

Warsaw's Architectural Community during the 1939-1944 German Occupation

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ABSTRACT

The Warsaw architectural community was the largest such group within the territory of the Second Polish Republic, a fact influenced by Warsaw's role of as the capital, the number of investments undertaken during the interwar period when the capital was being rebuilt, and the presence of Warsaw University of Technology Institute to educate new academic staff. During the occupation, this large community did not cease its professional activity. The article reviews professional activities undertaken by architects between 1939 and 1944—i.e., from the outbreak of the Second World War until the Warsaw Uprising. This subject has not been dealt with comprehensively until now. The author looks at both institutionalized works, prepared under the auspices of the City Board as part of the clandestine activities of the Architecture Faculty at the Warsaw University of Technology, as well as individual architectural projects. From the perspective of the history of Warsaw's urban design, the work of the City Board's Commission of Urban Studies Experts and the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop (Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna), which officially operated as part of the Social Building Enterprise and employed nearly eighty people at its peak, was of the greatest significance. Looking at the intensity of occupation work in Warsaw allows us to take a broader look at the history of the capital's architecture and complement it with the period from 1939 to 1944, thus preserving the continuity of the narrative about twentieth-century design.

KEYWORDS: architecture, urban planning, occupation, Warsaw, modernism

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Warsaw was home to the largest community of architects in the Second Polish Republic. This was a consequence of the city's position as the country's capital and the number of construction projects initiated during the interwar period when the capital's status was being restored, as well as the presence of the Warsaw University of Technology, which yielded new professionals. This sizable group continued to pursue its professional activities during the occupation period.

The aim of this article is to explore the professional activities of Warsaw's architects between September 1939 and August 1944, i.e. between the outbreak of the Second World War and the start of the Warsaw Uprising. I am excluding the duration of the Uprising, as its military character significantly affected Warsaw residents' mode of living, driving new forms of initiated activities.¹ Thus far, this topic has not been addressed in the form of a general overview of Warsaw's architectural community. There is, however, a need for a complete review of this professional group's work during the war. This is especially important for the overall history of Polish twentieth-century architecture, as the years-long habit of excluding that period from various reviews led to a general conviction that it was a time of hiatus, inconsequential for the post-war period. However, the years between 1939 and 1944 were at times incredibly fruitful creatively and saw a continuation of work from before the war.

Małgorzata Popiołek's book *Powojenna odbudowa ulicy Nowy Świat w Warszawie*² and the exhibition "Reconstruction Disputes", presented as part

¹ Posing an exception to the described situation were the architects Stanisław Dziewulski and Kazimierz Marczewski, who continued their works even during the Uprising. This is how another architect, Stanisław "Agaton" Jankowski, reminisced about their studio: "In the light of the expected surrender and the necessary evacuation from Warsaw, people prepared themselves for a journey towards the unknown. They collected their clothes and provisions, medications, and family heirlooms. When I arrived in the studio set up in an apartment, I found both gentlemen at work: Marczewski was just about to finish sketching a design of the 'Muranów' residential district, and Dziewulski—on a salvaged typewriter—Guidelines for the Warsaw Restoration Program, dated: 26 September 1944. Previously, on 21 September 1944, he wrote a two-page note titled 'The Need for a Territorial Reform in Cities (on the example of Warsaw).' It was a continuation of the design works on the general plan of Warsaw, conducted underground throughout the occupation by Stanisław Dziewulski, Kazimierz Marczewski, and Zygmunt Skibniewski." STANISŁAW "AGATON" JANKOWSKI: *Z fałszywym ausweisem w prawdziwej Warszawie: Wspomnienia 1939–1946* [Holding a Fake Ausweis in Real Warsaw: A Memoir 1939–1946], vol. 2, Warszawa 1996, p. 457.

² MAŁGORZATA POPIOŁEK: *Powojenna odbudowa ulicy Nowy Świat w Warszawie* [Reconstruction of Nowy Świat Street in Warsaw after the Second World War], Warszawa 2012; EADEM: *Od kamienicy do museum: Historia siedziby Muzeum Warszawy na Rynku Starego Miasta / From a Tenement House to a Museum: The History of the Museum of Warsaw's Site in the Old Town Market Square*, Warszawa 2016; EADEM: *Warsaw: A Reconstruction that Began before the War*, in: *Post War Reconstruction: The Lessons for Europe. A Symposium at the Lebanese American University, Beirut*

of the seventh edition of the Warsaw Under Construction festival organized by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw in 2015, marked the first significant attempts to spotlight the impact of the pre-war and occupation period on post-war reconstruction. The exhibition was followed by the book *Spór o odbudowę Warszawy*.³ Nonetheless, despite these publications, the war period is usually only featured in studies on post-war reconstruction to a very limited extent and often inaccurately.⁴ Considering all of the above, it is evident that there is a lingering demand for a comprehensive and thorough investigation of sources and a review of this subject matter.

The following text is based on multiple preserved memoirs written by architects and those associated with their community, such as Helena Syrkus, Kazimierz Wejchert, or the commissar mayor⁵ Julian Kulski, as well as archival materials from the collection of the State Archive in Warsaw, and drawings found in the Museum of Warsaw's collection. Recreating various career paths during the occupation period has been possible not only thanks to the memoirs of Warsaw architects, but also monographic studies of some of them, including Bohdan Pniewski, Juliusz Nagórski, and Edgar Norwerth.⁶ One source that has not yet been fully taken advantage of are the archives of institutions active in Warsaw during the war. While most of the City Board's records have been destroyed, those that have been preserved include the documents of the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop stored in the Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences.⁷ The entire material relating to the occupation period is fragmented and filled with inaccuracies (often even found in reports

2019, pp. 44–52; EADEM: *Warschau: Ein Wiederaufbau, der vor dem Krieg begann*, Paderborn 2021.

³ EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA: *Warszawa, miasto do przebudowy* [Warsaw, a City to Be Reconstructed], in: TOMASZ FUDALA (ed.): *Spór o odbudowę Warszawy: Od gruzów do reprivatyzacji*, Warszawa 2016, pp. 59–91.

⁴ One example is: ANNA CYMER: *Architektura w Polsce 1945–1989* [Architecture in Poland 1945–1989], Warszawa 2018, the first chapter of which contains information about the works of architects during the war; however, it is presented superficially and at times with factual inaccuracies, such as including projects by Maciej Nowicki in this period, while in fact they were created in 1945 within the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, or counting Piotr Biegański as a member of the Urban Planning Experts Commission.

⁵ Translator's note: This article features a distinction between a mayor (*burmistrz*) and a president (*prezydent*) of a city—terms which refer to positions governing smaller and major cities, respectively.

⁶ MAREK CZAPELSKI: *Bohdan Pniewski—warszawski architekt XX wieku* [Bohdan Pniewski—a Twentieth Century Warsaw Architect], Warszawa 2008; MAREK TOMI-CZEK: *Juliusz Nagórski 1887–1944: Monografia architekta* [Juliusz Nagórski 1887–1944: The Architect's Monograph], Warszawa 2015; TOMASZ ŚLEBODA: *Edgar Norwerth 1884–1950: Artysta i człowiek* [Edgar Norwerth 1884–1950: The Artist and the Person], Warszawa—Toruń 2018.

