

CHANGES IN POLISH HISTORICAL MEMORY AFTER 1989 AND THE IMAGE OF THE INTER-WAR PERIOD



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SUMMARY. The article analyzes changes in the Polish politics of memory after 1989 with a specific emphasis on the image of the interwar period. The restitution of the interwar statehood traditions which took place in the years of political transformation is described. The image of the Second Polish Republic was widely used in various memory aspects: from the formation of commemorative landscape by renaming the streets and erecting monuments, to the revival of political figures and ideas, the models of international relations, and the manifestations of the image in popular culture.

KEYWORDS: politics of memory, transformation, the Second Republic of Poland.

History and historical images have always played a very important role in the Polish society and public spheres as, for example, commemorative landscape¹. Naturally, the creation of historical images changed during the periods of transition, which, like in the most of the Central Eastern European countries, took place at least three times during the 20th century. In the case of Poland, we have to distinguish the independent Polish state, called the Second Republic of Poland, which existed in the inter-war period, the Polish People's Republic created by the communist forces after the Second World War, and, finally, the Republic of Poland, known as the Third Republic, existing after 1989. The aim of this article is to analyze the changes in the Polish politics of memory² that took place after the collapse

¹ The article is written according to the research project "Central and Eastern European Region: Research of the Construction of National Narratives and Politics of Memory (1989-2011)" – VP1-3.1-ŠMM-07-K-02-024 – sponsored by the Programme for Human Resources Development for 2007-2013 "Support to Research Activities of Scientists and Other Researchers (Global Grant)".

² In Poland, the term "politics of memory" occurs only as an equivalent to the term "politics of history" (polityka historyczna) that was introduced to the Polish public sphere at the beginning of the 21st century, as a loan translation from German (Geschichtspolitik). The concept of "politics of history" was associated with one political project of the Fourth Republic (by the party "Law and Justice", See: *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – Program 2005, IV Rzeczpospolita: Sprawiedliwość dla Wszystkich 2005*, p. 110 (<<http://www.pis.org.pl/doc.php?d=unit&id=3>>) (12.12.2013)). "Politics of history" was broadly discussed (and still is) with respect

of the communist regime in 1989, with a specific focus on the image of the inter-war period in memory construction. Also, the question of relations with neighbors and attempts to negotiate the existing narratives with the chosen neighbors are discussed.

The politics of memory in contemporary Poland is sometimes regarded as a reflection of the debate that took place in the Second Republic of Poland, characterized as a dialogue between the followers of Henryk Sienkiewicz and Stefan Żeromski. The first wanted that history would raise the national spirit, the other preferred that history would “rub salt into the national wounds, that they could not skin over with the knavery”³. The origin of these two camps can also be traced back to the 19th century clash between the romantic and the critical positivist traditions in the Polish literature, which were used as the main tools for creating historical narratives in a society without its own independent country. After 1989, the main political parties agreed on the primary direction for the development of the Polish state – the democratic reforms and the “European and Euro-Atlantic” direction. However, there was no agreement on the portrayal of the communist past and on the assessment of the events that led to the fall of the communism⁴. This disagreement, similarly to the situation after 1918, provoked endless political discussions on history and influenced the collective memory of the Poles. Put more simply, the romantic and the positivist visions of history are reflected in the two dominant parties on the political scene of the last decade: the former vision being most commonly visible in the program of “Law and Justice” (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), the latter in that of “Civic Platform” (Platforma Obywatelska), which has ruled the country since 2007. However, this distinction has manifested relatively recently and is still not very clear⁵.

The restitution of the name of the country (or rather the erasing of the adjective “people’s” in the name), took place on the 29th of December, 1989. From this time onward, in journalism and in historiography, the country has been called the Third Republic of Poland, as a continuation of the Second Republic. In this way, a new

to bring the term into the academic sphere. The discussion was related with the traditional dispute of Warsaw and Krakow schools. Gradually, after public discussions, the terms “politics of remembrance” or the “culture of remembrance” came into use. The use of a particular term often has a political undertone. On searching for the Polish definition: Stobiecki R. *Historians Facing Politics of History: The Case of Poland. Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism in Central Europe After 1989*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008 (<<http://books.openedition.org/ceup/1600>>) (16.01.2014); Korzeniewski B. Wprowadzenie, *Narodowe i europejskie aspekty polityki historycznej*, ed. B. Korzeniewski, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 2008, p. 7-28.

³ Kurski J. Wprowadzenie. *Pamięć jako przedmiot władzy*, ed. P. Kosiewski, Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, 2008, p. 7.

⁴ Ochman E., *Post-Communist Poland – Contested Past an Future Identities*, London – New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 6.

