

Article

In a Time Loop: Politics and the Ideological Significance of Monuments to Those Who Perished on Saint Anne Mountain (1934–1955, Germany/Poland)

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Abstract: Polish Góra św. Anny (Saint Anne Mountain), previously German Annaberg, is one of the few places in the world where art was utilized to promote two regimes—fascist and communist. With the use of art, the refuge of pagan gods and then, Christian Saint John's Mountain with Saint Ann's church and a calvary site were transformed into a mausoleum of the victims of uprisings and wars—those placed by politics on opposite sides of the barricade. The “sacred” character of the mountain was appropriated in the 1930s by the fascist Thingstätte under the form of an open-air theatre with a mausoleum, erected to commemorate fallen German soldiers in the Third Silesian Uprising. After the Second World War, the same place was “sacralized” by the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed, which replaced the German object. The aim of both of them was to commemorate those who had perished in the same armed conflicts—uprisings from the years 1919–1921, when the Poles opposed German administration of Upper Silesia. According to the assumptions of both national socialism as well as communism, the commemorative significance of both monuments was subjected to ideological messages. Both monuments were supposed to constitute not only the most important element of the place where patriotic manifestations were intended to be held, but also a kind of counterbalance for the local pilgrims' center dedicated to the cult of Saint Anne. The aim of the paper is to present the process of transforming a Nazi monument into its communist counterpart, at the same time explaining the significance of both monuments in the context of changing political reality. This paper has not been based on one exclusive research method—historical and field studies have been conducted, together with iconographical and iconological analyses of the monuments viewed from their comparative perspective. The text relies on archive materials—documents, press releases, and projects, including architectural drawings of the monument staffage—discovered by the authors and never published before. They would connect the structure not only to the surrounding landscape but, paradoxically, to the fascist Thingstätte.



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1. Introduction

From the ancient era, intentional demolition of monuments had constituted the expression of victory and domination, but within the last hundred years, we would morally justify such actions if performed by the victims of violence from the commemorated individuals or communities erecting the ruined monuments. New statues would emerge in place of the demolished ones, as they serve the function of tools helpful for shaping social identity (Gillis 1996). In Central and Eastern European countries, three mass monument “exchange” actions were carried out in the 20th century. The first of them took place after the end of WW2 and was connected with the establishment of many new states and at the time, monuments constituting the symbols of the old order were being demolished (Gamboni 2007). The second action took place after WW2 and the fall of the German Third Reich. Traces

of Nazi presence were being removed in the countries under German occupation during the war; in Poland that, under the provisions of the Yalta Conference, was granted part of former German territories, activities were planned by state authorities and were aimed at integrating the society, mutilated by the war. Finally, the third monument demolition action resulted from the “peaceful revolution” of 1989, when six countries from the former Soviet Bloc freed themselves from the burden of communism. Some monuments considered to represent the hegemony of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were deconstructed at the time (cf.: [Bartetzky 2006](#); [Gabowitsch 2018](#)).

In this context, the Monument of the Insurgents’ Deeds erected on Saint Anne Mountain can be treated as a unique structure. Firstly, it constitutes an exclusive example of a Nazi Thingstätte being transformed into a socialist monument that preserves, or mirrors, the same function and idea. Secondly, the monument was not “verified” after the fall of the Soviet Union. Thirdly, it is a mature work, performed by an artist holding recognized pre-war achievements. Xawery Dunikowski, the author of the monument, won numerous prizes in international competitions. Fourthly, the monument was given forms originating from the patterns of pre-Christian art and architecture, to which the artists of the Third Reich would also eagerly refer ([Michaud 2004](#), p. 99 and the following).