⁷ *Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk (APAN)* [Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences], Warsaw, III-185: *Materiały Stanisława Tołwińskiego*.

given by different architects about the same project), and undoubtedly, not all of the preserved sources, both within public and private collections, have been investigated, particularly as access to private collections is limited. Moreover, it ought to be emphasized that issues which seemingly have already been explored, such as the work of the Urban Planning Experts Commission and the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop (Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna, PAU), continue to require further studies and a detailed analysis.⁸ This especially concerns PAU, which tends to be covered very superficially, with recurring mentions of the same facts.

The overall picture of the five-year period of these architects' work is composed of a variety of themes identified in a vast and diverse set of recollections and archives, which is why in the following text, many aspects will be merely signaled as they await further elaboration in a more comprehensive study. This text will focus on the work of architects carried out in institutions affiliated with the City Board and the city government, commissioned projects, and the activity of the Architecture Faculty of the Warsaw University of Technology. The following article is the first to gather materials hitherto not presented together, thus spotlighting the diversity of projects conducted by architects. In this way, a new light is shed on the occupation period. One blatant revelation is that, despite the difficult wartime conditions, works initiated before 1939 could be successfully continued; moreover, the uncertainty of what was to come stimulated imagination and supported planning for better future times. A comprehensive analysis of the professional activity of the Warsaw architectural community inspired a thesis that the potential of this group primarily relied on institutional support. Without sustained support from Warsaw's authorities, institutional financing, and credits provided by the National Economy Bank, many projects and initiatives would not have been able to materialize. Furthermore, the city government provided a sense of security for the architects by hiring many of them, therefore also allowing them to survive the tumult of war. A cross-sectional overview of these architects' professional activity also allows for consideration of the question of whether the construction initiatives represented a coherent vision of Warsaw's future, and if so, what its roots were.

The only study existing to date that is dedicated to an overview of Warsaw's architects during occupation is the book accompanying the exhibition *Urbanistyka zagłady—urbanistyka nadziei, Warszawa 1939–1945*, organized by Niels Gutschow and Barbara Klain in 1994 at the Historical Museum of the Capital City of Warsaw (currently the Museum of Warsaw).⁹ The materi-

⁸ In the case of the Urban Planning Experts Commission, the gap was filled by: EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA: Komisja Rzeczoznawców Urbanistycznych i jej wizja przekształceń Warszawy / Urban Planning Experts Commission and its Vision of Transforming Warsaw, in: *Almanach Warszawy 10* (2016), pp. 329–381.

⁹ NIELS GUTSCHOW, BARBARA KLAIN: *Vernichtung und Utopie: Stadtplanung Warschau 1939–1945*, Hamburg 1994.

als contained in it are today priceless for researchers, as the authors had the opportunity to talk to several living architects who were active in Warsaw during the occupation. Nonetheless, their adopted theme, which consisted in comparing German and Polish architects in Warsaw, left out many of the aspects concerning architects' professional activity during the occupation.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, a sizable group of Warsaw architects became involved in a number of civic initiatives. From the very beginning, these projects were predominantly initiated by the municipal authorities—the Warsaw City Board. In early September 1939, during the defense of Warsaw, the city's president, Stefan Starzyński, established the Community Technical Emergency Unit (*Spółeczne Pogotowie Techniczne*), with Marian Lalewicz, a respected architect and professor at the University of Technology, serving as its chief, and Józef Vogtman with Stanisław Murczyński as the deputies. The main task of the Unit, which was divided by district, was to erect defense fortifications in the city and its peripheries.¹⁰ After the capitulation of Warsaw, many institutions which had been dissolved as well as those whose domain of activities was kept secret, fell under the purview of the Citizens' Guard. This was also the case with the Technical Emergency Unit, which was transitioned into the construction section of the Technical Department at the Citizens' Guard Main Headquarters.¹¹

President Stefan Starzyński's decision to remain in the city after the capitulation and his involvement in negotiations with the Germans invading the city was paramount for the continuation of the City Board's operations.¹² In a conversation with Wanda Telakowska, Starzyński said: "Some roles one needs to keep until the end."¹³ The preservation of the apparatus of the city was crucial to provide work opportunities for architects. It was the initiative of none other than the City Board that enabled the majority of the projects undertaken in the city. Cooperation between the experts and city authorities was of key importance for projects carried out during the occupation. The Deputy Mayor of Warsaw Jan Pohoski was especially supportive of the idea of implementing urban planning works geared towards post-war times. These projects were supervised by both the City Planning Department, which fell within the city structures, and individual experts, as well as entire teams

¹⁰ STANISŁAW MURCZYŃSKI: *Pierwszy rok okupacji Warszawy* [The First Year of Warsaw's Occupation], in: TADEUSZ BARUCKI (ed.): *Fragmenty stuletniej historii 1899–1999: Relacje, wspomnienia, refleksje. W stulecie organizacji warszawskich architektów*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 150–151.

¹¹ JANUSZ REGULSKI: *Straż obywatelska m.st. Warszawy w październiku 1939 r.* [Citizens' Guard of the City of Warsaw in October 1939], in: *Rocznik Warszawski* 5 (1964), pp. 262–296, here p. 265.

¹² GRZEGORZ PIĄTEK: *Sanator: Kariera Stefana Starzyńskiego* [The Sanationist: Stefan Starzyński's Career], Warszawa 2016, pp. 348–349.

¹³ WANDA TELAKOWSKA: *Na Jeziorach Augustowskich i na ratuszu* [On the Augustowskie Lakes and in the City Hall], in: MARIAN MAREK DROZDOWSKI (ed.): *Wspomnienia o Stefanie Starzyńskim*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 298–301, here p. 301.

formed through external commissions. Architects worked within official institutions operating as cover-ups for underground work as well as in full conspiracy.

Under the new division of the occupied territories, Warsaw became part of the General Government (GG) and together with sections of Masovia formed the Warsaw district. Between 26 October 1939 and January 1945, it was governed by Ludwig Fischer, who simultaneously acted as Warsaw's Chief Administrator.¹⁴ Prior to that, however, Helmut Otto,¹⁵ the commissar mayor, acted as the Reich Commissioner of Warsaw following the German invasion of the city, while Oskar Dengel was his deputy. Helmut Otto was appointed as the Reich Commissioner of Warsaw (this seat was later transformed into president commissar of the city) in early October and as part of this role, he oversaw the City Board. After the arrest of Stefan Starzyński, the latter institution was led by Julian Kułski (the former deputy president) as the commissar mayor of Warsaw, a role which he held until 5 August 1944. At the beginning of November, the Reich Commissioner's seat was taken over by Dengel, who held this position until March 1940. Following his departure from Warsaw, Fischer created a new deputy position with the title of "district chief's plenipotentiary," responsible for cooperation with the Polish Board—a function which was filled by Ludwig Leist until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising.¹⁶ Possibly already in late 1939, Dengel brought in employees of the town planning office from his hometown of Würzburg. The urban planners Hubert Groß and Otto Nürnberg were tasked with designing "a new German town." Years later, Groß reminisced: "the idea was to design how and where, using imposing party and state buildings, to create an impression of a German town on the image of the city."¹⁷ This aligned with the Reich's policy towards Warsaw aimed at depriving it of its significance as the capital, while hindering its territorial growth and working towards reducing its area.

