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ONE IDEOLOGY, TWO VISIONS.

CHURCHES AND THE SOCIALIST CITY, EAST BERLIN AND WARSAW – 1945-1975.

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In this presentation sacred architecture in rebuilding war damaged cities during the the period 1945-1975 is discussed, starting with a short look at the postwar reconstruction of Minsk and Magdeburg as socialist cities, followed by a look at East Berlin and Warsaw. This presentation is an adapted version of the paper presented at the conference *State (Re)construction in Art in Central and Eastern Europe 1918-2018* in Warsaw 2018. We will look at the first three decades of rebuilding the nation after the end of the Second World War. 1975 was a pivotal year. It was the European Architectural Heritage Year, shifting the heritage values regarding religious buildings from the traditional religious connotations towards the important values of education and economy, including tourism, and the year the German Democratic Republic adopted the Denkmalschutz Gesetz in the DDR, heralding a change, a growing awareness of the significance of historic buildings including sacred architecture.

Introduction.

At the end of the Second World War in May 1945 two capitals were in ruins. The war had destroyed much of Europe. Cities and towns had been bombed or damaged in combat. Some buildings were even calculatedly dynamited and burned down. As the Nazis retreated historic buildings, in my home country especially the church towers, were targeted and detonated. Severe combat damaged the German capital until the final days of the war. But nothing compares to the intentional destruction of Warsaw in scale or determination. Built heritage was targeted and intentionally destroyed, churches were deliberately damaged, demolished, dynamited. Demolition is an intentional transformation of place.

A comparison of both capital cities in the first three decades after the war reveals a remarkable and perhaps unexpected discrepancy regarding the treatment of historic places of worship, notably churches in the city centre.

POST WAR REBUILDING

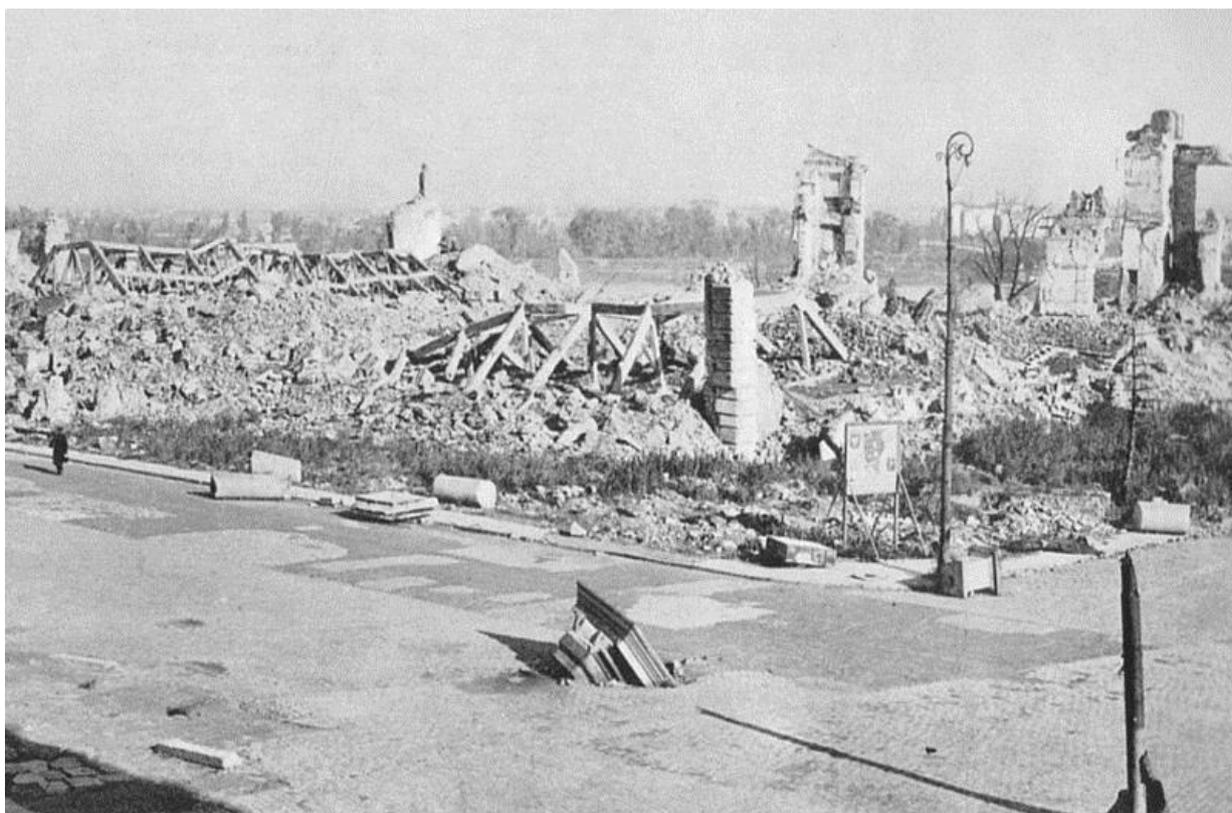


Figure 1 Warsaw Royal Castle in 1945.

