



ORIGINAL PAPER

What do we accept, what we neglect? The quest for the proper version of collective memory. Some considerations about the names present in urban space after the 2015 elections in Poland. The case of Łódź and its neighbourhood

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Abstract:

Public space in Poland was a subject of spontaneous decommunization after the year 1989. What is interesting the wave of changes was observed mainly in the big cities, in small settlements it was usually restraint to the main streets and/or the subjects unanimously perceived as connected with communist ideology. In the small cities – in proposed case study in the commons around Łódź, usually the names connected with previous times remained, usually due to finances and people's habits. The situation changed only recently, after the 2015 elections, when the Law and Justice (PiS) party, began the complex decommunization of Polish reality. There was complex law prepared, and the special state agenda the Institute of National Remembrance was obliged to name the places whose names should be changed. From what seemed to be rather simple question it finally appeared very complex one due to pressed cohabitation on a local level, which is still visible due to different outcome of 2015 legislative elections and 2014 local ones. Peoples connected with present majority (PiS), have different understanding of collective memory then the politicians connected with Civic Platform (PO) and their minions from Peasant Party (PSL) or Nowoczesna etc. The most controversial element is the discussion about commemoration of persons connected with this version of history proclaimed by the ruling majority as *only true* – members of anti-communist resistance after 1945 or the victims of the Smoleńsk Crash (10th April 2010), which shaped modern political discourse in Poland. The proposed case study is Łódź and its neighbourhoods where proposed memorization of late president Lech Kaczyński became serious political issue. The sources for the analysis are: laws, local press and empirical knowledge. The aim of the study is to show how the final stage of decommunization is perceived by common people and by politicians do they feel that it is important or not?

Keywords: *Poland; Łódź, decommunization; street names; politics of memory*

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The Law on decommunization of the names present in urban space²² [the Law] which was introduced in Poland after the *Law and Justice* (PiS) electoral victory caused serious nationwide discussion about its legitimacy, especially because it sparked another wave of changes (the first occurred just after 1989 and was rather spontaneous). This time, the political discussion about the issue of changing street names has reached the issue of: who will lose the commemoration (by law, it was restricted to the people related in some way to propagation of communism). Understandably, this triggered vivid discussion, which pointed to the argument that the streets which had to be changed under the Law, since they had survived the wave of spontaneous decommunization in 1989/1990, should not actually annoy anyone. The next element were the cases of commemorating, which occurred after the political transformation - since they were granted a street, monument, stadium already in the conditions of freedom and political pluralism, it should not be changed anymore. Finally, there was also a key problem in the selection of people or events that which were yet to be commemorated.

This problem however did not appear, only with the mentioned act. This was already visible during the process of naming newly appeared streets in the city. Surveys carried out 5 years ago indicate that only about one third of the population cares of the patrons of their streets²³.

Urban nomenclature has a rich collection of onomastic and historical works. During the storms of history, it often changes. Lidia Pacan-Bonarek identifies the following reasons for the appearance of a new nomenclature in the urban space: the appearance of new streets, previously unnamed; change of the name to another one; disappearance of the name and object to which it relates and finally disappearance of the name despite the continued existence of the street (Pacan-Bonarek, 2015: 491). In relation to the presented *case study*, i.e. in the case of Łódź, we have research indicating that for reasons completely independent from political issues, and related to the current development of the city during the years (1983-1993) 41 street names disappeared together with the buildings they determined, while in the existence of the so-called industrial Łódź, so for the last 190 years, about 120 proprietary names have disappeared (Pacan-Bonarek, 2015: 491). Sometimes old street names are subject to a specific recycling process and are used again in a different part of the city (Bieńkowska, Umińska-Tytoń, 212: 241). In the second case mentioned in the study, namely the Andropol municipal common, we can even mention the disappearance of objects affecting the street name, thus the name of the street will be understandable only for older residents of the locality –eg. Ceramiczna street, where the production plant were once located producing ceramics (eg stove tiles); now, the shopping center is being developed here, so it is completely unrelated to the former character of the place.

The emergence of *patronage* streets, which could carry political meaning and therefore are possible to analyze in the context of considerations regarding collective memory, took place in the Polish reality in the second half of the nineteenth century (Kita, Nartonowicz-Kot, 2012: 5). From that moment, the names of streets in the urban space are perceived as a reflection of reality and the creation of space. In this way, we define and even create the reality that surrounds us. The names present in the urban space indicate who is important enough to perpetuate memory and who is the most important. People/patrons of the main streets in the city must be widely respected and positively evaluated in history (Kita, Nartonowicz-Kot, 2012: 10). Of course, this also works the

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other way, especially after a period of political change, when certain patrons are condemned to be a subject of *damnation memoriae*.