The work of the Würzburg town planners led to the project "Warsaw, the New German City," the intention of which was to reduce the city to 40,000 residents and establish a dominant role of a network of streets and train tracks, with its central point lying in the so-called *Gauforum*, comprising party buildings and a tower. The plan was presented to the Governor-General in

¹⁴ BARBARA RATYŃSKA: *Ludność i gospodarka Warszawy i okręgu pod okupacją hitlerowską* [Population and Economy in Greater Warsaw under Nazi Occupation], Warszawa 1982, pp. 40, 51.

¹⁵ Helmut Otto's biography can be found in: MARKUS ROTH: *Herrenmenschen: Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen—Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte*, Göttingen 2009, p. 493.

¹⁶ JOLANTA ADAMSKA: *Organizacja niemieckich urzędów nadzorczych w Warszawie w latach 1939–1944* [The Organization of the German Supervisory Bodies in Warsaw in 1939–1944], in: KRZYSZTOF DUNIN-WAŚOWICZ, JANINA KĄZMIERSKA et al. (eds.): *Warszawa lat wojny i okupacji 1939–1944*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1973 (Studia Warszawskie, 17), pp. 367–384, here pp. 374–375.

¹⁷ GUTSCHOW/KLAIN, p. 23.

February 1940, not long after which Dengel stepped down from his seat. Meanwhile, the town planners had returned to Würzburg and the project was laid aside. In 1942, the Building Construction Office was taken over by Friedrich Pabst, who ordered Groß's office to be cleared out, as a result of which the "Warsaw, the New German City" project was rediscovered. Polish municipal authorities and architects learned about the plans thanks to Jan Zachwatowicz, who secretly found access to Groß's room and saw them there. Meanwhile, Pabst commissioned the Berlin architect Hans Hubert Leufgen to create the "Bridgehead Building for the City Bridge" project—a domed People's Hall built on the site of the Royal Castle. Both Groß's project and the project stemming from Pabst's era were to symbolize the demise of Polish nation; however, it is worth pointing out that they were impossible to execute at the time. With neither taking into consideration the actual territorial conditions and the existing infrastructure, they would both be too demanding for the Nazis who were involved in military operations on several war fronts.¹⁸

Despite the diminished status of Warsaw, which was turned into a county town in the General Government with a mayor instead of a president, the City Board retained most of its competencies, even if many of the decisions required permission from the occupation authorities.

The grassroots civilian initiatives were among the most sought-after forms of cooperation with the city. Such was the mode of operation of the Metropolitan Committee of Mutual Social Aid (Stołeczny Komitet Samopomocy Społecznej, SKSS), established in September 1939 under the auspices of the City Board (and eventually dissolved in March 1941). In October 1939, a Reconstruction Unit was formed within SKSS, with the former rector of the Warsaw University of Technology, Andrzej Pszenicki, as its head, and the Board comprising the architects Marian Lalewicz, Bohdan Pniewski, Stanisław Murczyński, as well as the economist Michał Kaczorowski. The primary goal of the work conducted by the Unit was to explore the technical and economic prospects for the city's reconstruction. In the spring of 1940, a Residential Council was formed within the Unit, responsible for rehousing evacuated or homeless people in apartments. The Unit was also in charge of weatherizing apartments, as well as gathering and securing building materials, including window glass and plywood. The Reconstruction Unit was eventually dissolved on 21 August 1940 and replaced by the Housing Unit.¹⁹ From the perspective of the architects' professional work, the most critical endeavor carried out by the Reconstruction Unit was creating an inventory of damage suffered in September 1939, initiated by Lalewicz. The inventory was devel-

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 57–58.

¹⁹ ANDRZEJ PSZENICKI: Sprawozdanie z działalności Sekcji Mieszkaniowej od 1 sierpnia 1940 r. do 31 października 1940 r. [Report from the Operations of the Housing Unit from 1 August 1940 to 31 October 1940], in: Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie (APW) [State Archives Warsaw], RG 1897: Stołeczny Komitet Samopomocy Społecznej, file 28, p. 1.

oped as a foundation for the reconstruction plan. It was conducted out in the streets, after dividing the city plan into sections. The levels of destruction marked on the maps were as follows: “destroyed,” “severely damaged,” and “partially or fully burned down,” with other information being noted down including technical characteristics, utility potential, estimated volume, and the percentage of destruction. This work was completed in the fall of 1940. The data collected by the cataloguers constituted the basis for the “damage protocol” form for mortgage institutions. Upon presenting the protocol, property owners could expect a deferment of their credit payments. Preparing the protocols also made for an additional source of income for architects out of work.²⁰ Unfortunately, the registry of damage prepared under Lalewicz’s direction has not been preserved. Kazimierz Saski’s memoir suggests that the city government also put together a catalog of damage that unfortunately no longer exists.²¹

Remaining within the City Board structures was the City Planning Department, which as of 1936 was led by Stanisław Różański. The Department’s planning works during the occupation showed a continuation of the general spatial policy plans in Warsaw. The main transport and urban planning issues that were considered included transforming two historic squares in the city’s center (the Three Crosses Square and the Saxon Square), constructing a large square with a uniform building style on the intersection of two major arteries (Waszyngtona Avenue and Grochowska Street) of the Praga side of the city, and redesigning the Saxon Garden with Marszałkowska Street running through it, thus forming a North-South route across the city. The urban planner Jan Chmielewski²² continued work on the *Warszawa Maksymalna* (Maximum Warsaw)²³ and in 1940 formulated guidelines for the Warsaw Urban Complex,²⁴ which could be described as a “city landscape”²⁵ with an organic

²⁰ MURCZYŃSKI, p. 151.

²¹ KAZIMIERZ SASKI: Wydział Nadzoru Budowlanego Zarządu Miejskiego w m.st. Warszawie w okresie od 1 IX 1939 r. do 1 VIII 1944 r. (Zarys historyczny) [Building Inspection Department of the City Board in Warsaw between 1 September 1939 and 1 August 1944 (Historical Outline)], typescript, Warsaw 1946, in: APW, Manuscript Collection, RG 205, pp. 10–11. Saski was an architect and urbanist, working in the Building Inspection Department.

²² Jan Chmielewski (1895–1974)—urban planner, regional planning pioneer, studio director at the Warsaw Regional Plan Office; besides the spatial development of Warsaw, he was involved in projects in the Podhale region. He founded the Main Office for Spatial Planning and led it up until 1949.

²³ Cf. MARTIN KOHLRAUSCH: *Brokers of Modernity: East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects, 1910–1950*, Leuven 2019, p. 225: “[...] Chmielewski and Syrkus envisioned that the differences between town and countryside would be leveled out through a broad zone branded *Warszawa Maksymalna* or *Wmax*, stretching some 100 kilometers north to south and east to west.”