Research on the art of socialist realism was carried out following two paths – already in the 1960s and 1970s, countries situated on the western side of the “Iron Curtain” were interested in the relationships between artistic work and Marxism (cf.: [James 1973](#); [Bullitt 1976](#)), while researchers from the Eastern Bloc countries began writing critical texts devoted to socialist art as late as in the late 20th century (cf. [Groys 1990](#); [Murawska-Muthesius 1996](#); [Gutkin 1999](#)). After the 1989 transformation, the heritage of socialist realism was rejected and all remnants of the past era were reactively removed from the public space ([Gabowitsch 2018](#)), in particular, the statues of “revolution leaders” ([Czepczyński 2010](#); [Basic 2011](#)). In the early 1990s, works representing socialist realism disappeared from museums in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland, considered culturally distant and sometimes deprived of the right to be called art. Hungary had a park where statues were removed from their plinths ([Williams 2008](#); [deTar 2015](#)), while in Poland, the Gallery of Socialist Art was established in 1994 ([Main 2008](#), pp. 373–74), but was located in the peripheral region of the country and treated nearly as a warehouse of unnecessary artefacts. The situation began to change in the first decade of the 21st century, when the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary joined the European Union together with former Soviet republics: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and then, Bulgaria and Romania. The people of these countries began to realize that their recent past constitutes an inherent element of their identity ([Kanet 2008](#)). Distinguished artists were noticed among socialist authors ([Chmielewski 2011](#); [Moskalewicz 2020](#)) and some of the works and buildings were granted legal protection, such as the Palace of Culture and Science, Joseph Stalin’s “gift” for the capital city of Poland which, after a stormy discussion, was entered into the register of monuments in 2007. What is more, the voice of the young generation, who do not know the reality of living behind the “Iron Curtain” and treat the socialist era just as any other period in history, was heard. It is, among others, thanks to them that we are now experiencing an explosion of trends referring to the art of socialist realism and its presence in auction houses—in 2019, the damaged sculpture by Alina Szapocznikow, formed in the years 1952–1953 and entitled “Polish-Soviet Friendship”, was sold for USD 420,000 ([Desa Unikum 2021](#)). In connection with the progressing evolution of attitudes towards the works of socialist art, the latest research on the “unwanted artistic heritage” from the years 1949–1989 follows two main directions. The first of them concentrates on analyzing the influence of socialist art and architecture on identity, also including the gender identity ([Funk and Mueller 2018](#)) of citizens of the former Eastern Bloc countries (cf. [Ochman 2010](#); [Čamprag 2018](#); [Moore 2019](#)). The second, in turn, refers to the touristic, and thus, economic potential of communist heritage, analyzing its perception by different social and professional groups and local and foreign tourists (cf.: [Ivanov and Achikgezyan 2017](#); [Banaszkiewicz et al. 2017](#)). The abovementioned studies prove that tourism not only gives

the opportunity to preserve socialist monuments, but also to protect them. Our paper inscribes into the first of the quoted trends, even though it was constructed based on tools which are nowadays used rather rarely, i.e., historical studies and archive queries. The article follows the order that can be called chronological, which should make it easier for the readers to trace the complex history of the erection of both monuments, their ideological identity, and connections with the politics of those times. At the end of the article, a brief overview of Xawery Dunikowski's art is presented. He was the designer of the Polish monument and his works would elude the assumptions of the doctrine of socialist realism. Dunikowski's style, together with the concept of including timeless European art models in the silhouette of the monument, make it possible to exclude the monument from the collection of works following the principles of Lenin's "monumental propaganda" (see more, e.g., [Kruk 2008](#)).

2. Saint Anne Mountain—Franciscan Sanctuary and National Socialist Thingstätte

Today, Saint Anne Mountain is situated within the administrative borders of Poland, in the southwestern part of the Upper Silesia region, which had belonged to Germany until 1945. In the 1480s, Saint Jerzy's chapel had been erected on top of the hill, then replaced with the church. In the early 17th century, a wooden sculpture with the relics of Saint Anne had been placed in the church and its dedication had thus been changed. In the second half of the 17th century, a Franciscan monastery had been erected next to the church, which had gradually transformed Saint Anne Mountain into a pilgrims sanctuary. At the turn of the 18th and 19th century, industrial activity in the form of limestone and nepheline mining had begun on the hill and in its vicinity. One of the quarries—Krowiok (Kuhtal), located on the southwestern side of the sanctuary and remaining out of operation after the end of the First World War—had been intended in 1934 for the construction of national socialist Thingstätte, the place inspired by the "heritage of ancient forefathers" ([Lurz 1975](#), p. 126), the idea of the Germanic agora (Thing) which was supposed to strengthen national and historical identity. Thingstätten were planned to constitute a venue for open-air performances aimed at strengthening "the spirit of community" and presenting reality as a staged, half-religious myth. In the press, Thingstätten were even called the "places of cult of the national socialist faith" and Joseph Goebbels, in his speech inaugurating the functioning of a facility of this kind erected in Heidelberg, called it "a genuine church of the Imperium" ([Lurz 1975](#), p. 126). The Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda planned the creation of four hundred monumental "sacred places" ([Hoffmann 1985](#), p. 176) to be surrounded by mountains and forests, as their vicinity was supposed to shape the desired national characteristics of the German people: industriousness, discipline, attachment to the land, and moral purity.