The first three decennia after the defeat of Nazi-Germany are typified by the rebuilding of Europe. East Berlin and Warsaw were reconstructed as capitals of newly established states. This reconstruction was not in the conventional understanding of the concept, it was not a restoration of a situation prior the war, instead reconstruction in a socialist understanding was a transformative rebuilding according to the Marxist/Leninist ideology. They were reconstructed as socialist cities.

In architectural theory the concept of the socialist city is an example of the ideal city. The ideal city is the architectural reflection of a utopian society as constructed by theorists. Plato

in his Republic first explores the notion of the ideal city and Thomas More introduced the notion Utopia in his publication of the same name published in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century.

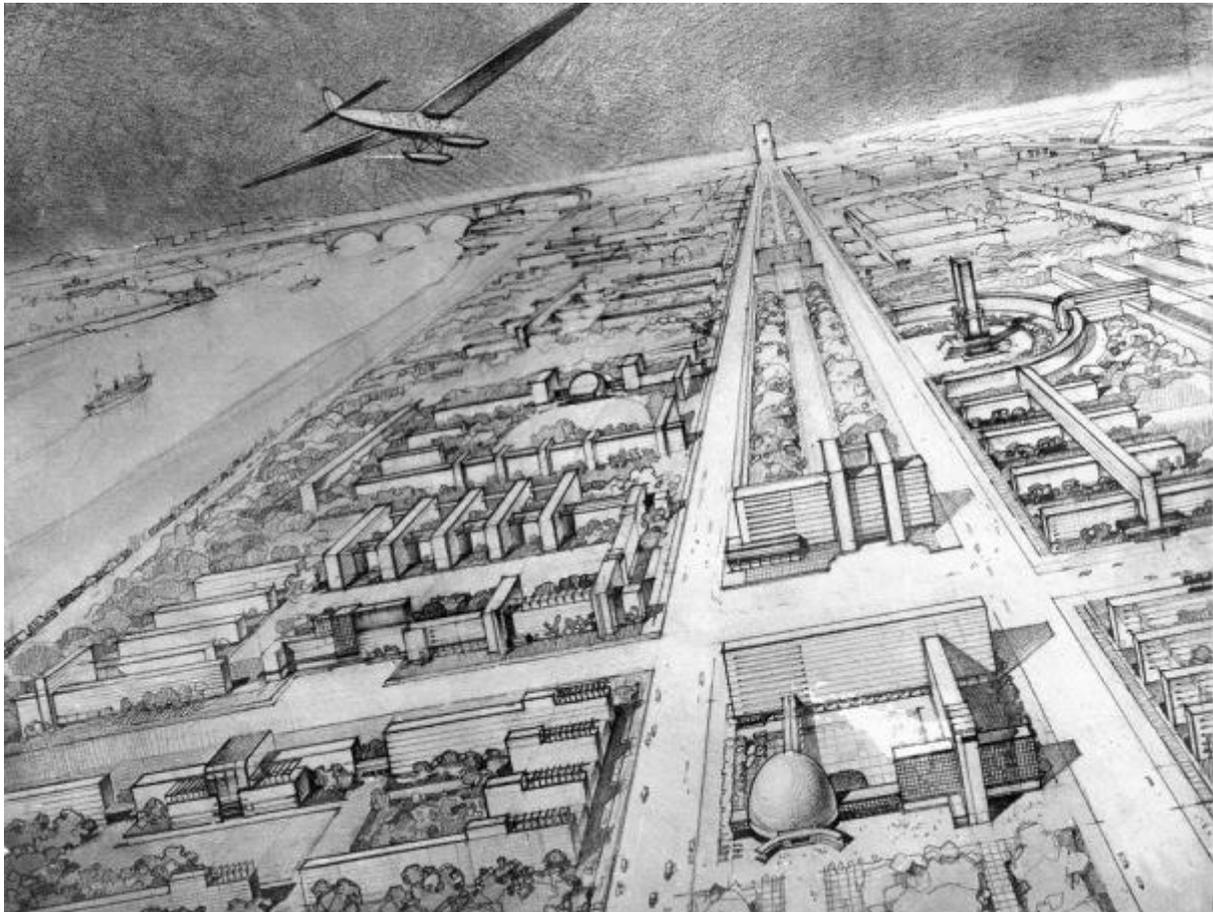


Figure 2 Sokogorod

The socialist city is an ideal city for a Utopian society in the tradition of the theorists. An attempt in shaping a new society, anchored in the belief architecture can influence behaviour and architecture should represent society. And the creation of a stage in architecture and urban design for daily life and for public events.

The concept of the socialist built utopia developed in the decades of the Interbellum and is heavily influenced by Modernist ideas. The socialist city or Sokogorod, a contraction of socialisticskij gorod [Russian : socialist city] wants to shape society by design. This society is egalitarian and collective. It is a rational place and an objective place. Industrialisation is an

essential part of its planning. Public buildings reflect the new society and the new order. Building the socialist city is constructing a new environment to accommodate the new society.