²⁴ The Warsaw Urban Complex was a continuation of the *Warszawa Maksymalna* project initiated in 1933, devised by Chmielewski within the Warsaw Regional Plan Office and of the Functional Warsaw project, realized together with Szymon Syrkus in 1934.

growth model. He paid particular attention to the natural landscape of the scarp running alongside the Vistula river, the historical concepts behind the Saxon and King Stanisław Axes, the “Marszałkowska Valley” that connected them, and the two roads paralleling both axes: the East-West route and Jerozolimskie Avenue. In 1944, Chmielewski wrote a text on the Warsaw Urban Complex in which he outlined the main elements of the project in 14 points, including creating a North-South route that would naturally reinforce the direction of the city’s historical development, dictated by the Vistula’s riverbed.²⁶

One of the key topics that ought to be mentioned among the occupation-era debates on thoroughfares, as well as in the context of the question of the scarp and green areas on the Vistula’s bank, is the King Stanisław Axis—an eighteenth-century urban planning concept intended to connect Warsaw with a suburban residence in Ujazdów through a system of star-shaped squares. In the fall of 1943, Julian Kulski, the commissar mayor of the city of Warsaw, commissioned a project of regulating the King Stanisław Axis, as well as adding buildings and trees along its entire length, spanning from the Vistula bank to the Warsaw West train station which was in the process of being designed. This was likely one of the largest design jobs ordered by the city authorities during the occupation. The entire project was divided into three sections with dedicated designers as follows: Antoni Dygat for the section between the river bank and Na Rozdrożu Square, Waław Tomaszewski for the section between Na Rozdrożu Square and Topolowa Street intersection, and Adam Krzyszkowski for the final section stretching to the West Station.²⁷ Stored in the collection of the Museum of Warsaw are two preserved designs outlining

In the following years, Chmielewski worked on the concept of Greater Warsaw and on defining a so-called “buffer zone” surrounding the existing administrative boundaries of Warsaw as an area reserved for future housing estates and workplaces.

²⁵ The notion of a “city landscape” (*Stadtlandschaft*) was first introduced in 1934 by Eugen Blanck and Wolfgang Bangert in their study of Cologne. It refers to managing the function of a city in accordance with natural and topographic conditions, and stands for “a unity bringing all ingredients of a neighborhood to a shared order.” In this respect, this notion is not unlike the urban planning propositions applied by Chmielewski. See GUTSCHOW/KLAIN, p. 47. On the subject of the term “city landscape” and its adaptation within the ideology of National Socialism and continuation in post-war Germany, see NIELS GUTSCHOW: *Ordnungswahn: Architekten planen im “eingedeutschten Osten” 1939–1945*, Basel et al. 2001, pp. 173–182.

²⁶ ADAM KOTARBIŃSKI: Jan Chmielewski—sylwetka twórcy i zarys działalności [Jan Chmielewski—Creator’s Profile and Overview of Work], in: JAN ZACHWATOWICZ (ed.): *Początki planowania przestrzennego w Polsce*, Warszawa 1979, pp. 13–72, here p. 37.

²⁷ Projekt zamówienia w sprawie opracowania regulacji i zabudowy Osi Saskiej w Warszawie [Outline of a Design Commission for the Regulation and Settlement of the Saska Axis in Warsaw], in: *Archiwum Muzeum Warszawy* [Museum of Warsaw Archives], A/V/1625.

The most significant outcome of the work performed by the Urban Planning Experts Commission was the memorandum “Evaluation of the City of Warsaw Plans Prepared within the City Board,” issued as a typescript.³² The evaluation pertained to “General Building Development Plan of the Capital City of Warsaw,” created in 1937/38 in the General Plan Studio of the City Board’s City Planning Department under Marian Spychalski. The Commission simultaneously evaluated ongoing projects, such as, for example, the previously described planning work on the King Stanisław Axis area. The contents of the “Evaluation” mainly referred to the historic section of Warsaw, the so-called King Stanisław Warsaw (*Warszawa stanisławowska*).³³ It featured many of the elements of a modernist approach to a city, and even propositions put forward in the Athens Charter. These included aiming to organize the city by dividing it into functional zones (e.g. moving housing estates to new neighborhoods), improving the residents’ sanitary conditions through reorganizing public space, and creating a differentiation of thoroughfares according to their functions, as well as separating foot and vehicle traffic. This vision was intertwined with the perception of a city as a hub for historical and artistic traditions, with the historical monuments acting as an expression of its identity and therefore deserving special attention. At the same time, preserving Warsaw’s landscape did not mean following restrictive conservation rules; on the contrary, as it was postulated that the planning would adhere to the general concept of the city outline as it was seen from the Praga side of the river (a so-called two-level concept, building on top and at the foot of the Vistula scarp) and aim for aesthetic improvement. What is characteristic of the Commission’s work is the method rooted in the modernist pursuit of order and harmony, as well as holistic thinking, whether with regard to a city, street, or region, but also in terms of future and growth.³⁴ One also ought to keep in mind that the evaluation was written in 1941, so before the city suffered the greatest damage, and represents a continuation of the pre-war perception of Warsaw as a city in need of reconstruction. The “Evaluation” offers a somewhat idealistic image, an essence of the many years of efforts to regulate the capital.

³² The source text is published in: Komisja Rzeczoznawców Urbanistycznych przy Zarządzie Miejskim Warszawy w latach 1934–1944 [Urban Planning Experts Commission at the Warsaw City Board 1939–1944], in: *Rocznik Warszawski* 17 (1984), pp. 245–307.

³³ This term is used to refer to the historic area of Warsaw, described from the north by the section between Gdańska train station and Okopowa Street, from the west between Towarowa Street, Filtry, and Polna Street, and from the south from the Łazienki Park border towards the Vistula valley, which constituted the eastern boundary. The boundary lines were determined by the trenches outlined in 1770 following the order of the Grand Crown Marshal Stanisław Lubomirski in order to prevent a plague epidemic. These events took place under the rule of King Stanisław August Poniatowski.

³⁴ PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA, Komisja Rzeczoznawców Urbanistycznych, pp. 352–353.