The Thingstätte erected in the vicinity of Saint Anne Mountain consisted of: an open-air theatre built in the years 1934–1936 with a stage and a two-level candle-shaped base as well as a monument mausoleum (Figure 1a) commemorating 51 German soldiers from the Volunteers Corps (Freikorps) who perished during the Third Silesian Uprising, during the attack of the "saint mountain" on May 21st 1921 ([Das Freikorps-Ehrenmal auf dem Annaberg 1939](#), p. 102). The open-air theatre, with a capacity of 7000 seats and places for 20,000 standing spectators, designed by Franz Böhmer and Georg Petrich, was located in the former excavation site of the quarry at the feet of a vertical stone, 34 meters high, on top of which the said mausoleum was constructed in the years 1937–1938 ([Böck 2017](#)). Robert Tischel, the creator of the design of fallen soldiers' monument, gave it the shape of a rotunda, supported with buttresses and covered by a flat roof hiding an internal dome with a lantern (Figure 1b). Even if the facility represented, according to the press, "military" character ([Das Freikorps-Ehrenmal auf dem Annaberg 1939](#), p. 102), it was perfectly well inscribed in the remnants of the quarry. Its shape, resembling a "natural" rock uplift, was used to hide a crypt carved in rock with the curtilage and side recesses, where the sarcophaguses of the victims of the uprising were placed (Figure 2a). In the middle of the Hall of the Dead, the sculpture of a dying warrior was situated (Figure 2b) and stone

sarcophaguses were ornamented with propaganda inscriptions—slogans referring to the history of Germany from the years 1914–1933. The interior of the dome and the rear walls of the recesses were covered with multicolor and golden mosaics including stylized representations of the eagle and swastika, and the names of those who perished. The Hall of the Dead, immersed in twilight and illuminated only with lanterns and narrow side windows resembling embrasures, represented nearly mystical character and resembled old Christian catacombs (Dobesz 1999).

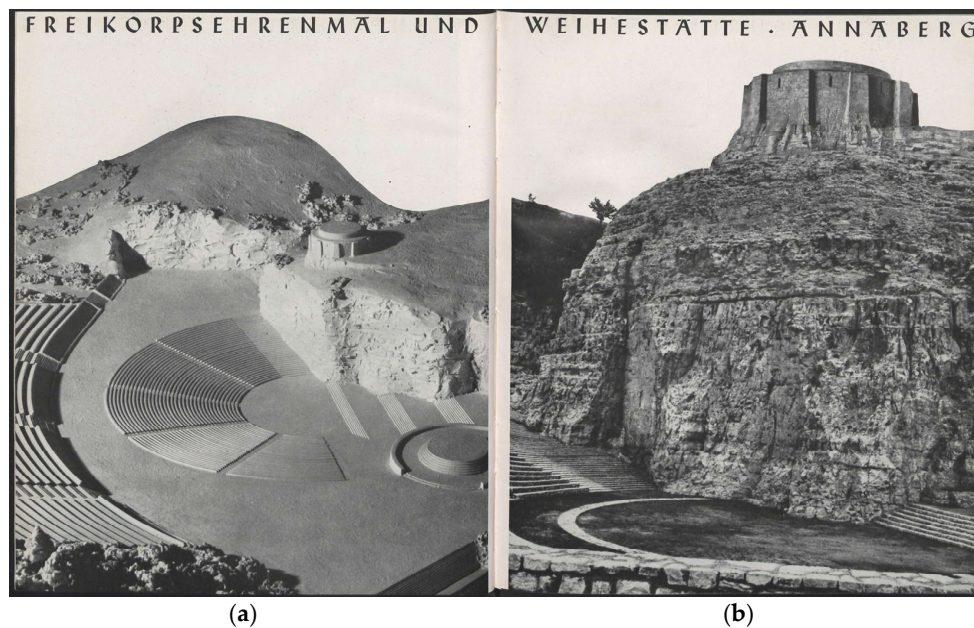


Figure 1. Saint Anne Mountain: (a) German Thingstätte, model; (b) Monument mausoleum of the fallen German soldiers from the Volunteers Corps (Freikorps), view from the open-air theatre (*Schlesische Monatshefte* 1938, May 15: 12, 13).

