart from the official changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier attended by top state officials, the city inhabitants were invited to march to the monument to the Polish Underground State and the Home Army near the Szym. Moreover, wreaths and flowers were placed in the district of Wawer at the monument to Józef Piłsudski and in Żoliborz (‘under boulders commemorating the anniversary of recovery of independence’)<sup>13</sup> at the Sokolnicki Tower. The day before Independence Day official delegations (including government authorities of the capital city of Warsaw and of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship) placed wreaths and bouquets of flowers in the Execution Gate of the Warsaw Citadel.

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Rzeczpospolita’ daily no. 264 of 10-11 XI 2004, p. 20 (press release).

*Casual actions – remembrance.* For several years after 1989 there were few initiatives of this type. Overwhelming and aggressive advertising (also large format adverts) of strictly commercial nature practically prevented, for instance, presentation of posters of patriotic content (reminding the people of national anniversaries). Scout alerts organised from time to time (e.g. associated with commemorating the famous Action at the Arsenal) did not meet with any wide social or media response. The years were definitely dominated by ceremonies which – although in the spirit of independence – appeared too official and standard to a significant part of the people. Recent years may indicate a possibility of a significant breakthrough within this sphere of public activity. One of the most interesting examples of activities aimed at raising and restoring historic remembrance of the city inhabitants is for example the latest event during which, in memory of the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, youths put 1,000 simple crosses with lamps and small white and red paper flags at selected sites where the Uprising fighters died. What is more, Varsovians were reminded of the time of the Uprising by a lamp shining on top of the Warsaw Uprising Mound for 63 days (from 1 August to 2 October) and furthermore, near the Old Town, scouts lit lamps at sewer manholes.

Worth remembering is also the more and more frequent appearance of more or less successful outdoor attempts to reconstruct historic events. For some years now, they have been enjoying ever greater popularity and attracting numerous spectators. They appear to have an ever greater impact on the interests of the capital city inhabitants in the history of the city and Poland. It is good to mention at least several of the most spectacular events of this type. For some years now (1998, 2001, 2002), events have been staged related to Józef Piłsudski's coming to Warsaw (on 10 November 1918) while in 2004 quite successful attempts were undertaken to reconstruct battle scenes: first, inhabitants of Warsaw were shown a fragment of Polish-Soviet battles in the Old Town of April 1794. (Warsaw Insurrection), then the 1994 Warsaw Uprising battles in the district of Wola and, finally, in November, the capture of the Arsenal by the insurgents in 1830.

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When we look at the barely analysed problem of historic remembrance and shaping historic sites from a slightly longer time perspective, we will discern that during the 'people's rules' (1944/45–1989) Warsaw was for political and

ideological reasons shaped to be a centre of dominating industrial features which were to provide the social and professional structure of the city with a working class majority, that is the so-called 'leading power of the nation'. Within the 'national remembrance' sphere this meant the firm will of the authorities to realise monuments, obelisks and commemorative plaques referring above all to the traditions of the workers' movement. After 1989, political changes but also the city's entry into a post-industrial development phase, enabled gradual transformations within Warsaw public space. In most general terms, it may be said that new patriotic sites to an ever greater extent personify the traditions of independence suppressed by the Communist regime and show respect and do justice to those historic characters the nation was supposed to forget during the era of the People's Republic of Poland. But most recent history (after 1945) found its symbolic expression in the form of monuments and plaques to commemorate the victims of communist crimes, including hundreds of Poles repressed during the Stalinist era. What is interesting and surprising is that Warsaw does not have within its public space any patriotic sites related to the events of 1970 and 1980–81 or devoted to the victims of the martial law of 13 December 1981.

In the case of Warsaw, further documentation and research – from the point of view we are interested in here – should be conducted in parallel in two directions: 1) full inventory and preparation of a special publication generally available to the city inhabitants and other interested parties (e.g., an atlas of patriotic sites);<sup>14</sup> 2) conducting studies and analyses related to the symbolism of patriotic sites, the role of these sites in shaping historic awareness of the city inhabitants, and culture-creating importance of patriotic sites. The nature of possible further research, ethnological or sociological works associated with patriotic sites as important elements of the city symbolic space but also of significance to the process of shaping contemporary cultural identity of our city appears to be indicated by a fragment of a recent statement of Dariusz Gajewski (director of 'Warsaw' of 2003) in the context of commemorations related to the lots of the city inhabitants during the German occupation, including those associated with the Warsaw Uprising:

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<sup>14</sup> With respect to the years before the Second World War, one may indicate an interesting attempt of a similar study, see: S. Sempołowska (et al.), 1938 (p. 201-276, section entitled 'More important buildings and sites commemorated in the years 1788–1792, 1794, 1830–1831, 1860–1864, 1904–1906, 1918' – with a map of Warsaw). On the other hand, among the numerous publications of recent years, the 'Warszawskie Termopile' [Warsaw's Thermopylae] series ought to be deemed some kind of an example setting the correct direction of documentation and popularisation works.

... *Uprising fighters cannot find themselves here as it is not theirs anymore; theirs ceased to exist during the war. Supposedly everybody knows that but it is hard to accept it emotionally. And understanding Warsaw without this knowledge is not possible... We live here for years and do not think about it, and this is the case when the city has another in it – the destroyed one...* (quote from: Sańczuk, Chaciński, Skolimowski 2005: 215)

On the other hand, various forms of commemorations in the public space – both in the sacred and profane spheres – will make it possible to organise anew the life of inhabitants in a destroyed and then restored city now aspiring to play the role of one of the most important European metropolises. In further research into this significantly important cultural process let us use – as some kind of inspiration – current remarks of humanists learning and still discovering Warsaw anew. Here is one more such remark which, in that respect, inspires ethnologists or cultural anthropologists:

... *what layers of horror do we tread every day, nobody could sleep here peacefully. The dead would not let us fall asleep... Death in Warsaw does not evoke thrills of emotions or ill fascination but has been domesticated, involved in ordinary routine (...)* (Zielińska 1995: 180-181)

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