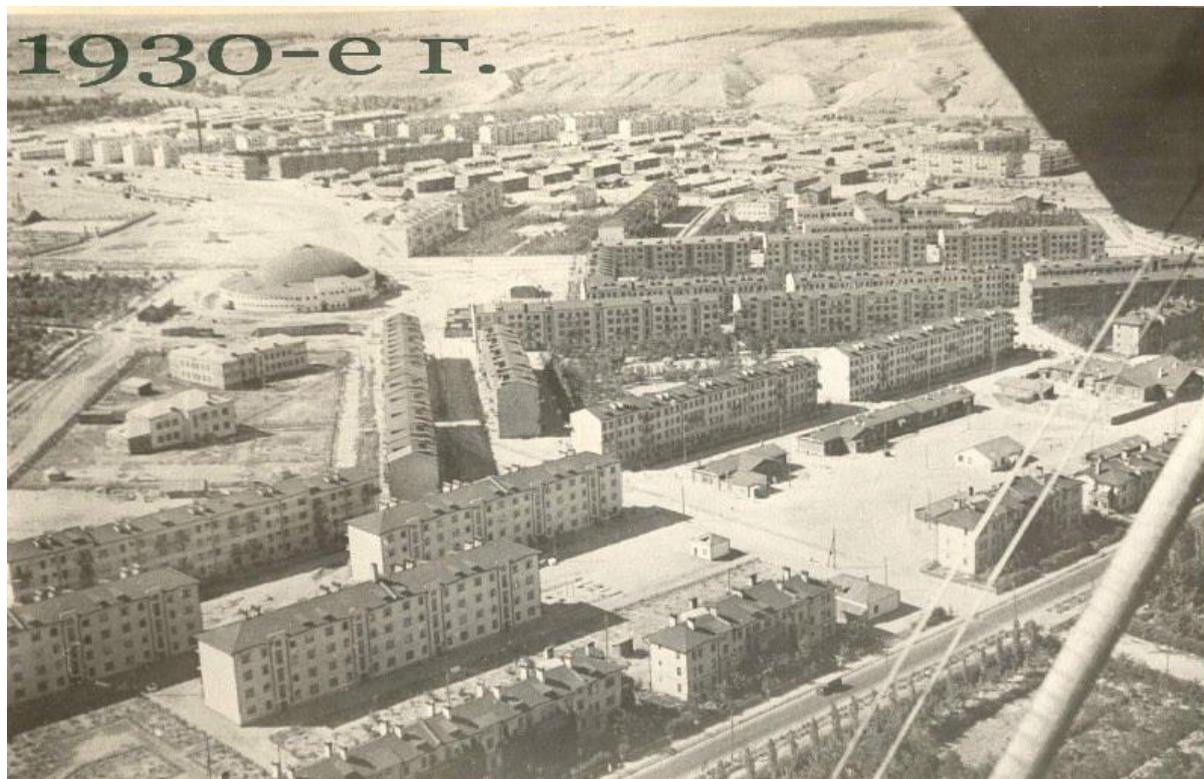


Figure 3 Birdseye view of Traktorozavod, Soviet Union 1930.

Traktorozavod district in Stalingrad built in 1930 is an example. The principles of the Socgorod were ideal for the construction of new foundations. There are some new cities constructed as socialist utopias. In the German Democratic Republic the new town of Stalinstadt, later renamed Eissenhüttenstadt, is an example. This was a new planned city, as a Tabula Rasa.

For existing cities, however, it was different. Implementing the ideals of the socialist city imply a transformation of the existing urban landscape adapting the urban fabric to the envisioned ideal.



Figure 4 Reconstruction of Minsk.

The destructions of the Second World War provided an opportunity to construct a socialist utopia. The cities of Minsk in Belarus and Magdeburg in Germany are examples. Minsk, Belarus, was damaged during the Second World War, when it was occupied by the Nazis. Reconstruction (Rekonstrukcija) of the destroyed Minsk was not the recreating of the previous city but the development of a new one.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-2008-0041
Foto: Nerling, Dr. | Ivärz 1943

Figure 5 The remodelled Dominican church of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Minsk, before demolition.

Reconstruction implied a transformation as the historic centre was redesigned according to the ideologies of the state. An industrial city with a central axis and a central square for political manifestations and the representation of the state. For churches, which have no future in the ultimate destination of the communist state, there were three possibilities : demolition, mutilation, or conservation. Conservation typically indicated reuse. The [Krasni Kastjol] *Красні костёл*, or Red Church, was reused as a cinema. The Jesuit church and *cathedral of the Holy Virgin* was until 1990 the [Dom Fizkulturnika] Дом физкультурника or gym. In reshaping the identity of the new Minsk, the towers of the Jesuit church had to disappear from the urban landscape. The façade was architecturally merged with the surrounding buildings and the interior of the church reshaped as a sports facility. Located on the central Ulica Lenina, or Lenin street, this prominent building was removed from view.



Figure 6 Cathedral of the Holy Virgin, Minsk, before mutilation and merge with new buildings during the socialist reconstruction of the city in the 1950s.

The church of the [Dominikański Manastir] Доминиканский монастырь, the [Kastjol Swetowo Phoami Akwinskowo] Костёл Святого Фомы Аквинского, was first adapted, reducing its religious appearance. In 1950 it was demolished and replaced by the central square honouring Stalin. Today there are plans to reconstruct this baroque building. Reconstructing Minsk as a socialist city was reducing the presence of religious buildings in the appearance of the urban landscape.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-28478-0002
Foto: Biscan | 21. September 1954

Figure 7 Construction of the new Magdeburg with the church of St Ulrich.