⁵ Polska polityka historyczna. *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 2006, nr. 5, p. 19.

independent narrative, although not legalized according to the juridical categories, began. On the other hand, this category can be found in one legal act. In the preamble to The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of the 2nd of April, 1997, written by the late Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a direct reference to the statehood tradition can be found: “We, the Polish Nation – all citizens of the Republic (...) recalling the best traditions of the First and the Second Republic”⁶. This reference not only reflects the legal and ideological continuity of the state, but also this formula in the supreme law shows the importance of the inter-war Poland in the Polish memory. The reference to the independent state and the inter-war period is rather unique. Similar references in the supreme act can only be found in the modern constitution of Estonia (“(...)state, which is established on the inextinguishable right of the people of Estonia to national self-determination and which was proclaimed on 24 February 1918”⁷), Lithuania (though the Lithuanian case refers to the “legal foundations on the Lithuanian Statutes and the Constitutions of the Republic of Lithuania”⁸) and, if we would consider the Czechoslovakian state as the “product” of the inter-war period, the Czech Republic (“We, the citizens of the Czech Republic in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, at this time of the reconstitution of an independent Czech State, true to all the sound traditions of the ancient statehood of the Lands of the Crown of Bohemia as well as of Czechoslovak statehood”⁹).

The Polish constitution also defines the politics on memory of the country “[Nation – TB] is obliged to bequeath to future generations all that is valuable from our over one thousand years of heritage, (...) Mindful of the bitter experiences of the times when fundamental freedoms and human rights were violated in our Homeland”¹⁰. The Supreme Act was adopted only in 1997. We can say that at this time, the image of the Polish past, at least in the basic sphere of commemorative landscape, was already reconstructed, and the Polish politics of memory had come out from the phase that we may call an “active decommunisation” of the public sphere and the past, as most of the signs constituting the public space, such as street names, parks, squares, and halls¹¹ were changed at the beginning of 1990’s. It is estimated

⁶ The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April 1997. (<<http://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm>>) (15.11.2013).

⁷ The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia entered into force 3 July 1992, (<<http://www.president.ee/en/republic-of-estonia/the-constitution/#sthash.OsrG05LB.dpuf>>) (15.11.2013).

⁸ The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania came into force on 2 November 1992. (<<http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Constitution.htm>>) (15.11.2013).

⁹ Constitution of the Czech Republic of December 16, 1992. (<<http://www.hrad.cz/en/czech-republic/constitution-of-the-cr.shtml>>) (15.11.2013).

¹⁰ The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April 1997.

¹¹ A recent case that can be considered as a process of decommunization is especially interesting. One of the most impressive architectural landmarks in Wrocław – *Centennial Hall*, opened in the German city of Breslau in 1913 in commemoration of the centenary of the Battle of Lipsk in 1813 and the Prussian victory over

that between 1989 and 1993, about 30% of place names were changed¹². However, this process is still ongoing, as in some, usually, smaller, cities we can still find names glorifying the communist past. The situation provokes constant political discussions, which particularly intensified after the elections of 2005 won by the right-centered “Law and Justice”¹³. The Second Polish Republic left its mark on the “decommunization” of the public sphere in Poland. First, the heroes of the period found their place in the toponymy of the cities – streets named after the heroes of the communist Poland were renamed, often returning to the names used before the war¹⁴. The most popular names that came into usage were “Józef Piłsudski” (118 across Poland) and “the 11th of November” (Niepodległość) (57).¹⁵ In the top of 10 new names, we can also find “Independence” and “Józef Haller”¹⁶.

The Polish Parliament, the so called the Contract Sejm, elected on the 4th of June, 1989, was the first in the Eastern Block to officially condemn the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact (the symbolic end of the inter-war period when Polish autonomy was violated by adopting a special resolution on the 23rd of August, 1989)¹⁷. At the same time, on the 50th anniversary of the pact, the three Baltic States organized the “Baltic Chain”, one of the most important events in the collective

Napoleon, was renamed to *People's Hall* (Hala Ludowa) in 1945. The name was used till 2006, until it was listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site under the original name (with an argument that the object is more known outside Poland under its original name), what provoked huge discussion – which is better, the German or the communist heritage? Maciejewska B. *Spór o nazwę Hala Strulecia*, (<<http://wroclaw.gazeta.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,4214910.html>>) (23.12.2013).

¹² Kula M. *Nosiłki pamięci historycznej*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2002, p. 127. Elżbieta Hałas, analyzing the changes in street names after the communism, shows, that 80% of all the changes that took place during the decade of 1989-1998, were made in the period of 1989-1991, with the peak in 1990 (54% of all changes). Hałas E. *Polityka Symboliczna i pamięć zbiorowa. Zmiany nazw ulic po komunizmie, Społeczeństwo polskie po czterdziestu latach transformacji*, ed. M. Maroda, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2004, p. 131.

¹³ One of the biggest problems in the administrative changes is finances. The local communities are aware that mass change of street names can be destructive for the budget. Recently, several projects of law on decommunization of public sphere have been proposed in Polish Sejm. The first was the De-communisation of Public Space Bill in 2007, which was scheduled for reading in the parliament just before its dissolution. The recent one, from 2012, has stated that the names „cannot memorize persons, organizations, events or dates symbolizing communism or other totalitarian system“. According to the governmental estimations, the cost of executing the law can mount to several millions of zlotys. Ferfecki W. *Rząd za dekomunizacją*, (<<http://www.rp.pl/artykul/1054084.html>>) (27.12.2013). More on the 2007 project: Ochman E., op. cit., p. 76-79.