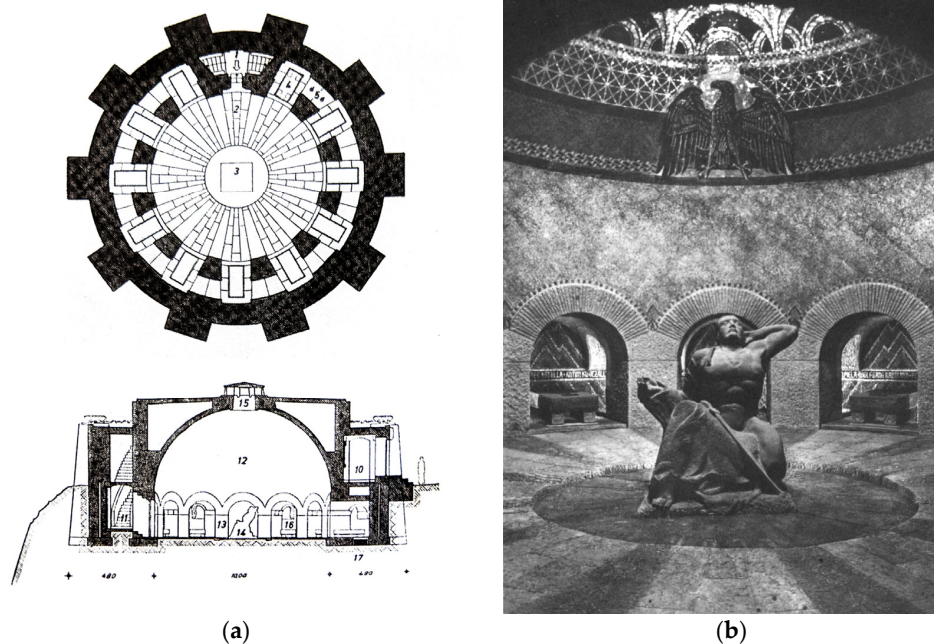


Figure 2. Saint Anne Mountain, monument mausoleum of the fallen German soldiers from the Volunteers Corps (Freikorps), (a) Plan and section, design by Robert Tichler (*Das Freikorps-Ehrenmal auf dem Annaberg* 1939, p. 102), (b) Interior of the Hall of the Dead, 1939 (Opole Digital Library).

3. Evolution or Revolution? German Thingstätte and Polish Monument to Silesian Insurgents

Thingstätte was ceremonially inaugurated on May 21st 1938, but until the outbreak of WW2, it did not host any open-air performances and soon after the end of warfare, in the spring of 1945, the Polish administration decided to remove the ashes of the German soldiers from the mausoleum and replace them with the remains of fallen Polish insurgents. Already a month later, the idea of preserving Tischler's rotunda turned out to be invalid and the press wrote that: "currently, Polish authorities, having examined the entire German mausoleum, decided to remove vulgar German traces immediately and erect there an appropriate monument to those who perished defending Polish identity and the right for the Silesian region to belong to the Motherland of Silesian Insurgents" ([Pomnik poległych 1945](#), p. 4). On July 1st 1945, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the new monument was held, organized together with the first reunion of the former participants of the Silesian uprisings. As reported in the press, for the occasion, "Saint Anne Mountain put on a festive robe. The commemorative mausoleum was decorated with white and red banners and the rock was ornamented with the Polish eagle" ([Manifestacja Jedności 1945](#), p. 2). On July 31st 1945, during the session of the Voivodeship National Council in Katowice, a proposal was submitted "to erect on Saint Anne Mountain a monument dedicated to fallen Silesian insurgents, who fought for annexing Silesia to its Mother Land" ([Niewczesna 1945](#), p. 2), announcing that the construction of the monument would be financed mainly from donations. A few days later, on August 5th, first commissions were appointed, responsible for the project in the fields of: propaganda, technology, finances, and art, led by Jerzy Ziętek, Silesian deputy voivode. Fieldworks began and it was then announced that "the mausoleum containing german (original spelling) ashes situated on Saint Anne Mountain is to be destroyed. The ashes will be removed during the ceremony forming part of the county meeting of insurgents and activists in the early September, while the demolition of the entire mausoleum will take place immediately after, by removing part of the structure above ground level. The new monument will be located in the same place as the old one or next to it; all in all, it will be connected with the valley already in the shape of an open-air theatre. Design for the monument will be selected during national competition" ([Rozpoczęto prace 1945](#), p. 4), and "for cost-saving reasons, designs are to be limited either by the total of expenses or the surface of the monument base. All construction materials are accepted, with priority for the Silesian construction stone" ([Pomnik Powstańców 1945](#), p. 4).