Street nomenclature in cities, especially during its chaotic development, which Łódź experienced at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, was quite chaotic, therefore the City Council in 1933 adopted the principles that were to be adopted, for ensuring the order and to end the previous chaos. Since then, in individual districts of the city, the streets were to commemorate, respectively: social and national activists, particular professions, geographical names, rivers, creators of culture, etc. The exception was Downtown, where this systematization was not applied.

In relation to the nature of urban names, we distinguish: motivated names, non-motivated names and commemorative names. In this case, particular attention should be paid to the last of these categories, which contain names commemorating important facts, events and people (Kita, Nartowicz-Kot, 2012: 10). By and large, they are most vulnerable to change. In Łódź, as well as in Poland, there were several waves of mass changes in names belonging to this category, related to changes with a geopolitical character. The first wave followed Poland's regaining independence in 1918, it resulted from the necessity of removing street names characteristic to tsarist times, although it should be admitted that in the case of Łódź this did not concern a large number of streets. As an example, we can mention there Mikołajewska street (commemorating Tsar Nicholas II [change of name from Dzika street, took place only in 1900]), which still during World War I, paradoxically during the German occupation (1916) was replaced by Henryk Sienkiewicz, (one of the best-known Polish writers who died this year)²⁴.

It can even be assumed that fundamental changes in this matter took place between 1916-1918, so after 1918 there was no need to *derussification* of the city. In 1920, the City Council ordered next wave of changes - this time of a ruly nature, eliminating the previous naming chaos, eg previously there used to be four Ciemna [Dark] streets or three Długa [Long] streets. The chaos mentioned resulted from the incorporation of parts of the neighboring settlements to Łódź – eg. Bałuty, which until 1915 remained the largest village in Europe with a population exceeding 100,000 people. Naturally after 1918, there also appeared names referring to the figures or events remembering the Great War and the following time of Poland's fighting for borders. Hence, the streets: Legionów [Piłsudski Legions] appeared; 28 p.p. StrzelcówKaniowskich (28th Infantry Regiment *Children of Łódź* - military unit stationed there, also having a Romanian episode in its history). Later during the interwar period, the deceased independence activists –eg. Józef Piłsudski were also commemorated [on previous Wschodnia Street], he received the street which may be not principal but the one associated with his pre-war independence activity. On this street was an illegal printing house, in which he prepared the newspaper of the Polish Socialist Party - Robotnik). Others then commemorated were: Gabriel Narutowicz, the first president of the Second Polish Republic, who was murdered after 10 days at office in December 1922 (Konicki, 1995: 29). Also there were commemorated other activists associated with the Sanacja government (always after their death), eg. Bolesław Pieracki after the murder in 1934.

The next torrent of changes took place during the Second World War, when Łódź remained under German occupation. It was incorporated directly into the Third Reich, then, apart from the germanization of urban onomastics also the city name was changed - Łódź became Litzmannstadt²⁵.

After the Second World War, and after the seizure of power by the forces associated with the Soviet Union, there were another changes. Firstly, it reflected the

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administrative needs associated with city expansion to neighboring areas, in particular the city of Ruda Pabianicka, in this case it was about elimination of repeating names. Secondly, it was connected again with the current political and propaganda needs, where the names commemorating the pre-war politicians, the Polish-Bolshevik war, or for other reasons uncomfortable for the new authorities were replaced by names just for the new order. As an anecdote one can treat the literal treatment of the Party's order to change the name of the main street in the city to Stalin Street. The authorities of Łódź, in contrast to other Polish cities, treated this literally, and Stalin became the patron of one of the side streets then, which was called Główna [Main street] [1945-1956]²⁶.

Similar changes occurred in the aforementioned period after the 1989, although some cautious street naming after the heroes not necessarily welcome after 1945 was already noticeable in 1988. Then it was associated with the establishing of a large housing quarter in the east of Łódź in the Widzew district (Olechów quarter). A convenient pretext was the 70th anniversary of regaining independence. The street of Marshal Józef Piłsudski appeared for a short time at Olechów.