The re-construction of war damaged Magdeburg in the German Democratic Republic was similar. After the second World War the city became part of the Soviet Zone of Occupation and part of the German Democratic Republic in 1949. In 1952 Magdeburg became Bezirkstadt or provincial capital. Reconstruction of the damaged city was done according the guidelines of The Sixteen Principles of Urban Design. The new socialist centre needed a central square and a new main axis and in planning this new centre churches were destroyed and the St John's [St Johannis] church retained in the urban landscape as a mutilated building, a relic of the past. This new central square was part of a complete redesign of the city.

The gothic church of *Saint Ulrich and Saint Levin* was pulled down in 1956. St Levin or Livinus of Ghent is a witness of the Flemish migrants that had moved here in the twelfth and early thirteenth century. In the early sixteenth century the parish church played a role in the Reformation and is considered one of the first urban parishes to adopt Lutheran Protestantism. The building was pulled down in 1956. Today this part of the new socialist centre is renamed Ulrich Platz after the church.

Renovation on the church of the Holy Ghost had started in 1948 and in 1950 the church was again used for worship. The location of the church, however, hindered the progressive reconstruction of the new city centre. In March 1959 the church of the Holy Ghost was closed for worship and pulled down in May that year. *Saint Catherine's* church was located in the middle of [Breiter Weg] Broad Street, the old main street. The gothic church had been founded the Archbishop of Magdeburg in 1230. The typical double tower front dated from the fifteenth century, the spires were renovations of the seventeenth century. Urban reconstruction of Magdeburg envisioned the rebuilding of the northern part of Broad Street in a modernist way. In 1964 the nave of the building was dynamited and in 1966 the towers were pulled down. The modernist House of the Teacher, a new and socialist tower, replaced the medieval church as a new *Stadtdominante*, as dominant building in the urban landscape.



Figure 8 Ulrich Square, location of the former St Ulrich and Levin church, Magdeburg

The oldest parish church of Magdeburg is *Saint John's* [St Johannis] founded in the tenth century. The church was damaged during the air strikes during the Second World War (of 28

September 1944 and 16 January 1945). In 1953 rubble was removed and in 1956 a flat roof was built over the vaults. In 1961 access to parts of the building was restricted by the Building Police. In 1968 the church became property of the municipality, (which started renovation of the outer wall between 1975 and 1977. The southern tower was opened as a viewing platform in 1980.)

The documentary film of 1983 called “ Magdeburg – gestern und heute” from the ARD series “Bilder Deutsche Städte” shows the mutilated, ruinous church of St Johan at the margins of the socialist boulevard Wilhelm Pieck Allee, today Ernst Reuter Allee.



Figure 9 Left, St Johann's Church. Right, Demolition of the University Church in 1968, Leipzig

Also Leipzig was in part re-constructed as a socialist city, with at the centre the Augustus square renamed after Karl Marx. The historic university church was pulled down in 1968 – the building had been not damaged during the second World War. Five years earlier the tower

of St Johann's church had been pulled down, a prominent structure at the end of a broad street leading towards the Augustus square, a Stadtdominante in the vicinity of the Karl Marx Square. A new tower was built as dominant structure of both the square and the city : the university tower by Henselmann of 1968-1972, today the City Hochhaus.

Religious buildings were removed from view in other parts of Leipzig as well, the Catholic Church of Trinitatis near the New Town Hall, or the Andreaskirche on the Karl Liebkechtstrasse.

Reconstruction of cities during the first post-war decades was reshaping identity.

Reconstructing Minsk was considered a socialist achievement of postwar rebuilding and was represented abroad as a model city, for example in the booklet presented at the Soviet pavilion during the World Exhibition of Brussels in 1953. Postwar rebuilding in the socialist state is a redesign of the city centre to reflect state ideology. The double objective of reshaping the urban landscape and the appearance of architectural ensembles is reducing religious presence and shaping society. A secularization of the urban landscape. Religious buildings that had been dominant in the urban landscape for centuries were pushed away from their prominent place in the city to the edges.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-12896-0003
Foto: Sturm, Horst | 9. Dezember 1951

Figure 10 Walter Ulbricht and a model of socialist reconstruction

In 1949 East Berlin formally became the capital of the German Democratic Republic, the DDR, a new state and a socialist state. Like many towns and cities in Europe Berlin was damaged during the Second World War and a rebuilding was required. The re-construction, however, was mostly the shaping of a new city for a new society. Rebuilding East Berlin became the construction of a new capital of a newly founded state, the recently established DDR. Re-constructing East Berlin became an instrument for a state identity and shows how the capital of the DDR wanted to present itself to the world.

The Soviet sector of the divided Berlin included Berlin Mitte, the historic centre of the former Prussian capital. In the centre was the City Palace with next to it the Lutheran Cathedral, rebuilt by the last emperor William II. Mitte is an urban landscape where historic churches were shaping the appearance of historic Berlin. In 1950, a year after the founding of the new state, guidelines for Urban Design in the DDR were adopted. Using these principles a new city was shaped, remodeling the German capital into a socialist Utopia

From Die Sechzehn Grundsätze des Städtebaus, or The Sixteen Principles of Urban Design, (27 June 1950).