¹⁴ Wykaz zmian nazw alei, mostów, osiedli, parków, placów, rond i ulic w Krakowie. (<http://kmk.krakow.pl/artykul_nazwy_ulic.html>) (27.12.2013).

¹⁵ Hałas E., op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁶ The case of Józef Haller (1873-1960) as a subject of memory and political consciousness is very interesting, especially in comparison with J. Piłsudski. J. Haller as a character was used by the Polish right in the interwar period as an opposition towards J. Piłsudski. Joseph's name day (19th of March) had a non-official status of the national holiday, as the main part of the country was celebrating this day as Piłsudski's day. The right-centered national democrats, who dominated the Polish political life in the western parts of the country or in Pomerania were gathering to celebrate Haller's name day.

¹⁷ Clines F. X., *Poland Condemns Nazi-Soviet Pact*. (<<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/24/world/poland-condemns-nazi-soviet-pact.html>>)(16.11.2013).

memories of the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians¹⁸. In Poland, the exposé of the first non-communist Prime Minister, the above-mentioned T. Mazowiecki, in which the phrase “We separate the past with a thick line. We are responsible only for what we would have done to get Poland out the current state of collapse” had a greater impact on the collective memory¹⁹. Later on, the term “thick line” became a symbol of Polish transformation, but not in its original sense of reforms on the economy, but in the historical aspect of the term, which was regarded as a policy of unwillingness of judging the communistic regime by lustration and decommunization²⁰. In 1995, the post-communist Aleksander Kwaśniewski won the presidential election over the Solidarity hero Lech Wałęsa with the slogan “Let’s choose the future” (*Wybierzmy przyszłość*). This was a rejection of reckoning with the past in order to consolidate the achievements of transition and to combine all their efforts to build a better future for the following generations²¹.

The year of 1989 brought pluralization of remembrance which manifested on both horizontal (political) and vertical (rediscovery of the local, regional and national past) levels. At the same time, we can observe a negation and contestation (or at least ignorance) of positive and heroic historical narratives, a skeptical approach to the national pride and sacrifice of patriotism. This concentration on the negative aspects of the past runs counter to the traditional function of any national memory, which should recall the nation’s martyrdom and triumphs in order to support the very foundations of national legitimacy and national existence²². Criticism of the Third Republic’s record on memory work resulted in a strong negation of critical patriotism, especially in the Polish right-wing political scene, which emphasized the lack of patriotism and national unity²³. This resulted in the project of the Fourth Republic that was defined as a political program of “Law and Justice” and aimed to build strong historical identity of Poland, bringing up the national pride with an open contradistinction to the pan-European identity²⁴. A particular attention was

¹⁸ Finally, the symbolic end of the inter-war period was designated in 2008, by the European Parliament as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.

¹⁹ Another strategy of renaming the public spheres was honoring the people and events connected with the Second World War and post-war times that were officially forgotten during the People’s Republic. E. Ochman, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁰ This term is used in this meaning in the *See. Ochman E., op. cit.*, p. 17.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 14.

²³ The core of the new approach was the remembrance about the Warsaw Uprising, ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

²⁴ The complex idea of the Fourth Republic as was defined in the pre-electional brochure: *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – Program 2005, IV Rzeczpospolita: Sprawiedliwość dla Wszystkich 2005*.

paid to changing the outside image of Poland and promoting the Polish contribution in the collapse of the communism²⁵.

With respect to the earlier times, especially at the beginning of political transformation, we can find a romanticized vision of the pre-World War II era, which idealizes everything that was before the communism and the values that were destroyed by the Second World War and the times of the People's Republic²⁶. However, there also existed a critical approach built during the communist time to serve the ideological position. According to this approach, the inter-war Polish state was a symbol of an undeveloped state with weak economy, ruled by the bourgeoisie. Of course, this image was constantly changing in People's Poland, from a very harsh straight after 1945 to a milder version after 1956²⁷. Even after 1945, the traditions of the independent Second Republic could not be erased from the social memory or at least neutralized. As a result of the opposition to the communist rule, a common reception of the image was opposite to the official one, often glorifying the Second Republic, just because it was a free Polish state and an antithesis to the People's Republic²⁸.

The discussion over the heritage of the Second Republic was especially problematic. The heritage was displaced in consideration to the territory of the country. The "Jagiellonian" image of Poland rooted in the East, and the role of the country in the Eastern Europe, was hardly compatible with the mono-ethnic and "Piastian" tradition of Poland between the rivers of Oder, Vistula and Bug. The heritage of the "Piastian" and the "Jagiellonian" visions can be seen as a state of Polish politics that Jerzy Giedroyc defined as the shadow of two coffins: Józef Piłsudski's and Roman Dmowski's²⁹. Both of them were the constructors of Polish independence, in 1918. However, as a result, two different visions and two different political standards were to be implemented at the same time. This clash, and a model of two Polands exists in the modern public discourse as well as in the historiography, where we can find

²⁵ For example, the change of the Polish image is a main goal of the international conference "Recovering Forgotten History: The Image of East-Central Europe in English Language Textbooks", organized by The Institute of Civic Space and Public Policy, established in June 2006 at Łazarski University in Warsaw. K. Łazarski, *Przywracanie zapomnianej historii: czy wizerunek Polski w świecie może być zmieniony*, *Arcana*, 2013, nr. 4-5, p. 33-56.