Spontaneous decommunization of names in Łódź urban space took place in 1989 and 1990. Usually the names of streets from pre-1939 were restored, of course where it was possible and the street did not disappear, or had no other equivalent in the city. The list of all changes made then would exceed the scope of this publication, but there were some major changes that should be mentioned:

<i>name before 1989</i>	<i>name after 1989</i>
Ul. Armii Czerwonej Obrońców Stalingradu Gen. Karola Świerczewskiego Armii Ludowej Stefana Przybyszewskiego Ernsta Thälmana Jana Promińskiego	Al. Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Legionów Radwańska Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej [POW] Stanisława Przybyszewskiego Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego Marszałka Edwarda Śmigłego Rydza

The attention of the public at that time was focused primarily at objects and centrally located areas, important for various reasons for the city (Bieńkowska, Umińska-Tytoń, 2012: 243). This was due to the fact that, as already mentioned, the then decommunization was conducted rather spontaneously without using any central legal act regulating this issue. Hence, some names honoring the old regime, survived. A possible explanation will be in this case a very short collective memory about the patrons of specific streets, where they were not openly associated with the old regime. They were often local communists, or activists of the socialist movement, whose merits were quickly forgotten after naming the street. Certainly, there also did not help the change of the street identification system in the city at the turn of the millennium. On the new boards, criticized by the residents short comments properly describing a particular character, or an event commemorated in the name of the street, disappeared. This was also maintained during the next change of the visual information system made in the year 2005, this time reflecting the Warsaw model.

The spontaneous de-communization was slightly different in the second of the discussed cases, in the case of the Andrespol commune, in particular in its main settlement. Here, de-communization was initially carried out very modestly, where the only notable change was actually of 30 Years of PRL [Polish People's Republic] to

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Tuszyńska Street (its traditional , directing name). Many names were then left although they were unquestionably associated with the old system, it was explained in double: the habits of the population, and the costs of making changes (mainly the exchange of documents). This situation was also characteristic to many small towns in Poland. It was only *the Act of 2 September 2016 on the prohibition of promoting communism or other totalitarian regime by names of buildings, facilities and public utilities*; that forced the common authorities to act.

The situation related to maintaining names in urban space evidently associated with the previous system remained as arbitrary for each individual local units for a very long period of time, until 2016. We can indicate many reasons explaining such attitude, to those mentioned earlier, you can also add here lack of political consensus about such actions. Only the gaining of full power by *Law and Justice* in 2015 (victory in both presidential and parliamentary elections) opened the gate for further activities related to the broadly understood de-communization of the state, including public space. Currently in Poland, these changes in public space are not the only activities of the aforementioned nature, nevertheless they perfectly fit into the other, more publicized activities that are leading to extensive de-communization, not only personal, but also structural. An important element of such activities is, for example, pursuing reform of the judiciary, perceived by some as an assault on civil liberties, while by advocates of change as an element of state repair, determined quite recently by one of the prominent PO [Civic Platform] activists as a *theoretical state*.

Although, on the one hand, the issue of changes in urban onomastics is not so carefully observed by social organizations dealing with the protection of human rights, etc., however, they arouse understandable interest in the society, especially those who live there. Obviously, but from other reasons, it also arouses interest among local politicians, but they are not so much interested with old patrons but with new heroes /patrons whose selection is usually a derivative of a certain political attitude and reflects the political views of the decision-making body.

Łódź, as a city in which investments were implemented and it creates new communication arteries, experienced even before 2017 some clashes regarding the nomenclature present in the urban space. It should be objectively acknowledged that in the time interval mentioned, i.e. from about 1994 to 2015, if new street names appeared, it was usually attempted to minimize the so-called *costs* for the society. that is, the names were changed in order to be hardly burdensome for the residents. The best example was the change of the name of the southern part of *Aleja Włókniarzy* to *Aleja św. Jana Pawła II* [Saint John Paul II Av.], which took place after the death of the Pope and the great Pole on June 8, 2005²⁷. In this case, also the necessary prestige has been maintained, because that time this street was part of the main transit route in the North-South relation, on the national scale [National Road No. 1] and at the same time it did not have too many addresses. While the figure of the Holy Father did not raise any controversy, further actions undertaken, for example, in connection with the construction of new streets in investment areas have already aroused controversies. We can indicate here at least three decisions that stir up quite fierce discussions in the city. Two of them concerned industrial areas, where some attempts were made to encourage foreign investors to invest in Łódź by giving the street where the investment was supposed to be, the name honoring the event / person for some reason important to the investor (this can be considered an interesting example of corruption activities ?).

An example of this is the creation of King C. Gillette Street, at the Retkinia district of Łódź, where a factory producing razors for the aforementioned company was built. The first signals indicating such a possibility and with a clearly defined goal - incentives for investments appeared already in 2004, that is three years before the investment²⁸. This aroused the inhabitants astonishment, especially as the project was not confirmed at that time. A similar case resulted from another important investment at that time, namely the route leading to the Dell computer assembly plant being built in Łódź. At that time, in order to honor the investor, the councilors decided to name the street leading to the factory as: Ofiar Terroryzmu 11 Września [Victims of September 11 Terrorism]. Here the matter has become so complicated that the investor himself was not very pleased with this gesture, asking for the street to be renamed Dell Street, or another related with IT industry. It was explained in two ways, firstly the name was too long, which could have generated problems in the IT systems (contact details), and secondly the attention was paid to potential problems related to trade with Arab countries, which did not necessarily have to accept this name²⁹. Eventually, the city went to the investor on the one hand, leaving the name of Victims of September 11 Terrorism, on the other hand, calling one of the access streets Informatyczna, which satisfied the investor.