4. New in the Old. Competition for the Design of the Monument to Silesian Insurgents

A competition for the design of the monument was finally announced on November 10th 1945. It represented an open character, with the plan of awarding three cash prizes and the purchase of four works. As specified in the competition's terms and conditions, its purpose was to "obtain the best solution reflecting from the artistic point of view the idea of the Insurgents' Deed in the context of the attempts of the Silesian people to regain independence" ([Konkurs na projekt 1945](#), p. 3) as well as "supervising all natural and manmade factors for the creation of a new image of the place, matching current historical reality and the needs resulting from the intended aim for the facility to serve as background for public ceremonies" ([Frydecki and Michejda 1946](#), p. 5). Competitors were left with a large dose of artistic freedom—as recalled by Jerzy Ziętek, the competition "was supposed to serve as a kind of a wide-scale interview and for this reason, designers were not limited in any way by the conditions of the competition; on the contrary, they were charged with the decision on the concept and dimensions of the facility" ([Kiedy rozpocznie się 1946](#), p. 3). The guidelines included only the reservation that an open-air theatre, "as a common element of all European cultures, should remain one of the components of the new facility" ([Frydecki and Michejda 1946](#), p. 5). The press also published questions that, according to the organizers of the competition, should be answered by its participants:

- “Should the accent dominating the design constitute the crowning of the rock massif and be the main element attracting spectator’s attention from the open-air theatre, and at the same time destination of the ceremony in progress?”
- Could this accent be presented at the background of the rock, or even could its edges be used as the motif of the sculpture itself?
- Is the interior of the valley where the open-air theatre is located spacious enough and do its dimensions make it possible to organize the ceremony and place the dominating accent here?
- (. . .) Do the existing natural and manmade structures fill their surroundings to a sufficient extent and would they be enough to serve as background for introducing the artistic structures of sculptures as the reflection of a desired and wanted symbol here, or should it be treated as necessary, in order to complement the existing structures, for the dominating accent to represent prevailing characteristics of an architectural work of art?
- (. . .) what should be considered the most appropriate representation of the symbol in order to constitute a simple, understandable and moving tone for every individual today and in the future?” (Frydecki and Michejda 1946, p. 6).

Thirty-eight works were submitted for the competition “including artistic representations in gypsum, drawings, sketches and photographs” (Wystawa 1946, p. 7). Even if the level of artistic skill was considered high, no first prize was awarded as “none of the works deserved pronounced distinction” (Frydecki and Michejda 1946, p. 6). Three designs were awarded with equal second prizes and their authors were: sculptor Marian Wnuk (1906–1967) and architect Stefan Listowski cooperating with him (1902–1987), professors Xawery Dunikowski (1875–1964) and Władysław Jaroński (1879–1965) as well as architect Franciszek Mączyński (1874–1947), sculptors Stefan Momot (1909–1998) and Józef Trenarowski (1907–1965) with architect Władysław Tomaszewski (1909–1975). The necessity to include the open-air theatre in the concept for locating monument elements motivated the artists, concentrated around two out of three distinguished teams, to refer in their designs to ancient patterns. Both Marian Wnuk as well as Stefan Momot with Józef Trenarowski suggested the construction of columns covered with reliefs including the representations of the history of the Silesian Uprisings, which were placed in the middle of the existing candle-shaped base. In Wnuk’s design, the column was crowned with the sculpture of an insurgent (Figure 3a) and the candle shape was placed on the flattened rock.