²⁶ Maciorowski M. *Chcieliście Polski no to ją macie*, *Ale Historia Extra*, 2013, nr. 3, p. 3.

²⁷ Malczewska-Pawelec D. Pawelec T. *Rewolucja w pamięci historycznej. Porównawcze studia nad praktykami manipulacji zbiorową pamięcią Polaków w czasach stalinowskich*, Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas; Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 2011, p. 253-274.

²⁸ Habielski R. *Przeszłość w sferze publicznej i życiu kulturalnym 1989-2005 (Obszary zainteresowań, interpretacje, nośniki)*, *Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, ed. P. Skibiński, T. Wiścicki, M. Wysocki, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2011, p. 90.

²⁹ Mencwel A. *Dwie trumny wiecznie żywe*, (<http://www.teologiapolityczna.pl/dwie-trumny-wiecznie-zywe-prof-andrzej-mencwel/#p,4>>) (11.12.2013).

historians supporting the camp of Piłsudski on the one hand, and the camp of Dmowski on the other. Unfortunately, we cannot find a sphere in which those two groups find a place for discussion.

In disputing about the visions, professional historians cannot be forgotten. It can be claimed that the inter-war period was a popular object of research in the early nineties. The Polish historiography had to revise the ideological theses of the local narratives, as well as myths created by historical emigration narratives, constructed without archival material support. The early nineties were a unique period for researches, when most of the “eastern” archives became available for free, but not unlimited research (the situation changed later, especially in Russia). In the new situation, the post 1989 historiography was able to uncover loads of “blank spots” in the contemporary history³⁰.

The situation in historiography has not been transmitted to the public sphere and did not become an object of broad discussions and critical analyzes. Neither the recent anniversaries of 1918 and 1939, neither the 20th anniversary of the Third Republic, which was a perfect time to compare both “twenty years” of the independent Polish state, did not provoke broader discussions³¹. However, we can find some “anniversary” events³², as, for example, a book edited by Krzysztof Persak and Paweł Machcewicz, “Dwudziestolecie”, published by The Museum of Polish History in Poland as the first part of the series on Polish history in the 20th century³³; an exhibition “Between the Wars: the Faces of Modernity” organized by the same museum, described as “the first cross-sectional exhibition about the Second Republic”³⁴. In 2006, a new academic handbook on the Polish interwar period was published by the historians from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Czesław Brzoza and Andrzej Leon Sowa³⁵; in Warsaw, new works on the Polish literature of the interwar period were published³⁶. In 2013, as a result of collaboration of the publishing houses “Bellona” and “Edipresse Polska”, 22 volume series

³⁰ Brzoza Cz., Sowa A. L. *Historia Polski 1918-1945*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006, p. 11.

³¹ Wójcicki K. *Jaka pamięć o Drugiej RP jest nam potrzebna? Skutki uboczne amnezji*, <<http://kazwoy.wordpress.com/2012/05/31/jaka-pamiec-o-drugiej-rp-jest-nam-dzis-potrzebna/>> (18.11.2013); idem, Friszke A., Wójcicki K. Państwo wobec historii [voice in debate], *Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, p. 17, 21.

³² Polish Parliament declared 2008 as the year of independence, and on the 5th of November issued the anniversary resolution. *Monitor Polski* (M. P.), 2008, nr. 14, poz. 145. Uchwała w sprawie ogłoszenia roku 2008 Rokiem Niepodległości; M. P., 2008, nr. 85, poz. 748, Uchwała w sprawie uczczenia 90. rocznicy odzyskania przez Polskę niepodległości.

³³ Persak K., Machcewicz P. *Dwudziestolecie. Polski wiek XX*, Warszawa: Bellona, 2009, 340 p.

³⁴ *Dwudziestolecie: oblicza nowoczesności = Between the Wars: the Faces of Modernity*, ed. M. Matwiejczuk, A. Kosińska, R. Kostro, Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2008, 166 p.

³⁵ Brzoza Cz., Sowa A. L. *Historia Polski 1918-1945*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006, 754 p.

³⁶ *Dwudziestolecie 1918-1939: odkrycia, fascynacje, zaprzeczenia*, ed. A.S. Kowalczyk, T. Wójcik, A. Zieniewicz, Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 2010, 459 p.

“Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne” (Inter-war period) by a popular writer Sławomir Koper³⁷ were released.

The actualization of the politics of memory under the government of “Law and Justice” and the presidency of Lech Kaczyński, resulted in huge popularization of history, which can be observed in various spheres. On the 3rd of May, 2007, a public television Telewizja Polska S.A. (Polish Television) launched a new channel: TVP History (TVP Historia). A huge turn can be seen in the market of popular historical magazines. Quite recently, the only popular historical magazine used to be a monthly released “Mówią Wieki” (The Centuries Speak). The magazine was edited by professional historians from 1958 till 1990s. Also, some magazines had regular columns on history. After 2006, the market has increased several titles³⁸.