On 9 April 2008, the City Council in Łódź, by virtue of Resolution No. XXX / 0586/08 on naming streets, squares and parks, adopted a moratorium on changes applied to existing names. By the same resolution were introduced: the principle of not naming new streets, squares and parks with names of deceased persons within one year from the date of their death; the principle of not giving new streets, squares and parks names of meaning, spelling or sound similar to the names already existing in Łódź.

As already mentioned, changes in names that commemorate specific people or events, important for a specific political camp, but not necessarily accepted by competitors usually cause vivid discussions. In Łódź, the biggest controversy occurred in the period preceding the publication of the 2016 Act, while looking for a patron for one of the new but important streets in the city, opened in 2015, streamlining the transit north-south. For a year, it was called a provisional, but quite neutral name, the Trasa Górna [Górna Route - from the city district], in July 2016 the councillors from the PO proposed to give it the name of Władysław Bartoszewski, a merited Pole and former foreign minister³⁰. Applicants expected that the proposal would be acceptable to all interested parties, although they probably had to be aware that Bartoszewski was certainly not the one accepted by the current ruling party [PiS] in the country. As expected, this sparked a fierce discussion, during which the life of the proposed patron was not discussed (although some historians associated with the right side of the political scene consider it quite controversial). The discussion drew attention to another important issue - not carrying out the so-called *public consultations* about the idea. That gave the impression of unnecessary hurry when making a change. Applicants suggested quick naming, arguing that the lack of an official name makes it impossible for individual companies to operate. The PiS councillors suggested that in this case, keeping the provisional name, that residents have already got used to. Ultimately, with the majority of the PO and its minions in the City Council, the proposal was accepted by 24:11³¹.

The legal basis for the new changes is *the Act on the prohibition of promoting communism or other totalitarian regime by names of buildings, facilities and public utilities*. In 2016, the Institute of National Remembrance pointed out that there are 943 streets in Poland to change³². A special index of names, which were to be changed automatically was created. There was also left a gate to leave actual name, but the IPN

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had to verify the biography of a given person and finally decide about the fate of a particular street. Mentioned Law was adopted on April 1, 2016, and had taken effect on September 2, 2016. It gave local self-government units a year to adopt the urban space to the requirements of the Act, in other words, to remove elements that promote the totalitarian system (in the Polish case, of course, communist, because denazification was carried out extremely scrupulously in 1945)³³. In case that the local self-governments did not fulfill their abilities, the appropriate voivode obtained the right to change them on their own. The Act, despite the relatively short period of validity, has already been amended twice. The first time on June 22, 2017, when monuments and educational institutions were also included in scope of its interest. First and foremost, it obliges to remove all commemorations of the Red Army from the public space as a *de facto* force that occupied Poland after 1945. In this sense it completes the actions taken already after 1989, when a large number of such memorials were removed, while the graves of Soviet soldiers which were usually located near the monuments, usually with the military ceremonial were transferred to the appropriate war cemetery. On January 6, 2018, another amendment came into effect, giving the voivode the option of vetoing the resolutions of local councils changing the names of streets or public buildings.

Now in Poland, a certain part of the discourse regarding the shape of collective memory determines several important issues present in the political narrative promoted by the ruling Law and Justice [PiS]. They have also been reflected in discussions on new street names and places of public utility. They are primarily: resistance against the Workers Party government after 1945, i.e. *Damned Soldiers*; the second important element of the narrative is the Smolensk Crash, and especially the commemoration of those who died in it, in particular President Lech Kaczyński, twin brother of PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński, and his wife Maria. As already mentioned, Łódź is now a specific city, at the moment we have there cohabitation, whereas the City Council is dominated by the PO and its coalition partners, for example from the SLD, while the voivodship is managed by the PiS nominee, though not a formal member of the party - prof. Zbigniew Rau, a lawyer associated with the University of Lodz.