According to Momot and Trenarowski, a stone candle in a conical form was placed on the column (Figure 3b) and sculptures of the insurgents were located on the retaining wall of the upper terrace within the open-air theatre. Xawery Dunikowski presented a completely different idea, as he planned to carve in the rock, constituting the background for the open-air theatre stage, giant figures of Slavic archers (Figure 4a) limited on their sides with rows of caryatids. On top of the rock, the sculptor placed a gloriette in the form of a rotunda “pierced” with a quadrilateral tower, which constituted the element dominating the space (Figure 4b). Dunikowski’s answers to questions asked by the competition organizers were clear—the artist assumed that “the accent dominating the design” should be placed on the cliff plateau, he treated the stone wall of the former quarry as sculpting “material”, he did not suggest the open-air theatre be extended, and linked sculpture with architecture, letting the latter prevail—the gloriette received architectural forms and caryatids were applied to serve as architectural “support” of the rock. Finally, when asked about the representation of the symbol commemorating the insurgents, Dunikowski replied with the reliefs of archers, referring to Piast warriors. In this way, the artist emphasized not only the prowess of the fallen soldiers, but also the “inalienable right” to Silesian privileges, temporarily belonging to Poland in the Middle Ages. Even if a decisive winner was not selected, the competition was considered successful, as it “narrowed to some extent the perspective adopted towards the monument itself and the main characteristics that it should represent” (Frydecki and Michejda 1946, p. 6). The Artistic Commission was thus appointed, assigned with the task of specifying the conditions of the second competition, to which only the competitors

who had won the second prize were invited. It was also decided at the same time that the hills and “picturesque ravines” situated next to the monument would be transformed into a national park. The neighboring area, consisting of forested hills with the surface of a hundred and fifty hectares, was described in the press as “an area which is big enough for holding mass ceremonies, which may at the same time serve as a destination for touristic excursions and sports camps” (*Kiedy rozpocznie się 1946*, p. 3).

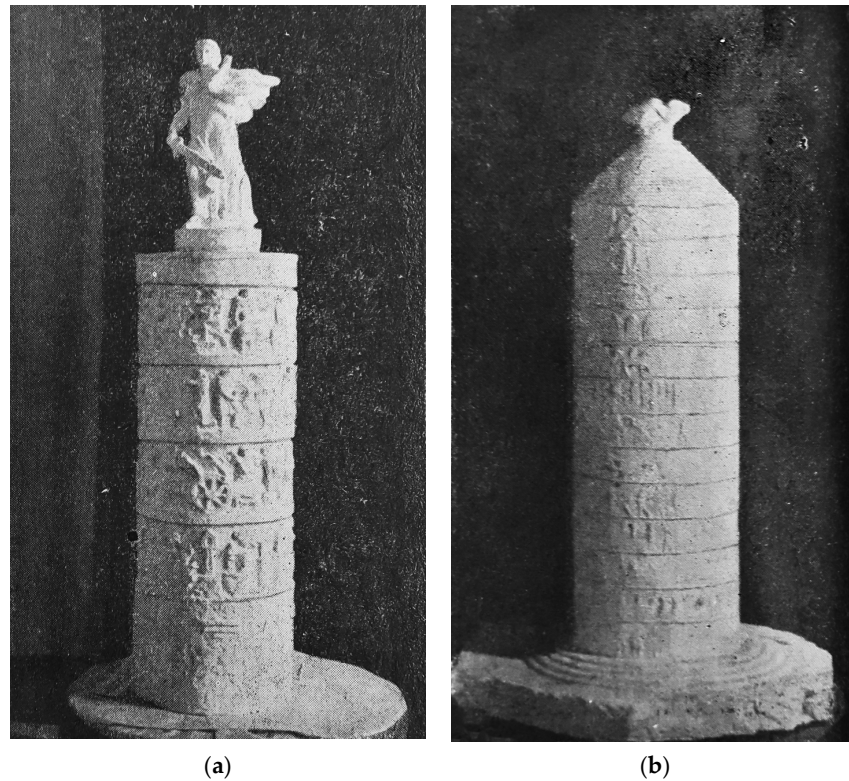


Figure 3. Saint Anne Mountain, the first competition for the design of the monument commemorating the Silesian Insurgents; parts of models made by: (a) Marian Wnuk, (b) Stefan Momot and Józef Trenarowski (*Frydecki and Michejda 1946*, p. 6).