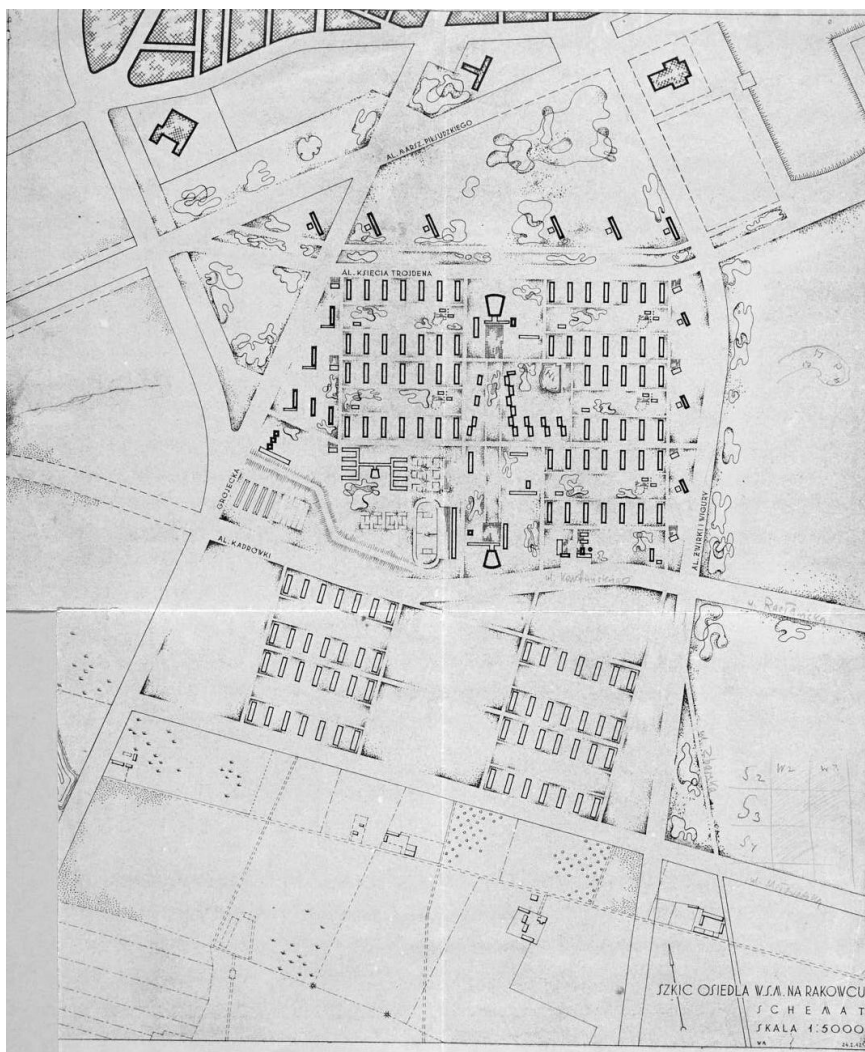


Fig. 2: The Architectural-urbanistic Workshop (PAU), Sketch of the Rakowiec housing estate, 1:5000 (1942-01-24), in: Museum of Warsaw, MHW 6956/PI

Throughout the entire period of occupation, the Social Building Enterprise (Społeczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane, SPB) remained active, carrying out construction and installation works in the General Government. In Warsaw, the main jobs involved protecting dilapidating buildings and cleaning up rubble. The investors in that work were the Warsaw Housing Cooperative

(Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa, WSM),³⁵ the Polish Mutual Insurance Company (Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych, PZUW), and the “Społem” Consumer Cooperative. The initial works consisted mostly in the technical supervision of reconstruction of the destroyed WSM Rakowiec housing estate (where the damage was estimated to be 50 percent), delegated to Helena Syrkus,³⁶ and of the TOR³⁷ estate in Koło, led by Szymon Syrkus. In November 1940, WSM activists commissioned both to design a concept for the Rakowiec district and an expansion of the already-existing estate to the size of an urban unit (Fig. 2). Due to the rising need for design projects such as the Rakowiec estate, the design studio affiliated with the Social Building Enterprise gained autonomy as the PAU.³⁸ PAU was also hired for housing-estate projects by the City Board. A 1941 construction diary of the SPB mentions ongoing finishing work, for instance at the reconstruction sites of the Rakowiec (such as the finishing work on the community building) and Koło estates, the finishing of the PZUW buildings at 36/48 Kopernika Street and 34 Mickiewicza Street, and the erection of warehouses on Wolska Street and a building on Kolejowa Street for the Warsaw branch of the “Społem” Consumer Cooperative.³⁹ Regardless of the direction of the work conducted by PAU, the motivation behind its foundation can be recognized as predominantly pragmatic, given its potential to provide employment and security for a team of experts, and to educate new ones. It operated as a drawing and design office taking external commissions.

The studies the PAU members carried out in conspiracy focused mainly on the spatial planning of Warsaw and its surroundings, rooted in the 1934 con-

³⁵ WSM formed in 1921 upon the initiative of Polish Socialist Party activists. The Party's founding members included, among others, the leftist activists Bolesław Bierut, Stanisław Tołwiński, Stanisława Szwalbe. WSM housing estate designs were a social and architectural experiment.

³⁶ Helena (1900–1981) and Szymon (1892–1964) Syrkus—a married architect couple, the most prominent Polish representatives of modernist avant-garde, founding members of CIAM, Athens Charter signees, and authors of a series of modernist projects, including the first avant-garde housing estate in Poland, WSM Rakowiec.

³⁷ Towarzystwo Osiedli Robotniczych (Workers' Estate Society).

³⁸ HELENA SYRKUS: Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna, in: TADEUSZ BARUCKI (ed.): *Fragmenty stuletniej historii: Ludzie, fakty, wydarzenia. W stulecie organizacji warszawskich architektów*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 157–164, here pp. 158–159.

³⁹ Wykaz zamówień na roboty budowlane w 1941 roku, stan 10.3.1941 r. [Registry of Construction Work Commissions in 1941, Status as of 1941-03-10], in: APAN, III-185, file 87, pp. 1–2. The Społem warehouse and building designs were created by Bohdan Lachert in 1941 (the design plans are stored in the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław), whereas the building on Kolejowa Street wasn't erected until 1950. See KATARZYNA UCHOWICZ: *Ariergarda modernizmu: Katalog projektów i realizacji Bohdana Lacherta i Józefa Szanajcy* [Ariergarde of Modernism: A Catalogue of Designs and Projects by Bohdan Lachert and Józef Szanajca], Warszawa 2017, pp. 576–577.

cept of “functional Warsaw.”⁴⁰ Among the PAU members was Jan Chmielewski, who was simultaneously employed at the City Planning Department of the City Board. The housing estate designs were based on the model of “social estate,”⁴¹ the theoretical background of which was originally presented by Helena Syrkus in 1940, based on the example of Rakowiec and subsequently developed by her. The area of Warsaw and its surroundings was eventually divided between working groups studying individual parts of the city.⁴²

This efficient design studio grew to become an institution, hiring almost eighty people and investing in education seen as self-improvement. This was demonstrated by the expansive library supplemented by books translated during the occupation, such as Bruno Wehner’s *Grenzen des Stadtraumes vom Standpunkt des innerstädtischen Verkehrs: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Wechselwirkung zwischen Städtebau und Verkehr* from 1934,⁴³ or the Polish abridgment of Lewis Mumford’s *The Culture of Cities* from 1938, prepared by Jacek Nowicki in 1942. Additional training was offered to lower-level workers and young people through courses, for instance the course for group

⁴⁰ “Functional Warsaw” was a plan for the development of Warsaw based on the natural landscape features and its location on the intersection of transcontinental transit routes; JAN CHMIELEWSKI, SZYMON SYRKUS: *Warszawa funkcjonalna: Przyczynek do urbanizacji regionu warszawskiego* [Functional Warsaw: Towards an Urbanization of the Warsaw Region], Warszawa 2013.