1 The city as a form of settlement did not arise by chance. The city is the richest economic and cultural form of community settlement, proven by centuries of experience. The city is in its structural and architectural design an expression of the political life and the national consciousness of the people.

6 The center forms the veritable core of the city. The center of the city is the political center for its population. In the city center are the most important political, administrative and cultural sites. On the squares in the city center one might find political demonstrations, marches and popular celebrations held on festival days. The center of the city shall be composed of the most important and monumental buildings, dominating the architectural composition of the city plan and determining the architectural silhouette of the city.

9 The visage of the city-that is, its individual artistic form-shall be defined by squares, main streets, and prominent buildings in the center of the city (in those largest cities containing skyscrapers). Squares and plazas shall serve as the structural basis for the planning of the city and for its overall architectural composition.



Figure 11 Alexanderplatz socialist re-construction. Above centre the church of Saint George



Figure 12 Schinkel's brick church, neglected and disused, blocked from view by a new socialist edifice

The day after these sixteen principles were adopted the demolition of the Berlin city palace began. This was part of the reconstruction of the socialist capital with squares and main streets, for celebrations and parades and a show case for the German Democratic Republic.

In 1959 Henselmann, at the time the state architect, presented his model for the capital city of the DDR, with a striking new TV tower as central visual point in the location of the demolished City Palace- the Stadtschloss- and a void were the Lutheran Berliner Dom was. Ultimately the Berliner Dom was not demolished, however, and remained neglected until renovation began in 1975.

As it were a new design was put over the existing fabric of the city. The historic centre was replaced by a gargantuan Marx Engels Forum, and a new axis towards the east was erected, the Stalin Allee. Existing dominant buildings that were not suitable for the desired image of the DDR were pulled down. The prominent buildings of the socialist city, as described in the Sixteen Principles, were related to the common man, and that is ideally a non-religious man.

(Constructing the future is erasing the past.)

The George Church with its tall spire, the tallest in all Berlin, standing on what is now a corner of Alexander Platz square was pulled down. This demolition was a clear political and ideological act and intended to erase the presence of religious buildings from the urban landscape, a structure dominating Alexanderplatz and its vicinity. In 1964 the other tall spire in Berlin Mitte, that of the Petri church, was pulled down.



Figure 13 Pulling down the tower of Saint George's Church, Alexanderplatz, Berlin Mitte.

In 1953 during the inauguration of Stalinstadt, today Eisenhüttenstadt, first secretary of the GDR and SED chairman Walter Ulbricht spoke words that expose the underlying idea of this annihilation: *„Ja! Wir werden Türme haben, zum Beispiel einen Turm fürs Rathaus, einen Turm fürs Kulturhaus. Andere Türme können wir in der sozialistischen Stadt nicht gebrauchen.“* [English : Yes, we will have towers. For example a tower for the townhall and a tower for the house of culture. Other towers are not needed in the socialist city.]

This so-called [Turmrede] Tower Speech by Walter Ulbricht discloses some of the ideology behind the demolition of churches. In Berlin Mitte, the historic centre, a dozen churches were demolished and many others were kept as ruins.



Figure 14 The Nicolai church in Berlin Mitte in 1982.

The Garrison church was demolished in 1962, the Luisenstadtchurch in 1964, the Dorotheenstadtische church in 1965. The Bohemian or Bethlehem church in Mitte was built between 1735 and 1737 to accommodate the protestant migrants from Bohemia. It was a centrally planned house of worship with a dome designed by Diterichs. Burned during the Second World War the walls remained largely intact. In 1954 the building was demolished. Other places of worship remained in a neglected or ruinous state. The Klosterkirche, the Nicolai kirche and the two domes on Gendarmenmarkt, erroneously called French and German cathedrals, were left ruined and neglected.

The last demolition that took place in the period 1945-1975 was the pulling down of the [Denkmalskirche] Memorial chapel of the Lutheran cathedral, the Berliner Dom, in 1975.

In comparison, in West Berlin in the period 1949 to 1975 about thirty damaged churches were renovated and some sixty new churches were built. The Gedächtniskirche, remodeled by Eiermann, even became a symbol for West Berlin, and the post war churches of this isolated city can be considered its finest built heritage.

The built environment in East Berlin was purified of its religious buildings, an intentional transformation of the historic centre. As the symbols of the historic city were demolished a new city emerged. The new centre with the Fernsehturm, the TV tower, and the Marx Engels Forum. In the near vicinity of this new central area there is of course the [Marienkirche] Saint Mary's Church, dwarfed by the enormous tower advocating progress. This was what Ulbricht had meant with towers in the socialist city. Other historic churches near the Forum such as the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche/church, the Nicolai Kirche/church and the Kloster Kirche/church were left in ruins. Kloster Kirche is still in ruins today and the Nicolai Kirche remained in ruins for most of the period of the DDR, reconstruction only began in 1980.