As it was expected, to fulfill the task set out in the act on de-communization, takes place in Łódź in the atmosphere of a political quarrel, in which the issue of proper commemoration in the city of the late President Lech Kaczyński is the axis of the dispute. Because the City Council did not prepare resolutions on changing street names on time (similarly to the majority of local self-governments in Łódzkie Voivodship, where from 171 commons changes have to be made in 71 of them - 44 commons did not take care of it, giving the voivode the free hand)³⁴; voivode on December 13, 2017 (symbolic date associated with the anniversary of the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981) issued the so-called *replacing order* changing 27 street names and one square in Łódź. According to the provisions of the Act, patrons connected with the previous regime were removed, as to which the negative opinion was issued by the Institute of National Remembrance³⁵. The voivode commented on the changes as follows: *The following premises were guided by the choice of new street names in Łódź: firstly, characters that fit into our joint efforts to win and maintain independence should be promoted, and secondly they should be significant for national culture and marked by pluralistic Łódź sensitivity*³⁶.

While most of the changes made were not controversial, the City Council practically vetoed Lech Kaczyński Square, which replaced Plac Zwycięstwa, this change was assessed as particularly negative by the City Council. There curious is the fact that Victory Square (over Germany in 1945) itself was not negatively verified by the Institute

of National Remembrance. City councilors indicated that there was no need to make this change, while even if there were some doubts, it was possible to change the name into traditional (official until 1945 – Wodny Rynek [Water Market]), and still present in the consciousness of the inhabitants of Lodz, or act as it was done in the early 90's, for example with Stefan Przybyszewski street, turning it into Stanisław Przybyszewski; in this case leaving the name, but with a different justification. One of the councilors associated with the Civic Platform stated directly that: *we do not want Lech Kaczyński's cult in Łódź*³⁷. In the assessment of forces removed from power in 2015, the new Law created mechanisms enabling the party in power to properly shape the politics of memory by giving voivode (government nominees) the real influence on shaping the urban space, so something that was previously reserved for local self-governments. On the other hand, the argument should be raised that the City Council had, according to the Law, time to introduce its own proposals, perhaps even more *in line* with the PO's vision, but if it did not, then gave the voivode the free hand. It was the second attempt to commemorate the tragically deceased President in the city. First time it happened in 2014, when one of the city squares located in the city center for a short time bore his name³⁸.

Eventually, the City Council decided to maintain the old name, but with a different justification - this time the term Victory was to refer to the victory over the Bolsheviks in 1920. The City Council changed voted it in a hurry on 4th January 2018, practically at the last minute before the entrance into force of amendment to the Law, which was supposed to block the possibility of making changes by the Council. Now the voivode and local branch of the Institute of National Remembrance have to agree³⁹. Eventually, the voivode published this decision, but he announced its in-depth legal verification, which is an expression of the obvious *quasi-guerilla* war between him and the City Council. What's more, some councilors began to question the validity of the other changes, arguing that is also due to the social consultations. In this case, however, the City Council had a chance to make changes (there was an annual *vacatio legis*), since this was not used, the current questions are a manifestation of a political activity - it is easier to criticize the changes already made than to initiate them⁴⁰.

Noting the general changes announced by the governor on December 13, 2017 and attempting to indicate the collective memory version, whether the appropriate narrative model promoted in this ordinance. It should be noted that indeed there are names associated with the already mentioned narrative commemorating the anti-communist underground functioning after 1945. - the street of Konspiracyjnego Wojska Polskiego [the Polish Army in the Conspiracy] (former Leona Kruczkowskiego), although the names that are more often associated with the anti-communist opposition, however, operating over a longer period of time, prevail. Commemorated are: universal figures, widely known such as: Andrei Sakharov, Bulat Okudzhava, or characters, movements and events known rather in Poland, for example Anna Walentynowicz⁴¹ (also the victim of the Smolensk crash), Ferdynand Ossendowski⁴², and Solidarność Walcząca [Fighting Solidarity]⁴³. Commemorated were also people known locally, but active in the anti-communist opposition - such as Jacek Berzin. A separate category are people associated with Łódź, born there, but also related to its promotion, such as Karl Dedecius; commemorated were also people of culture in some form associated with Łódź - Ira Aldridge (Kujawińska-Courtney 2009: 290)⁴⁴, Kazimierz Dejmek, or universal characters, outstanding creators of culture as: Czesław Miłosz, Zbigniew Herbert or Wojciech Kilar. It was also used to commemorate events associated locally but nevertheless important to the Łódź community. An example of this is the commemoration of the so-called Little Fifteen [Mała

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Piętnastka], a Girl Scouts Troop operating in the city, whose members were killed in a tragic accident in the early 1950s. An interesting fact is also the commemoration of one of the most famous Western genre actors, but also strong anti-communist - John Wayne.