The main cause of the mentioned lack of discussion on the inter-war period is the change of research policy with respect to the contemporary history. From the beginning of 21st century, in Poland, the research on the communist period has received a lot of attention; thus the research on the inter-war period was pushed aside. The Polish politics of memory shifted from liberal to conservative model³⁹. These changes are related to the establishment of the Institute of National Remembrance in 2000, which was based on the Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation that existed from 1945 (till 1989 it was devoted to the research of the Nazi Crimes in Poland)⁴⁰. The Institute concentrates on the period of 1939-1990, i.e. from the fall of the Second Republic till the rise of the Third Republic, and includes both research institute and prosecution powers. From the establishment of the Institute, we can observe the process that can be called as an institutionalization of memory. Also, an association of the term “memory” with the contemporary history of the occupation and the People’s Poland can be observed⁴¹. Increased attention to the contemporary history of Poland overshadows the image of the Second Republic and diminishes public discussions, thus leaving the topic to the academic sphere⁴².

³⁷ Koper S. *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, t. 1–22, Warszawa : Bellona, Edipresse, 2013.

³⁸ At the end of 2013, we can find on sale the following publications, most of them derived from the most popular daily or weekly magazines: *Pomocnik Historyczny* (issued from 2006, irregularly, started as a supplement to weekly *Polityka*, nowadays quarterly), *Focus Historia* (monthly from 2007), *Newsweek Historia*, (monthly from 2011), *Ale Historia* (from 2012 as a supplement to daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*); *Ale Historia Extra* (individual publication, irregular from 2012); *W sieci historii* (defined as the “the monthly of victorious history”, from 2013); *Nasza historia* (monthly from 2013, printed in 8 local variations for different regions, edited by the local titles of Polska the Times group).

³⁹ Dudek A. Historia i polityka w Polsce po 1989 roku, *Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Official name of the institute defined by the law is “Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation”. Ustawa z dnia 18 grudnia 1998 r. o Instytucie Pamięci Narodowej – Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu. Dziennik Ustaw (Dz.U.), 1998, nr. 155, poz. 1016.

⁴¹ Dudek A. Historia i polityka w Polsce po 1989 roku, *Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, p. 47-51.

⁴² Friszke A. Państwo wobec historii [voice in debate], *Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, p. 21;

Of course, the lack of analysis does not mean the lack of remembrance. The period of the Second Republic was present in different spheres of the Polish memory. The Third and the Second Republics are interrelated in different ways: Lech Wałęsa, the first democratically elected president, straight after giving an oath on the 22nd of December 1990, received the presidential insignia from the last president of Poland in exile Ryszard Kaczorowski. This fact strengthened the resurgence of the image of state traditions. First, the direct recall of the interwar period in the political images should be mentioned: the image of Marshal Piłsudski was widely used in the creation of political image of Lech Wałęsa during his presidential term. This relation was not only present in the image which stressed and compared Wałęsa's role in regaining the independence of the state. Wałęsa, as well as Piłsudski, was seen in the Polish society as a romantic hero. However, this relation can be connected only with Wałęsa as an anti-communist fighter, whose presidential term had debunked this image⁴³. A direct recall of inter-war is evident in the foundation of Nonpartisan Bloc for Support of Reforms (Bezpartyjny Blok Wspierania Reform) established by the president Wałęsa in 1993. The Polish acronym – BBWR – of the founded organization was the same as the abbreviation of Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem) which existed in 1927-1935 as a “non-political” organization, founded by the marshal J. Piłsudski after the coup d'état in 1926 to support the Sanation regime. In both cases, the “non-partial” organizations had to create the party that was to support the authority in rule. While in the case of Piłsudski, it helped to strengthen his rule after the coup d'état, in the case of Wałęsa, it was the beginning of the fall of his active political career.

With respect to the public sphere, a similar situation as with the street names can be observed in the symbolic sphere of new monuments⁴⁴. The cult of the Marshal Piłsudski is evident: monuments commemorating the marshal were erected (sometimes restored) in the most significant public spaces. For example, in Warsaw, exactly in the very center of the Polish capitol since 1989, even two monuments of Piłsudski were erected: the first in 1995, near the Piłsudski's square (the former Victory square) and the second in 1998, near Belvedere. Dmowski had to wait to be memorialized in this form till 2006, whereas the monument was received with

⁴³ Biskupska K. *Pamięć społeczna w zwierciadle języka. Analiza dyskursu pokolenia przełomu*, Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2011, p. 106-119.