Demolition of religious buildings such as towers was one way of *shaping* the socialist capital, the others were intentional ruins or the blocking of buildings from sight. Both examples were found near the Palace of the Republic in the new heart of this socialist capital. This palace of the people, a prominent building reflecting the political life, replaced the old city palace. Opposite of this people's palace on the other side of the enormous new square is the red brick church by Schinkel, the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche, which would have been clearly visible from the steps of the new Palace. The solution was to obscure it from sight by placing a modern building in front of it, tall enough to completely eclipse it.



Figure 15 Above, Bethlehem Church in Berlin Mitte, demolished in 1954

This is a good example of how religious heritage was erased from sight, if not from memory. A new building was placed before this historic church, tall and wide enough to completely obscure it from view. In the appearance of the new centre of East Berlin this church was intentionally blocked. A transformation of place. Next to the Palace of the Republic was the Lutheran Cathedral, or Berliner Dom, in its existing form built by Kaiser William II. It is a building that is symbolic for not only the dominance of the protestant faith in this part of Germany, but intended as a Lutheran counterpart of St Peter's in Rome. This enormous building was ruined during the war and remained visibly damaged symbolic for the ruinous state of the Ancient Order. Gradual restoration only began in 1975, the year, as mentioned before, that marked the arrival of the *Denkmalschutz Gesetz* in the GDR. Gradual renovation of neglected and ruined churches began, however, often for a new purpose. The

Friedrichswerdersche Kirche - a museum gallery – is a fine example. [It was restored for the 750 years Berlin celebrations of 1987 and reopened as part of the National Gallery (Nationalgalerie)]



Figure 16 View from the TV tower with a ruined Nicolai church.

The transformation of East Berlin from the historic capital of Prussia and of Imperial Germany, but also of the Third Reich, to that of the DDR is the formation of a new image. As formulated in The Sixteen Principles, and confirmed in the Tower Speech, the urban design of the city in this socialist state meant the shaping of a built environment representing the new society and political order. This included the removal of towers from the architectural silhouette of the city, and the removal of historic churches in the architectural composition, a secularization

of the cityscape by demolition or by blocking them from sight. In the new composition of the city the church could only remain as a relic of the past, a ruin symbolic of the collapse of the Ancient Order, such as the ruinous Berliner Dom in juxtaposition to the new Palace of the People and dwarfed by the enormous TV tower. A socialist identity was constructed.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-J2029-0007-#
Foto: Brüggmann, Eva | 29. Oktober 1970

Figure 17 The city centre of East Berlin in 1970 after socialist re-construction.



Figure 18 Reconstruction of Warsaw. The ruined Church of Saint Alexander (right) was reconstructed to its original designs.

WARSAW. RECONSTRUCTING THE POLISH CAPITAL.

The reconstruction of Warsaw could have been much like that of Minsk. Exceptionally large parts of the historic fabric of the city was reduced to rubble. A reconstruction in a socialist understanding as the transformative building of a new place would have been reasonable. The reconstruction could have been like that of East Berlin. Like the German Democratic Republic the Polish People's Republic was a newly created state of which Warsaw was the official capital since its establishment in 1947.

UNESCO says about the reconstructed Warsaw on its website :'' *The city was rebuilt as a symbol of elective authority and tolerance, where the first democratic European constitution, the Constitution of 3 May 1791, was adopted. The reconstruction included the holistic recreation of the urban plan, together with the Old Town Market, townhouses, the circuit of the city walls, the Royal Castle, and important religious buildings.*''

These important religious buildings are the cathedral, the churches and monasteries. However, not only in the historic centre were churches rebuilt.

The rebuilding of the Polish capital followed the intentional demolition during the Nazi occupation in 1944. Before the total annihilation by the German occupier, plans to transform Warsaw from the capital of Poland to a German provincial town had been adopted. The so-called Pabst Plan which spoke of - Der Abbau der Polenstadt und der Aufbau der Deutschen Stadt – the dismantling of the Polish city and building of the German city - had already been presented in 1939. The war did not develop as anticipated and in 1944 a total destruction was no longer intended as a stage to transformation to a German provincial town but now as annihilation of the Polish capital. A desperate act of anger. Looking at the figures of destruction about 90% of all historical monuments were destroyed. The Royal Castle was wrecked on 4 September 1944. The cathedral of St John was bombed in August 1944 and what had remained was blown up a few months later. The list of religious buildings that were annihilated is disturbing.

This state of a heavily damaged city would have given the planners an opportunity to develop a new capital according to the socialist ideology. As we have seen above, in the transformative re-construction of historic places to a socialist utopia religious buildings were erased or mutilated, and occasionally ruined churches were kept as trophies.



Figure 19 Reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Saviour



Figure 20 The Church of Saint Casimir in Nowe Miasto, Warsaw. Above left, ruined after World War II. Above right, reconstructed. Below, painting by Bernardo Bellotto.