⁴¹ The social estate was a concept based on a functional program of an estate expanded through shared spaces; the foundation of the social estate concept predominantly consisted of supporting connections among the residents as well as their activities. This was exemplified by consultations with the residents conducted by the designers; EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA: *Eksperymentalne osiedle w przestrzeni miejskiej: WSM Rakowiec w Warszawie* [An Experimental Estate in a City Space: WSM Rakowiec in Warsaw], in: MARIA JOLANTA SOŁTYSIK, ROBERT HIRSCH (eds.): *Architektura XX wieku: Jej ochrona i konserwacja w Gdyni i Europie*, Gdynia 2018, pp. 61–66, here p. 65.

⁴² The detailed distribution of work as well as the comprehensive approach to the function of a city is reflected in how PAU was broken up into project teams:

Team I dedicated to studies of the overall plan for the city and region of Warsaw. Supervisor: Jan Olaf Chmielewski, deputy: Szymon Syrkus;

Team II dedicated to northern residential districts. Supervisor: Zygmunt Skibniewski, deputy: Kazimierz Marczewski;

Team III focusing on designs of the existing WSM housing estate in Żoliborz. Supervisor: Barbara Brukalska, deputy: Zsław Malicki;

Team IV preparing a design of the Rakowiec district and expansion of the WSM housing estate in Rakowiec. Supervisor: Szymon Syrkus, deputy: Helena Syrkus;

Team V preparing a concept design of the western district. Supervisor: Stanisław Dziewulski, deputy: Stefan Putowski.

Cf. ALICJA KĘCZKOWSKA: *Inwentarz archiwalny: Społeczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane 1929–1961, załącznik 8: wykaz zespołów PAU* [Archival Inventory: Social Building Enterprise 1929–1961, supplement 8: Index of PAU Departments], Archiwum Państwowego w Warszawie, 1984, no sign.

⁴³ Abridged edition prepared in 1942 by Adam Pawłowicz: *Granice obszaru miejskiego a komunikacja miejska*.

leaders with three-hour long classes twice a week. The subjects taught included work organization, technical drawing, construction, and budgeting.

Most studio members shared leftist political beliefs and strove to find solutions towards cooperative housing in socialist Warsaw. The language used in statements and lectures testified to the political engagement of PAU's avant-garde, as is exemplified in one of Szymon Syrkus's declarations:

“A capitalist city is a reflection of the friction between opposing forces and opposing interests, of the privileged class's oppression over the disadvantaged ones. The estates designed by us are intended to create a framework for a harmonious ‘COOPERATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FORCES, THE FORCES OF NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY, A FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION AND COHABITATION OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY’.”⁴⁴

Many of the employees had previously worked in the pre-war WSM. Some members were also politically engaged, for example, Michał Przerwa-Tetmajer and Janusz Neugebauer, both of whom belonged to the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR) and the People's Guard of the PPR (they were arrested in 1943).⁴⁵

PAU's design projects mainly consisted in researching estates in the Rakowiec⁴⁶ and Żoliborz districts and conducting studies of northern housing districts, the industrial western district, and regional studies. Despite the war circumstances, interdisciplinary projects continued with some of the permanent PAU collaborators, including the sociologist Stanisław Ossowski, who authored studies such as *Socjologiczne podstawy nowoczesnej urbanistyki* (Sociological Foundations of the Modern Urban Planning) during that time, as well as the geologist Stefan Różycki and the botanist Roman Kobendza, a researcher of the Kampinos Forest and author of *Ze studiów nad rolą środowiska przyrodniczego w urbanistyce* (From the Studies of the Role of Natural Environment in Urban Planning).⁴⁷ Significantly for scholars, PAU created a very thorough project documentation and numerous protocols of their operational meetings.

From the beginning of the occupation, Zygmunt Skibniewski, Stanisław Dziewulski, and Kazimierz Marczewski⁴⁸—three architects and urban planners affiliated with PAU—worked on future Warsaw designs in their own studio. They focused on Warsaw's landscape assets, thus restoring the significance of the Vistula scarp. Their studies resulted in a design plan of a linear

⁴⁴ Szymon Syrkus: Sprawozdanie i program PAU z dn. 26.IX.42 [PAU Report and Program from 1942-10-26], in: APAN, III-185, file 85, p. 32 [capitalization in the original].

⁴⁵ JACEK NOWICKI: Praca w PAU [Working at PAU], in: BARUCKI, Relacje, pp. 179–180, here p. 180.

⁴⁶ PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA, Eksperymentalne osiedle w przestrzeni miejskiej, p. 66.

⁴⁷ Studia ogólne, tytuły prac [General Studies, Project Titles], in: APAN, III-185, file 94, p. 99.

⁴⁸ For more information about these architects, see footnote 1.

settlement alongside the high bank of the river, with classicist architecture referencing grand ancient designs, and with a forum dedicated to government buildings featured as one of its elements. The drawings were treated autonomously and not as projects to be executed, but rather as studies of space and landscape that would form the basis for discussion on Warsaw's cityscape assets. It is worth bringing up these words by the sociologist Stanisław Ossowski:

"already in July 1944, in Stanisław Dziewulski's studio, the beautiful drawings in which the architect Marczewski expressed his visions of future Warsaw, prompted a philosophical discussion about the extent of urban planners' work and ways in which it could affect the future reality [...]."⁴⁹

The correspondence between members of the design team mentioned in architects' memoirs demonstrates their approach to this subject. The project itself was treated as a basis for discussion on the role of Warsaw's natural environment in the city space (the natural geological layout with the scarp) and on the key functions of architectural objects within a cityscape.

Besides the City Board, the other key institution uniting architects and providing employment and growth were universities, especially the Architecture Faculty of the Warsaw University of Technology (Wydział Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej, WA PW). It operated underground under the cover of the new German Städtische Fachschule für Bauwesen, a second-level vocational school providing construction engineering diplomas. Since 1941, the underground Urban Planning Studio led by Tadeusz Tołwiński operated at the WA PW headquarters at Koszykowa Street. It produced a series of studies dedicated to Warsaw, for example, studies on the North-South route (parallel to the central Marszałkowska Street), the Nowy Świat Bis—a street running parallel to Nowy Świat (a section of the historic Royal Route), which formed a section of the historic Royal Route, or the East-West route. Officially, some architects worked at said vocational school and taught classes, which ensured a stable income for such people as Bohdan Lachert, Maciej Nowicki, and Piotr Biegański. Simultaneously, underground classes were also held, culminating with an issuance of 25 diplomas, as well as completion of 12 doctoral dissertations (e.g. Kazimierz Wejchert's *Miasteczko jako zagadnienie urbanistyczne* (The Small Town as an Urban Issue)) and 13 postdoctoral degrees. Moreover, in the fall of 1943, a one-year course on the inventory and protection of historical monuments was introduced.⁵⁰

The strive towards normalcy and the sustaining of a professional community was symbolized by three underground architectural competitions. They originated from a research study on building layout in Polish towns conducted

⁴⁹ STANISŁAW OSSOWSKI: Odbudowa w świetle zagadnień społecznych [Reconstruction in the Light of Social Issues], in: JAN GÓRSKI (ed.): *Pamięć warszawskiej odbudowy 1945–1949: Antologia*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 297–328, here p. 301.