In this case, the general intention is to commemorate people and events of universal character, however, associated with anti-communist resistance, although not always directly. The vast majority have been commemorated with people important for the promotion of Poland in the world at different times, which proves the willingness to mark in the present collective memory rather uncontroversial people who are univocally associated with Poland or solidarise with this country. At the local level, there is also a willingness to appreciate people who actively contributed to the promotion of the city in the international arena (Karl Dedecius), or rather passive, like Ira Aldridge, who died in Łódź before his first appearance in 1867, but thanks to that probably a large part of the world even heard about such a place in the world. The very fact of streets decommunization did not cause much discussion in the city, no one defended the erased patrons, moreover in most cases these were names of long forgotten people, that even people who are professionally connected with the city's history could not say much about them. The only exception was the street of Michalina Tatarkówna-Majkowska, the former first secretary of the Workers Party Łódź Committee between 1955-1964. Tatarkówna-Majkowska was assessed positively by the majority of Lodz inhabitants, as a person devoted to working class (especially women, whom she prevented from work at night) and to all city residents - she objected effectively against the building in Łódź flats equipped only with so-called *blind kitchen* (without a window), which are the mark of housing from the 1960s in other Polish cities. In spite of this, the street was also decommunized, it was turned into the legendary leader of Solidarity - Anna Walentynowicz.

The term *decommunization* is also related to the naming of urban facilities, including primarily sports facilities, but also with the issue of commemorating people who have contributed to the sport in Łódź. In connection with the above-mentioned decommunization Law, serious doubts arose about the commemoration of the legendary chairman of Widzew Łódź, Ludwik Sobolewski. As part of the municipal investments selected for implementation in 2016, the *civic budget* included a monument dedicated to him, which was to be erected near the deeply reconstructed, or rather newly built, stadium used by club⁴⁵. Eventually, despite the fact that the stadium was opened in March 2017, the monument has not been created until today. As it turned out, this was the aftermath of the de-Communization Act. The Institute of National Remembrance in its archives confirmed that Sobolewski, in the 1940s and 1950s, was an Internal Security Corps (KBW) officer, something that was rather unheard of in a club-related society so far⁴⁶. Therefore, it was decided to change the concept and the monument to be created next to the stadium will be devoted to the creators of the *Great Widzew*⁴⁷, which is certainly more neutral formula, not requiring consultation with other institutions, and also commemorating the greater number of people actually involved in the club (Wawrzynowski, 2013: 77-78). This example shows that the act of de-communization also affects the possibility of commemorating people who were not necessarily involved in politics. It is also an important element of the discussion about officials and sportsmen and their connection with the authorities, in the PRL but also generally in the socialist camp (Majchrzak, 2017).

An important, though not the most popular, element of shaping collective memory at the local level in Łódź is the commemoration of people who have indeed created the city. It is connected with the issue of naming the new streets, which appeared

on the occasion of the reconstruction of the city center near reconstructed Łódź Fabryczna train station and the so-called New Center of Łódź. This time there was no controversy and streets surrounding the new station commemorate families that contributed to the development of Lodz in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁴⁸. In addition, this highlights the popular aspect of multiculturalism, because among the nineteenth century industrialists we find: Poles, Germans and Jews. Similarly can be qualified, the Włodzimierz Smolarek street at the already mentioned Widzew stadium. It commemorates, the Widzew, Eintracht Frankfurt, Feyenoord Rotterdam and the Polish national team player who died in 2012. In this case, there was no controversy and the City Council adopted the relevant resolution unanimously⁴⁹. In all, there should be mentioned that the legends of the second club in Łódź - ŁKS are also commemorated with street names – eg. Władysław Król⁵⁰ (Bieńkowska, Umińska-Tytoń, 2012: 89).

To sum up, it should be emphasized that the naming of the urban structure is certainly an important testimony of the era. Street names in Łódź have changed many times, especially after periods of historical turmoil associated with: both world wars, or finally the collapse of the so-called *people's democracy*. In each of these cases, the municipal authorities tried to commemorate people or events important for a specific era. This statement will be universal both for large cities (Łódź) and surrounding municipalities (Andrespol). On the other hand, the scale of changes will be different, when in smaller settlements usually limited to the necessary minimum, while in larger cities it took place on a wider scale. However, as it has been shown, at the end of 2017, it was not carried out in a satisfactory manner. The last wave of changes was enforced by the de-communization Law, which had to be applied both in Łódź and in neighboring towns. Nevertheless, in the province, the local councils tried to name the streets rather by neutral names, in the city the process of change triggered political struggle and reflected in the dispute over shaping collective memory. Above all, controversy aroused (not only in Lodz) with the city urban tissue named after Lech Kaczyński, which in the opinion of critics from the opposition is to be an element of building the cult of this politician. Interestingly, the commemoration of other victims of the Smolensk crash in Lodz did not arouse any controversy. The Law also did not spare people connected with sport, but in this case on the one hand it is the result of complicated human fate after World War II, and on the other hand of the specificity of sport management in the Eastern Bloc.⁵¹