⁴⁴ Demolishing the monuments as a part of transformation of collective identification was a simpler process than the toponymic changes, started straight after the political changes in 1989. The most spectacular were demolition of the monument to Feliks Dzierżyński on the Bank Square in Warsaw, that took place on the 16th of November 1989, and the statue of Vladimir Ilich Lenin in Nowa Huta, the district of Krakow, on the 10th of December 1989. Approximately, 2000 monuments were removed by 1993. Kula M. *Nośniki pamięci historycznej*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2002, p. 209, Nijałkowski L. M, *Polska polityka pamięci, esej socjologiczny*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa akademickie i profesjonalne, 2008, p. 124-125.

controversial discussions and was devastated several times. An interesting situation is seen in the West Polish city of Poznań, which, as all of the territories that were under the Prussian rule during the times of partitions of Poland, was traditionally very critical towards the rule of Sanation regime, and was dominated by the national democrats. After 1989, Piłsudski was commemorated by memorial table on the City Hall as well as giving his name to one of the streets. Only a minor street outside the city center was given Dmowski's name⁴⁵.

Another important factor of the politics of the remembrance is various commemorations. At first, two national holidays of the Second Republic were restored. The day of the Constitution of the 3rd of May (commemorating the declaration of the first written European Constitution of 1791)⁴⁶ was restored by Sejm on the 6th of April, 1990⁴⁷. The Independence Day on the 11th of November was restored by the Parliament of People's Republic on the 15th of February, 1989⁴⁸. From 1992, on the 15th of August, together with one of the biggest Catholic Church feasts of the Assumption of Mary, the Armed Forces' Day is being celebrated to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Warsaw in 1920⁴⁹. This decision can be regarded as a restoration of the traditions of the Second Republic, as this holiday was celebrated on the same day from 1923 to 1939 (as a Soldier's Day). The victory over the Bolshevik forces, sometimes called the Miracle at the Vistula, is an important point in the map of the Polish memory. The Eighteen Decisive Battles of the World excessively mythologized commemorative narratives shaped by the symbolic constructs of the defeated 'hordes of Bolsheviks' and crushed 'troops of Antichrist'. The Battle of Warsaw operates as a symbol of Poland's historical role of the defender of Western (Christian) Civilization against the barbarians⁵⁰.

Relatively recently, the Battle of Warsaw began to be manifested in popular culture. In 2011, a film by Jerzy Hofman entitled "Battle of Warsaw 1920" was

⁴⁵ Okulewicz P. Józef Piłsudski. Między apologią a odrzuceniem, *Historia – Pamięć – Tożsamość. Postaci upamiętniane pre współczesnych mieszkańców różnych części Europy*, ed. M. Kujawska, B. Jewsiewicki, Poznań: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2006, p. 262.

⁴⁶ May the 3rd became a state holiday in 1919, introduced as a first official holiday in inter-war Poland on the 29th of April, 1919 (Ustawa z dnia 29 kwietnia 1919 r. o święcie narodowym trzeciego maja. *Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego* (Dz.Pr. P. P.) 1919, nr. 38 poz. 281).

⁴⁷ Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 r. o przywróceniu Święta Narodowego Trzeciego Maja. *Dz.U.*, 1990, nr. 28, poz. 160.

⁴⁸ Ustawa z dnia 15 lutego 1989 r. o ustanowieniu Narodowego Święta Niepodległości. *Dz.U.*, 1989, nr. 6, poz. 34. Celebrating the Independence Day on the 11th of November (1918 the handover of military power to J. Piłsudski after return to Warsaw from German prison) did not have a strong tradition as a national holiday, as during the inter-war period it was usually celebrated by the military circles, gradually by the civil servants, and only form 1937 was given the status of the national holiday.

⁴⁹ Ustawa z dnia 30 lipca 1992 r. o ustanowieniu Święta Wojska Polskiego. *Dz.U.*, 1992, nr. 60, poz. 303.

⁵⁰ E. Ochman, op. cit, p. 28.

screened. The film depicts the fragments of the Polish-Soviet war in 1920. The film, originally planned for the 90th anniversary of the battle, could be regarded as a continuation (according to the critics not very successful) of the Polish historical cinema traditions. The fact that it was the first Polish film ever produced in the 3D technique, guarantees a place in the history of the Polish cinema. Other evidence seen in popular culture is the biographical TV series “Marshall Piłsudski” (Marszałek Piłsudski): a huge project, which resulted in 8 episodes released in 2001⁵¹.

Analyzing the image of the inter-war period in nowadays Poland, we cannot forget about the political project called “prometheism” initiated by Piłsudski. The project aimed to weaken the Russian empire by supporting the national movements⁵². After 1989, the Polish politicians often wanted to support the eastern dimension, e.g. the Orange revolution (A. Kwaśniewski) in Ukraine and at most, Georgia. In 2007, the president Lech Kaczyński and Mikheil Saakashvili dedicated the statue of Prometheus in Tbilisi. The statue signified the efforts of the Poles and the Georgians to achieve the independence of Georgia and of other peoples from the Russian Empire/ the Soviet Union. The activeness of the president Kaczyński in the Eastern dimension was also visible in the sphere of memory, as he was openly supporting Estonia during the conflict of the removal of the Bronze Soldier in Tallin, in 2007⁵³. In 2010, The Center for East European Studies started to publish an academic magazine “Nowy Prometeusz” (New Prometheus), devoted to the studies of the regions of the Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia. The publication was also inspired by the magazine “Prométhée” (1926-1938) and “La Revue de Prométhée” (1938-1940, which were published in Paris with the support of the Polish authorities.