The situation in Warsaw, however, was very different. The establishment of two offices for the reconstruction of what was destroyed was meaningful. The BOS— Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy – or Office for the Reconstruction of the Capital was founded in 1945. A masterplan for the rebuilding of historic Warsaw was presented in 1949, which included the rebuilding of Stare

Miasto, Nowe Miasto and of the Royal Route. For the socialist regime in Poland, however, the reconstruction of ecclesiastical buildings remained problematic in the broader plan of rebuilding the Polish capital. This attitude of distrust is seen in the adapted reconstruction of profane buildings. Religious symbols were not reproduced. A depiction of the Lamb of God of instance was substituted by a Boar, the Mother of God substituted by Diana the goddess of hunt, and the omnipresent symbol of the all-seeing eye was replaced by a flower basket (examples). The rebuilding of the churches and their towers was not without complications, with discussions ranging from placing a cross on top of the spires to giving new functions to these buildings.

In July 1947 the Rada Prymasowska Odbudowy Kosciolow – the Primate Office for the Rebuilding of Churches – was founded. This office helped financing and coordinating the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical buildings.

The Archiepiscopal cathedral was rebuilt between 1948 and 1956. Old photos show the exterior of the cathedral prior its destruction, however, the architect Zachwatowicz chose an idealized gothic state of the façade. In 1957 the Jesuit church was rebuilt in a simplified version and the completion of St Martin's church followed in 1958. The medieval Church of the Visitation was reconstructed by arch Beata Trylinska. St Casimir's is a wonderful historic church on the New Town Market square. It was reconstructed, with a reduced interior, between 1947 and 1953.



Figure 21 Interior of Saint Martin's Church, Warsaw Stare Miasto, before and after re-construction

The exteriors were typically scientific accurate evocations of the original, with the cathedral as an exception, the interiors were frequently simplified versions of the predecessor. Saint Martin in Old Town, close to the cathedral and the Royal Castle, is one of many examples.

The previous ecclesiastical buildings were all part of the reconstruction of the historic centre. But also in other districts of Warsaw churches were renovated. St Florian's Cathedral is located in Praga, a district on the other bank of the river Wisla /Vistula not far from the Orthodox church and the Zoo. This Gothic revival church was dynamited as an act of pulling down identity. The church was gradually rebuilt from the 1950s onwards and finally completed in 1972. Its two spires dominate the area and can be seen from the square between the royal castle and the church of St Anne. A similar story is Holiest Saviour in the eponymous square, another church with two slender spires. These were renovated and became part of the architectural ensemble. As such they are clearly visible in the urban landscape surrounding the Constitution Square, one of the main urban constructions of the socialist period in Warsaw. These four ecclesiastical towers defy a tower doctrine as postulated by Walter Ulbricht.



Figure 22 Saint Florian's Cathedral in Praga, Warsaw, rebuilt between 1950 and 1972

ST ALEXANDER

The most interesting of all reconstructions of religious buildings in Warsaw is that of St Alexander's in South Central City. This pantheon inspired building clearly illustrates the value of a church as a symbol, a meaning exceeding that as a place of worship. It is again Jan Zachwatowicz who pressed for a reconstruction of the church to the original design by Christian Piotr Aigner, and not for the rebuilding of the pre-war situation. For Warsaw, the neoclassical architecture once promoted by King Stanislas Poniatowski became an architectural style for national identity.



Figure 23 The Church of Saint Alexander Above, situation late nineteenth century. Below, situation in 2017..

The church of Alexander is associated with the Constitution of 3 May 1791, the first democratic constitution in Europe. To commemorate the adoption of this constitution Poniatowski planned the construction of a memorial, the Temple of Divine Providence, designed by Jakub Kubicki. St Alexander's Church is regarded the replacement for the never accomplished temple project.

Buildings such as the Church of St Alexander in the classical appearance were fitting in what can be regarded the desired image of the state capital. And the intended representation of the socialist regime as successors of the 3 May 1791 Constitution.

CONCLUSIONS.

Concluding.

After the Second World War, East Berlin and Warsaw were redesigned as capitals of newly established socialist states. A capital is a stage for state ideology, the architectural appearance a platform for manifestations and celebrations, the urban landscape a setting for social and political life. Both cities were severely damaged during the war and were rebuilt during the post-war decades. The official state ideology of the Polish people's Republic and the German Democratic was similar and directed from the Soviet Union, however, the interpretation of how to shape the new capital was very different in relation to historic sacred architecture, the difference in approach towards ecclesiastical architecture is interesting.

In shaping the identity of East Berlin as capital of the German Democratic Republic, the place of religious buildings was that as a relic of the past. In the transformative re-construction of to a socialist capital city, the principle city of this Utopian Society, religious architecture is erased from sight and from memory. Towers were pulled down, historic churches demolished or blocked from view. A nation was intentionally disconnected from its heritage.

The war damaged Lutheran Cathedral, the Berliner Dom, was left in ruins, in opposition to the new socialist Palace of the Republic and dwarfed by the enormous new Fernsehturm, the TV Tower. A powerful image of triumphant socialism.

The rebuilding of Warsaw by the socialist regime, is regarded an attempt to claim the role of hero, as Nicholas Bethell once claimed, a symbol of patriotism. Some scholars speak of a Polish Ideology of preservation, an approach advocated by Professor Jan Zachwatowicz. The reconstruction is always an adapted version of the original, the rebuilding after intentional destruction only makes the building more significant, as additional layers of meaning that contribute to heritage values.