²² Ustawa z dnia 1 kwietnia 2016 r. o zakazie propagowania komunizmu lub innego ustroju totalitarnego przez nazwy budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej. *Dziennik Ustaw RP* 1 czerwca 2016, poz. 744., [Law forbidding the propagation of communism or other totalitarian regime through the naming of buildings, and other items present in public space. 1st April 2016]. Retrieved from: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20160000744/O/D20160744.pdf> (11 01 2018)

²³ P. Toczyski, 30% Polaków przywiązuje wagę do patronów ulic, [30% of Poles cares about their street patrons] Retrieved from: http://wyborcza.pl/duzyformat/1,127290,14625829,30__Polakow_przywiazuje_wage_do_patronow_ulic.html (11 01 2018).

²⁴ It is worth to mention there about the completely different character of the German occupation during World War I, in comparison to that during the Second World War. While in the first case, the Germans tried to act as *de facto* allies of the Poles and allowed manifestation of Polish patriotism (calculated pragmatically for recruitment of the troops), which found its peak even in the proclamation of the Kingdom of Poland on November 5, 1916 (act differently evaluated, but with indisputable consequence as was the internationalization of the Polish cause and confirmation of creation of a Polish state after the war; absent since 1795).

²⁵ Commemoration of German general, Karl von Litzmann (1850-1936), commander of the German 3rd Infantry Division, who won the Łódź battle in 1914 against the Russian troops.

26 As the real main avenue in the city Piotrkowska street is commonly considered.

27 Uchwała Nr L/896/05, Rady Miejskiej w Łodzi z dnia 8 czerwca 2005 r., [Resolution Nr L/896/05 of Łódź City Council, 8th June 2005], Retrieved from: <http://archiwum.bip.uml.lodz.pl/index.php?Str=83&id=16596>, (11 01 2018).

28 (Kup), Czy będzie ulica Kinga C. Gillette?, [King C. Gillette street appears?], Retrieved from: <http://lodz.naszemiasto.pl/archiwum/czy-bedzie-ulica-kinga-c-gillette,768440,art,t,id,tm.html>. (21 02 2018).

29 W. Gnacikowska, Dell chce mieć swoją ulicę, [Dell wishes to have it's own street], Retrieved from: <http://lodz.wyborcza.pl/lodz/1,35136,4652392.html>. (21 02 2018).

30 There were also other suggestions, *eg. Vaclav Havel*.

31 P. Brzóska, Trasa Górna będzie aleją Władysława Bartoszewskiego, [Górna Route became Bartoszewskiego Avenue], Retrieved from: <http://www.dzienniklodzki.pl/wiadomosci/lodz/a/trasa-gorna-bedzie-aleja-wladyslawa-bartoszewskiego,10576710/> (11 1 2018).

³² kch, adom, Setki nazw ulic do zmiany. Propagują ustroje totalitarne. [Hundreds of streets should be renamed, they propagate the totalitarian regime]. Retrieved from: <http://www.tvp.info/33833586/setki-nazw-ulic-do-zmiany-propaguja-ustroje-totalitarne>. (30 03 2018).

³³ Art. 6. Ustawa z dnia 1 kwietnia 2016 r ... [Law forbidding ...].

³⁴ msm, Kiedy dekomunizacja ulic w Łodzi, [When will the decommunization in Łódź begin], Retrieved from: <http://www.expressilustrowany.pl/lodz/a/kiedy-dekomunizacja-nazw-ulic-w-lodzi,12571654/>, (11 1 2018).

³⁵ which is an institution that deals with de-communization, but also research on the past system.

³⁶ Dekomunizacja 28 łódzkich ulic. Powstanie m.in. pl. Lecha Kaczyńskiego, ul. Miłosza i John'a Wayne'a [Decommunization of 28 streets in Łódź. Lech Kaczyński Square and John Wayne street will be created], Retrieved from: <https://www.tulodz.com/wiadomosci,dekomunizacja-28-lodzkich-ulic-powstanie-m-in-pl-lecha-kaczynskiego-ul-milosza-i-john-a-wayne-a,wia5-3266-5513.html> (11 01 2018).

³⁷ bż/mś, Wojewoda zmienił plac Zwycięstwa na plac Kaczyńskiego. Łódzcy radni przywrócili starą nazwę. [Voivode has substituted the Victory Square with Lech Kaczyński Square. City councilors have the old name brought back], Retrieved from: <https://www.tvn24.pl/lodz,69/przemianowali-plac-lecha-kaczynskiego-po-czterech-dniach,803885.html>. (14 02 2018).