⁵⁰ TADEUSZ MRÓWCZYŃSKI: *Miejska Szkoła Budowlana* [The Municipal Building School], in: BARUCKI, *Relacje*, pp. 168–170.

by Wejchert, as well as from the need for architectural growth in smaller settlements, but with the intention of preserving small-town building traditions, both in terms of spatial layout and construction designs. This theme epitomizes the struggle for retaining national identity in the difficult occupation conditions. The first competition, organized in 1943, called for entries for three types of houses on plots 6, 8, and 12 meters wide in a small-town square, with roof designs featuring ridges, gables, or attics alongside the square frontage. The competition received 32 submissions, which was considered a success under wartime conditions. A small amount of money was even raised for 8 projects receiving special mentions and for a post-competition exhibition. However, much more interesting architecturally were the designs submitted in the subsequent competition for a small-town cultural center which received 25 entries.⁵¹ The submissions included a project by Zygmunt Stępiński⁵² and Tadeusz Miazek, who proposed an axis connecting the cultural center with the town square. The street connecting the square in front of the town hall with the cultural center was planted with a row of trees, and the building itself was surrounded by a park (Fig. 3). The proposed spatial arrangement aimed to create a distinctive public space. The cultural center building had a two-story elevation topped off with an attic, with the following words on the facade: “We are building a house for the future on the foundations of the past.”⁵³ The entire design ought to be viewed primarily through the prism of creating national forms; this is, for instance, apparent in the inclusion of an attic, which since the second half of the nineteenth century had been regarded as a typical Polish architectural feature.

When discussing national issues, the other theme that deserves a mention relates to the work of not just the architects invested in the “future Poland,” but also those working in German institutions. It is one of the matters that continues to be overlooked as it represents an uncomfortable element in these architects’ biographies.⁵⁴ One example of a thorough study of the occupation period is the recently published monograph on Edgar Norwerth⁵⁵ with a detailed overview of the architect’s output during that time. This well-known

⁵¹ KAZIMIERZ WEJCHERT: Konkursy wojenne na zabudowę miasteczka [Wartime Competitions for a Town Settlement], in: *Architektura* (1947), 2, pp. 52–54.

⁵² Zygmunt Stępiński (1908–1982)—A Warsaw architect who graduated from the Warsaw University of Technology in 1933. After the war, he worked at the Historic Architecture Department of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office; he was responsible for the reconstruction of, e.g., Nowy Świat Street, and co-designed the East-West route, Marszałkowska Residential District, and the modernist pavilion for the Cepelia store.

⁵³ TERESA KROGULEC: Plany i rysunki architektoniczne [Architectural Plans and Drawings], in: MAŁGORZATA DUBROWSKA (ed.): *Dary i darczyńcy: 70 lat Muzeum Historycznego m.st. Warszawy. Katalog wystawy jubileuszowej*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 449–467, here p. 460.

⁵⁴ See the contribution from Małgorzata Popiołek-Roßkamp in this issue.

⁵⁵ ŚLEBODA.

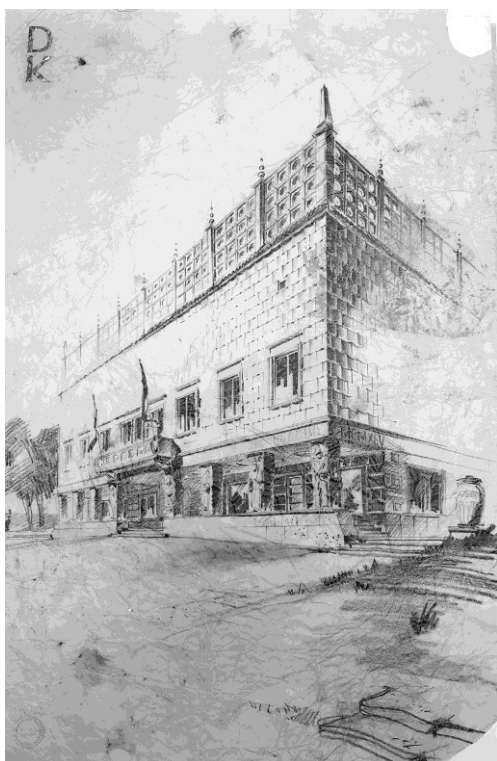


Fig. 3:
Zygmunt Stępiński, Tadeusz
Miazek: Typical house of culture
for a small town, front façade,
competition project (1943), in:
Museum of Warsaw, MHW
8270/2/P1

Warsaw architect and author of the modernist design for the Institute of Physical Education in Warsaw's district of Bielany worked at the X Main Building Department of the Warsaw District of the General Government in 1940–1943, where he prepared measurements and design plans for the occupation authorities. The team consisted mostly of Poles, and Norwerth himself did not attempt to conceal his activity during that period, as evidenced by the fact that he listed it in his biography submitted to the leadership of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office in 1945.⁵⁶

Another such example is the biography of the architect Juliusz Nagórski, whose work during the occupation influenced the way he was written about for many years after his death (he died in 1944 during the Warsaw Uprising). Having been initially hired at the city of Warsaw city government, he was required to work on adapting the structures seized by German authorities, which led him to creating his own design studio in order to accommodate these jobs. Projects he participated in include work on the Council of Ministers Palace or the Brühl Palace. According to family recollections used by Nagórski's monographer,⁵⁷ his work was consulted on with the Polish Under-

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 150.

⁵⁷ TOMICZEK.

ground authorities. However, in 1941 his name was mentioned in the underground press in the context of collaboration. This subject resurfaced in more recent post-war literature along with the release of the monograph on the Council of Ministers Palace, written by Tadeusz S. Jaroszewski and Zbigniew Bania.⁵⁸ In it, Jaroszewski refers to the memoirs of Stanisław Lorentz, who attested to the evidence of Nagórski's disgraceful cooperation with the occupying forces. This is a recurring subject to this day, as different authors continue to return to the reports of the architect's collaboration.⁵⁹ This is just one example, but there surely have been other similar cases. Regarding contemporary research, insufficient source documentation means it is impossible to find clarification around such incidences. Each case ought to be examined individually, taking into consideration the actual description of an architect's work beyond passing judgments.

When attempting a comprehensive overview of the work of Warsaw's architectural community, one ought to keep in mind the fate of Jewish architects during the Second World War.⁶⁰ Their activities were significantly halted, which affected the entire professional community as it lost many prominent architects. Architects of Jewish heritage formed a powerful group within avant-garde circles. Besides the most notable Szymon Syrkus and his wife Helena, they included Henryk Oderfeld, Maksymilian Goldberg, Lucjan Korngold, Jerzy Gelbard, Edward Eber, Edward Seydenbeutel, Marcin Weinfeld, and Roman Sigalin, among others. Szymon Syrkus managed to successfully hide his heritage and did not have to wear the Star of David armband in occupied Warsaw, nor in the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, where he was sent as part of the process of eliminating the Polish intelligentsia.⁶¹ Syrkus's professional activity during the occupation enabled the foundation of the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop, one of the Polish territory's most progressive design teams around the mid-twentieth century.