While considering the impact of the interwar period to the Polish public sphere, one cannot forget the modernization of Poland with its’ symbol, Gdynia, as a new concept of the Polish modernity and sea power. In this case, it is difficult to explain the reluctance to promote this symbol by inscribing an almost fully preserved unique complex of the city architecture in the UNESCO World Heritage List⁵⁴.

⁵¹ Rozmowa z Andrzejem Trzos-Rastawieckim, reżyserem serialu „Marszałek“, 27 października 2000, (<<http://stopklatka.pl/-/6663198,rozmowa-z-andrzejem-trzos-rastawieckim-rezyserem-serialu-marszalek->>) (24.11.2013).

⁵² Andrzej Nowak refers roots of the “Promethean” idea in the political concepts of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski from the beginning of 19th century. Nowak A. *Przez Ukrainę i Kaukaz na Petersburg: początki polskiego prometeizmu, Strachy i Lachy. Przemiany polskiej pamięci 1982-2012*, Kraków: Biały kruk, 2012, p. 209.

⁵³ In 2005, as the president of Warsaw, he was criticizing the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War organized in Moscow. The leading commemorative initiative of L. Kaczyński as the president of Warsaw was the building of the Museum of Warsaw Uprising, opened on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the beginning of uprising in the occupied Warsaw, on the 31st of July, 1944.

⁵⁴ At the moment, the only complex of modernist architecture on the list is the White City of Tel Aviv, inscribed in 2003. Interest on Gdynia dropped after 1945, as Poland broadened its access to the Baltic Sea and the neighboring city of Gdańsk was joined to the country, which made it hard to compete with its architectural masterpieces.

With respect to the critical view on the Second Republic, the dangers for democracy, visible not only in the case of authoritarian regime, but also in the rebirth of the ultra nationalistic organizations, cannot be forgotten. After 1989, the revival of radical nationalistic movements, which openly stress their inter-war roots (like the All-Polish Youth - *Młodzież Wszechpolska*) or recall past images (like the National Rebirth of Poland (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*) and links to the National Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*) can be observed. On the other hand, the image of interwar socialism had not been reoriented. The workers' movement was over-glorified, even unreasonably, by the authorities of the People's Republic. In some cases, the axis decommunization was aimed not only at the communists, but also at most of the 19th century or interwar socialists⁵⁵.

After 1989, the construction of the past that was created in Poland, and the transformed narrative, or rather particular narratives experienced the narrative clash with the neighbors⁵⁶. Political conflict which existed in the inter-war period, and the scale of this conflict is evident in the fact that the Second Republic of Poland, through almost all period of its existence, had conflicts with all neighbors apart from Romania, as well as with all national minorities. During the times of the Third Republic of Poland, the most interesting processes in the bilateral relations over historical issues can be observed in the Polish-Ukrainian and the Polish-Lithuanian relations.

The main plot of the Polish and Lithuanian meta-narratives can be two different traditions of relations between the two nations and countries. On the one hand, there is a tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a "strategic partnership", common geopolitical and military project (which is topical nowadays, in the times of the information war of the Russian regime) of the early modern period. On the other hand, the contemporary tradition of the 20th century can be characterized as a multidimensional conflict⁵⁷. With respect to the memory and narratives, the inter-war Polish clash with Lithuania is still dominant and has a great impact on bilateral relations. Of course, especially topical is the Vilnius case: all the other questions touch this problem. This issue was one of the main problems while constructing the Lithuanian-Polish Friendship and Co-operation Agreement signed on

⁵⁵ For example, Julian Nowicki (1912-1936) a young activist killed by a policeman during the workers' manifestation in Toruń, in June 1936, was glorified after 1945 as the main socialist activist in the region of Cuia-via, and the member of the Polish Communist Party, while he was only a secretary of the local regional trade union, most likely non-partisan. The memorial plate in the city center was moved to the grave of Nowicki in the local cemetery only in 2012. *Julian Nowicki – okoliczności tragicznej śmierci*, (<<http://informatorium.ksiaznica.torun.pl/julian-nowicki-okolicznosci-tragicznej-smierci/>>) (29.12.2013), Golon M. Julian Nowicki, *Toruński Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 2, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2000, p. 179-182.

⁵⁶ Nijałkowski L. M. op. cit., p. 131-132.

⁵⁷ Nowak A. *Polityka historyczna III RP: reOrientacja, Historycy i politycy. Polityka pamięci w III RP*, p. 47-51.

the 26th of April, 1994. In the preamble, both sides finally “expressed regret about the conflict between both sides after the World War I, when after a long period of captivity, the Lithuanians and the Poles began to create a new independent life and condemned the use of violence which had existed in the relations between the two nations”⁵⁸. The clash of narratives defined in the Agreement (“taking into account the possibility for the two nations to interpret common history of the two states in different ways”⁵⁹) still exists in bilateral relations. However, certain positive outcomes are also present, especially in the works of the Polish-Lithuanian commission for school textbooks. In this case, we can say that real negotiations on the narrative construction are being held regularly from 1992⁶⁰.