³⁸ M. Darda, W Łodzi jest już skwer im. Lecha Kaczyńskiego, [We have Lech Kaczyński square in Łódź] Retrieved from: <http://www.dzienniklodzki.pl/arttykul/3390747,w-lodzi-jest-juz-skwer-im-lecha-kaczynskiego,id,t.html>, (12 I 2018).

³⁹ W. Gnacikowska, Nie ma już w Łodzi Placu Lecha Kaczyńskiego. Wrócił Plac Zwycięstwa. Zdążyli przed IPN, [There is no Lech Kaczyński square, Victory Square is back. They managed do it in time]. Retrieved from:

<https://oko.press/juz-lodzi-placu-lecha-kaczynskiego-wrocil-plac-zwyciestwa-zdazyli-ipn/>, (15 I 2018).

⁴⁰ T. Talaga, Rada wojewodzie nie rada, wojewoda przeciw Radzie. Wojny o nazwy ulic ciągnie dalej [The Council dislikes voivode. Voivode strikes back. War about streets names lasts], Retrieved from: <https://www.tulodz.com/wiadomosci,rada-wojewodzie-nie-rada-wojewoda-przeciw-radzie-wojny-o-nazwy-ulic-ciagnie-dalzy-wideo,wia5-3266-6286.html> [27.01.2018].

⁴¹ Anna Walentynowicz (1929-2010), one of the very first Solidarity leaders. Firing her from the Gdańsk Shipyard was the cause of strike, which finally ended in emerging of Solidarity movement.

⁴² Ferdynand Ossendowski (1878-1945), writer, adventurer, *Lenin's personal enemy*. He popularized the truth about Lenin's collaboration with Central Powers. The author of unauthorized Lenin's biography *Lenin* [Romanian edition: *Lenin : Dumnezeul celor fără Dumnezeu*, Brăila 2015, trans. Nicolae Drăgușin]. His book about escape from revolutionary Russia *Beasts, Men and Gods*, was translated into 19 languages [Romanian edition: *Animale, oameni și zei*, București 1994, trans from French. S. Lupașcu i M. Romanică]. Taking into account the quantity he is second only to Henryk Sienkiewicz best known Polish writer in the world.

⁴³ Solidarność Walcząca (Fighting Solidarity) – was the radical organization created after the dissolution of Solidarity by government in December 1981.

⁴⁴ Ira Aldridge (1807-1867), well known American African shakespearean actor, who died in Łódź. K. Kujawińska-Courtney, Ira Aldridge (1807-1867), *dzieje pierwszego czarnoskórego tragika szekspirowskiego*, 2009, ss. 320

⁴⁵ It was nevertheless supported by the inhabitants of the city.

⁴⁶ IPN zablokuje powstanie pomnika Ludwika Sobolewskiego? [Will IPN block erecting of Ludwik Sobolewski statue?]. Retrieved from: <http://www.derbylodzi.pl/news/510/ipn-zablokuje-powstanie-pomnika-ludwika-sobolewskiego/>. (13 I 2018).

⁴⁷ Kamil, Nowe ustalenia w sprawie pomnika Ludwika Sobolewskiego, [New arrangements in case of Ludwik Sobolewski statue]. Retrieved from: <http://www.widzewtomy.net/aktualnosci/nowe-ustalenia-sprawie-pomnika-ludwika-sobolewskiego/>. (13 I 2018).

⁴⁸ Sz. Bujalski, Nowe Centrum Łodzi. Pierwsze ulice nazwane. Są duże kontrowersje. [New Center of Łódź. First streets named. There are big controversies]. Retrieved from: <http://lodz.wyborcza.pl/lodz/1,35136,21230786,pierwsze-ulice-w-ncl-nazwane-ale-sa-duze-kontrowersje.html> (13 01 2018).

⁴⁹ B. Jankowski, Jednomyślność w Radzie Miejskiej. Włodzimierz Smolarek patronem ulicy przy stadionie Widzewa, [Unanimous vote in City Council. Włodzimierz Smolarek has his street near the Widzew Stadium], Retrieved from: <https://www.tulodz.com/wiadomosci,jednomyslność-w-radzie-miejskiej-włodzimierz-smolarek-patronem-ulicy-przy-stadionie-widzewa,wia5-3270-1196.html> (13 I 2018).

⁵⁰ Władysław Król (1907-1991) – football and ice hockey player. Played in ŁKS between 1928-1946 [except 1939-1945]. Also football and ice hockey coach in this club. As a coach won the Polish Championship in football with his club in 1958. Played ice hockey in 1936 Olympics, designated also to play in 1940 Olympic football tournament.

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