Last year during the conference << Religious Heritage : Europe's Legacy for the Future >> at UNESCO, the function of reconstructed religious buildings as symbols for a community was discussed. Historic churches represent communities regardless denomination or conviction. (I think of the moving presentation by Lejla Hadzic about restoring a mosque in Bosnia)

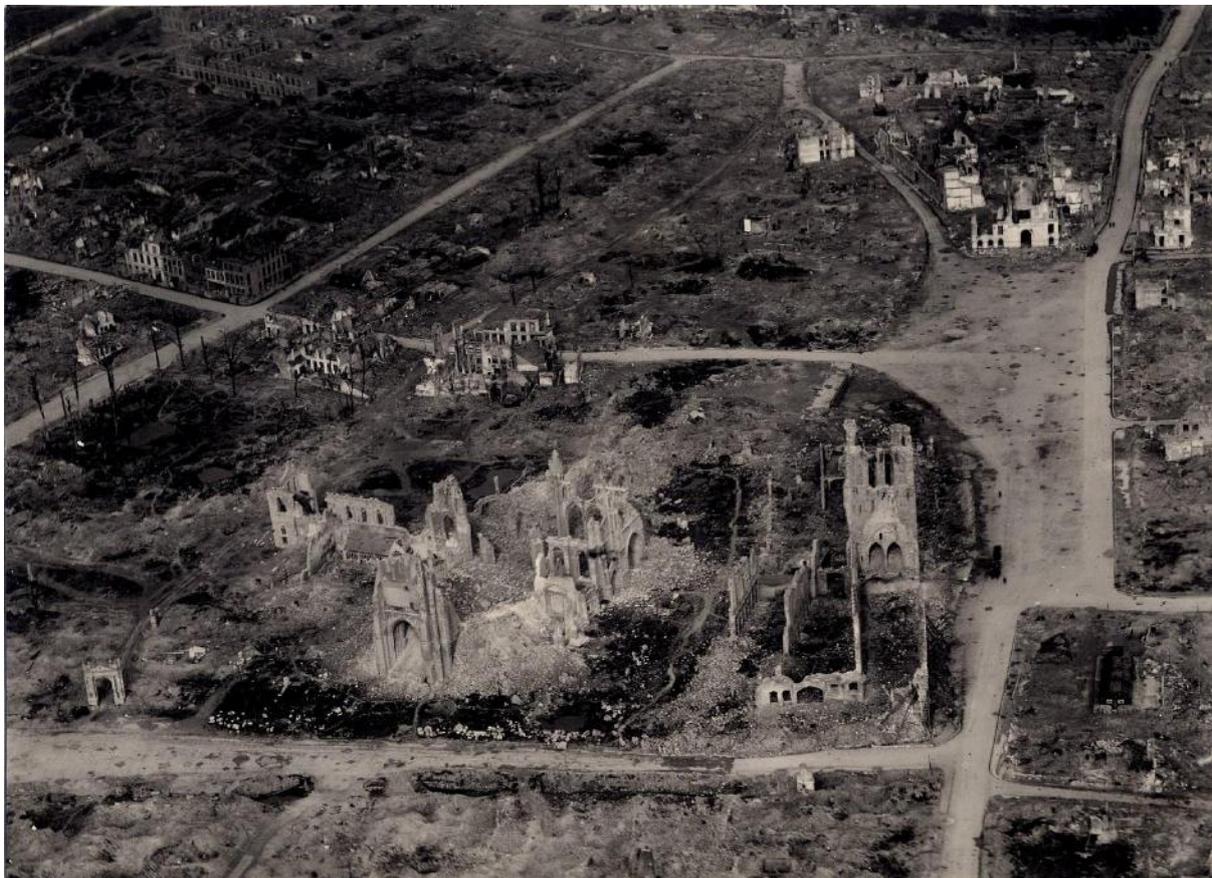


Figure 24 Ypres, Belgium, in 1918.

Last year we commemorated the end of the First World War. During this war the medieval city of Ypres in Flanders was annihilated. Rebuilding Ypres has been described as warfare against its demolition. It rose from the ashes seemingly as if nothing had happened. But the

place was transformed. The reconstruction of Warsaw is like that of Ypres. It represents the rebuilding of a nation.

In Warsaw, the religious buildings were reconstructed as part of the shaping of a state identity. It is the spirit of Warsaw as the capital city of an independent Polish State that was reconstructed. The reconstructed Warsaw represents an idealized version of the Polish capital, the creation of identity. The Church of St Alexander in Three Crosses Square is a perfect example. Reconstructing this building to its state prior the remodeling during the later nineteenth century must be understood as premeditated. Rebuilding churches becomes an act of not only legitimizing the Polish People's Republic, as a the lawful successor of the independent Poland and an heir of the state that adopted the 3 May 1971 constitution.. The rebuilt churches of Warsaw represent the connection between a city and a nation with its heritage.

And I believe this is what Jan Zachwatowicz – one of the principle architects of the reconstruction of Warsaw- once said : *" We will not allow to desert our cultural monuments. We will rebuilt them from scratch, und pass them unto next generations, if not authentic form, however, a in truthful and living form."*



Figure 25 Church of Saint Alexander seen from Nowy Swiat in 2017.

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