In the Ukrainian case, the main clash can be found in the narratives of the Second World War. However, the origin of this conflict can be found earlier: the war over Lvov, the betrayal of the Petlura’s in 1920’s, and the policy towards the Ukrainian minority. The Polish policy towards the Ukrainian minority in the Second Republic is seen as a Polish pre-guilt, when evaluating the affairs of the Second World War⁶¹. This position was stressed in the “joint statement by the presidents of Poland and Ukraine on agreement and reconciliation”, made in Kiev on the 21st of May, 1997, which declared that “the tragic treats as (...) the signs of anti-Ukrainian politics of Polish authorities in 1920s and 30s”.

A commission for textbooks was also established in 1993. From 1997 till 2006, professional Polish and Ukrainian historians have joint discussions in the conferences called “Poland and Ukraine – Difficult Questions”, organized in both countries. As a result of twelve conferences, eleven volumes of conference material were published. However, only a part of the first one is dedicated to the problems of the inter-war period⁶². It seems that during the last 20 years, Poland and Ukraine have found the way of negotiations⁶³. Independent Ukraine refused the traditional anti-Polish narrative, characteristic to the narrative of the inter-war period or

⁵⁸ English translation according to: Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation of the Republic of Lithuania and Republic of Poland, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 1998, no 2 (<<http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/1998-2/Treaty%20on%20Friendly%20Relations.pdf>>) (15.10.2013).

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Kasperavičius A. P. Dvišalės Lietuvos ir Lenkijos istorijos mokymo problemų tyrimo komisijos veikla ir jos prasmė, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, 2011, t. 28, p. 172-178.

⁶¹ Often, the asymmetry of evaluations and emotions in the discussions on the Second World War is stressed, while comparing the case of the mutual blames in the Polish-Ukrainian and the Polish-Jewish relations during the war. Merta T. Pamięć i nadzieja, *Pamięć i odpowiedzialność*, ed. R. Kostro, T. Merta, Kraków-Wrocław: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Centrum Konserwatywne, 2005, p. 85.

⁶² *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, t. 1-2. *Materiały II międzynarodowego seminarium historycznego „Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w latach 1918-1947” Warszawa 22-24 maja 1997*, Warszawa: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej; Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, 1998, p. 11-66; 225-227.

⁶³ The symbol of those changes was the renovation of the Polish mausoleum at the Łyczaków Cemetery – the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów, popularly called the Cemetery of Lwów Eaglets, after the Second

the Ukrainian emigration⁶⁴. However, similar processes on the Polish side are not so visible.

This could be noticed during the biggest recent Polish-Ukrainian project - European Football Championships held in both countries in 2012. The official slogan all over the world was directly related to the discussed problem of history and memory: "Creating History Together". The slogan was used in English and Ukrainian (Творимо історію разом). However, in Poland, it was "Creating Future Together" (Razem tworzymy przyszłość). Surprisingly, we cannot find any discussions in Poland on this change. Straight after the presentation of the logotype and the slogan, the fact was commented only by the Polish minister of sport Adam Giersz: "For us, the history associates with what used to be in the past. We wanted something more creative, that is why we proposed the change of translation"⁶⁵.

Tomasz Błaszczak

LENKIJOS ISTORINĖS ATMINTIES POKYČIAI PO 1989 METŲ IR TARPUKARIO ĮVAIZDIS

SANTRAUKA. Straipsnyje analizuojami lenkų atminties politikos pokyčiai, įvykę po 1989 metų, pabrėžiamas tarpukario įvaizdis, išryškinęs Lenkijos tarpukario valstybingumo tradicijų atgimimą. Antrosios Lenkijos Respublikos įvaizdis buvo iškeliamas įvairiai – nuo memorialinio kraštovaizdžio, gatvių pervadinimų, naujų paminklų statybų iki politinių figūrų, idėjų ir tarpautinių santykių modelių atgaivinimo. Taip pat jis išplito ir populiariojoje kultūroje.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: atminties politika, transformacija, antroji Lenkijos Respublika.

World War was devastated and neglected, destroyed in the 1970s, and finally restored and reopened in 2000.

⁶⁴ On the other hand, the "Polish question" after the independence of Ukraine lost the position to the "Russian and Soviet question" in the Ukrainian history, heritage and historical consciousness of the nation. L. Zaskilniak, *Historia Polski w ukraińskiej historiografii i świadomości społecznej Ukraińców początku XXI wieku*. Materiały 17. Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich. 15-18 września 2004 r. (<<http://jazon.hist.uj.edu.pl/zjazd/>>) (29.12.2013).

⁶⁵ Hasło inne niż wszędzie. W Polsce historia źle się kojarzy, (<http://www.sport.pl/euro2012/1,127123,7362823,Haslo_inne_niz_wszedzie__W_Polsce_historia_zle_sie.html>) (30.09.2013).