As regards Seydenbeutel, he was hiding in Warsaw throughout the occupation; in 1945 he changed his last name to Sułkowski and joined the Polish Armed Forces. He continued to work as an architect, for example at the Chief Council for the Reconstruction of Warsaw, until his death in 1959.⁶² Among the architects listed above, those who died during the war were Goldberg (in

⁵⁸ TADEUSZ S. JAROSZEWSKI, ZBIGNIEW BANIA: *Pałac Rady Ministrów* [Council of Ministers Palace], Warszawa 1980.

⁵⁹ TOMICZEK, pp. 41–46.

⁶⁰ Anna Kubiak: Wywiady z architektami na temat zmarłych architektów Żydów [Interviews with architects about deceased Jewish architects], in: *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* [Jewish Historical Institute], Warsaw, S/350: *Spuścizna* [Estate] Anny Kubiak (1908–1959).

⁶¹ GUTSCHOW/KLAIN, p. 51.

⁶² JOANNA DARANOWSKA-ŁUKASZEWSKA: Edward Sułkowski: 1894-03-25–1959-11-01, architekt, urbanista, in: *Internetowy Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, <http://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/a/biografia/edward-sulkowski> (2020-05-20).

1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto), Sigalin, Gelbard, and Oderfeld. The architects who managed to survive the tumult of the war were those who left the Polish Republic between 1939/40—Korngold, who made it to Brazil via Bucharest (and worked in São Paulo until his death)⁶³ and Eber, who landed in Italy and spent the remainder of the war years in Abbazia before moving to Rome.⁶⁴

The story of Warsaw's Jewish community during the war and occupation does not end with biographies of individual architects. Some of the other issues remaining to be explored in future studies include the material legacy of that community and how it was approached by the German authorities as well as Polish designers and conservators.⁶⁵ Yet another, separate topic to be researched is the significance of the Ghetto and its destruction for the plans prepared by Polish urban planners.

The hereby-outlined projects and activities of architects open up several key conclusions pertaining to the professional output of Warsaw's community between 1939 and 1944. Despite the constant sense of threat inevitably accompanying the architects (as evidenced by letters written by Helena and Szymon Syrkus even before the outbreak of the war to Walter Gropius and Cornelius von Eesteren, in which they asked for help in leaving Poland),⁶⁶ the wartime situation generated the need to stay active and plan the reconstruction as a remedy for the existing spatial and social issues faced by the city. All works pursued during the occupation were a direct continuation of pre-war projects, which calls for a revision of the approach to the history of architecture that excludes the war period and describes post-1945 architecture as the new beginning. The war not only did not disrupt design work, but in fact enabled its development on a scale unseen during peacetime. Further studies on occupation projects and outlining the professional paths of wartime architects, including those working within German structures, would shed new light on those five years in the professional lives of Warsaw's architectural community.

⁶³ GRZEGORZ RYTEL: *Lucjan Korngold: Warszawa—São Paulo 1897–1963*, Warszawa 2014.

⁶⁴ HANNA FARYNA-PASZKIEWICZ: Edward Zachariasz Eber, in: *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* (2011), 1, pp. 37–50, here pp. 42–48.

⁶⁵ It is worth adding that antisemitism, which intensified towards the end of 1930s, was also present among Polish architects. In 1939, the new authorities of the Association of Polish Architects amended the statute by adding that persons of Jewish nationality could not be members of the organization, while persons of Jewish descent were required to receive an approval from the Admissions Committee. As a result, on 1 July 1939, the Warsaw Chapter crossed out 59 people from the list of members. ROMAN PIOTROWSKI: *Lata trzydzieste w Stowarzyszeniu Architektów Polskich [1930s in the Association of Polish Architects]*, in: BARUCKI, *Relacje*, pp. 67–72, here p. 70.

⁶⁶ HELENA SYRKUS: *List do Waltera Gropiusa i Sigfrieda Giediona z 24 stycznia 1939 r. [Letter to Walter Gropius and Sigfried Giedion from 24 January 1939]*, in: ALEKSANDRA KĘDZIOREK, KATARZYNA UCHOWICZ et al. (eds.): *Archipelag CIAM: Listy Heleny Syrkus*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 76–85.

Works carried out within the city government and institutions governed by it, as well as those it commissioned, were for the most part concerned with urban planning designs. This is of significance, as it emphasizes thinking on the scale of an entire city, its neighborhoods, and larger spatial planning schemes. The actively operating City Planning Department of the City Board, and especially the General Plan Studio and the Detailed Planning Studio continued their pre-war projects aimed at managing the cityscape of Warsaw. Within them, a key role was played by transit issues, i.e. a system of roads and squares that would unclog the city. At the same time, there was an ongoing struggle with the ailments resulting from urban planning negligence in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Another problem arising in most projects was the question of the natural landscape of Warsaw, i.e. the Vistula scarp and the role it played in shaping the city.

It is evident that employees of the city government and of all other institutions falling within the scope of the municipal authorities considered the city in categories of modernization, widely drawing on the Athens Charter, including the idea of dividing the city into functional areas. The Urban Planning Experts Commission focused on the historic section—King Stanisław Warsaw—whereas PAU worked on the peripheral areas, preparing them for residential housing and fulfilling an industrial supply function. Even though these plans were produced independently of each other, they formed a quite coherent vision of the future development of the city that respected the downtown historic space. What they had in common was the negative approach towards the nineteenth-century building layout and insistence on improving the city space. Projects described in this text were developed before 1943, so they do not account for the destruction of the Ghetto. They were thus mostly based on the pre-war city fabric and “healing” it. It was only the bold visions, such as the design devised by Marczewski, Skibniewski, and Dziewulski, that ignored the present state and aimed at creating a new vision of the city on the scarp.

It is worth emphasizing that institutional support formed the basis for any design work. The institutional operations were of course influenced by the individuals advocating for these activities. Nonetheless, one ought to remember that preserving the Polish municipal authorities was in the best interest of the city's Polish population, as well as essential for the occupation authorities, who did not have access to sufficient German staff to manage the city of one million. These circumstances allowed the City Board to continue its operations (even though the designers worked in conspiracy), enabled the establishment of the Urban Planning Experts Commission, and made it possible to finance and commission external projects such as PAU's housing estate designs.

When looking beyond the scope of the urban planners' activities, it becomes apparent that we know very little about the designs of individual buildings, nor their reconstructions and transformations. This is partially covered in this issue by Wojciech Wólkowski. Warsaw's most intensive construction period occurred in 1940/41. According to the statistics published by the

Building Inspection Department of the City Board, in 1940, 1,500 building designs were approved and 500 construction permits were issued.⁶⁷ The period of “building prosperity” was interrupted at the end of 1941, when the competencies to issue permits were shifted to German construction authorities, and again in March of 1942, together with the enactment of the order prohibiting construction work, with the exception of projects justified by the war circumstances. The latter resulted from the reduced distribution of building materials, the purchase of which required a government-issued permit, as well as overall financial cuts related to the ongoing battles on the eastern front. So far, no one has attempted to reproduce these investment efforts in their entirety. Such study would certainly significantly expand our knowledge surrounding the professional output of Warsaw architects in 1939–1944.

Translated from the Polish by Anna Micińska

⁶⁷ SASKI, p. 18.

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