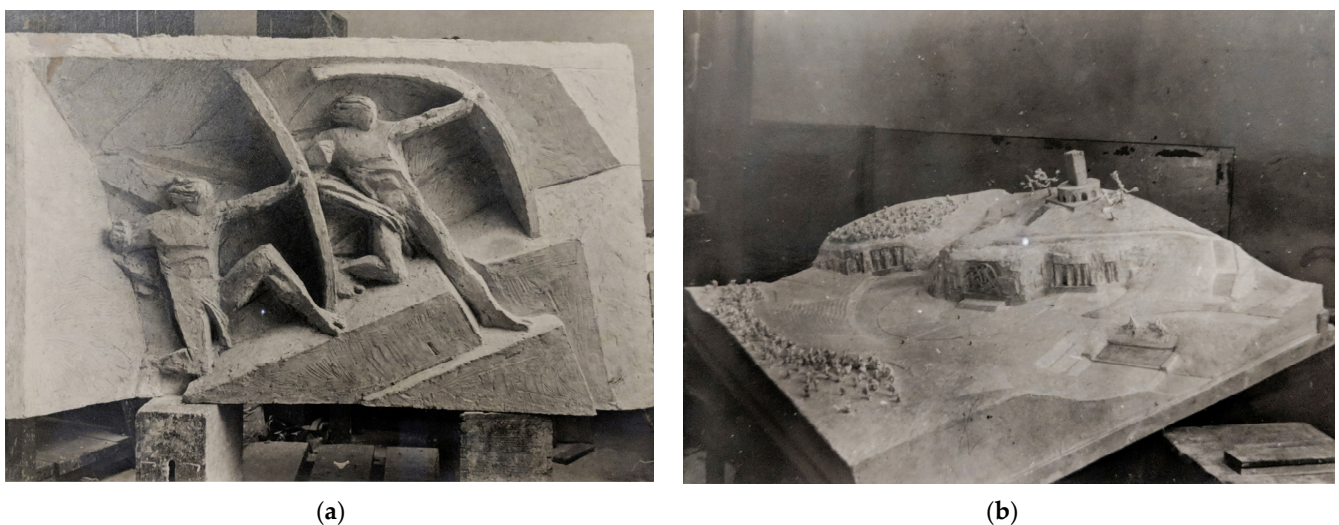


Figure 4. Saint Anne Mountain, the first competition for the design of the monument commemorating the Silesian Insurgents. Xawery Dunikowski’s work (in cooperation with Władysław Jarocki and Franciszek Mączyński), with models of (a) the reliefs of the Slavic archers and (b) the entire complex (National Museum in Warsaw, Królikarnia).

A new competition for the design of the monument was announced in mid-1946 and, according to previous communications, the competitors to take part in it were: Marian Wnuk and Stefan Lisowski, Xawery Dunikowski and Franciszek Mączyński, as well as the team formed by Stefan Momot, Józef Trenarowski, and Władysław Tomaszewski. This time, the conditions of the competition specified the location of the monument—“it should be on top of the hill, in the place determined more or less by the contour of the foundations of the former mausoleum”. Ideological assumptions of the monument were also clearly defined, which was supposed to “express clearly with its artistic message brave participation of the Silesian People in Uprisings” (*Kiedy rozpocznie się 1946*, p. 3). The winner was announced on August 16th 1946 and it was the concept by Xawery Dunikowski, prepared once again in cooperation with Franciszek Mączyński. The press emphasized that “Professor Dunikowski’s artistic achievements guarantee that the design for the monument to be located on Saint Anne Mountain, despite some mistakes connected with the composition in its gypsum model, will satisfy our hopes and constitute a lasting expression of gratitude of the Polish People for the deeds of a Silesian insurgent” (*Pomnik Powstańców 1946*, p. 3).

5. Xawery Dunikowski and His Vision of Commemorating Silesian Insurgents

In the literature relating to the subject, one can often find the suggestion that the selection of Dunikowski’s design had political motivation and even that it had been known in advance (*Kuźnik 2016*). Representatives of the local authorities were said to be supportive of the idea of getting a world-famous artist involved in the undertaking. Dunikowski, pre-war Professor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, was the most successful in the interwar period, when he created his most important works: the cycle of Wawel heads and the monument of Józef Dietl, Mayor of Cracow. Works performed by the artist after 1945 were referred to as “the treasures of Polish culture” and three expositions of the sculptor’s works, organized in 1948, were considered “the most important artistic event in People’s Republic of Poland” (*Flurkowski 1949*, p. 1). It also seems that Dunikowski was perceived as the forerunner of searching for the “national” form in art—writer Stefan Flurkowski noticed that “not many realize here that both Polish architecture, as well as Polish sculpture, have not formed part of those fields of artistic activity in which our voice has ever been heard. Both in sculpture as well as architecture, our achievements were very minimal; everything which genuinely ornaments our country and constitutes the expression of these two twin arts is the work of foreign artists. [. . .] With that in mind, Xawery Dunikowski’s works and artistic achievements acquire unique and exceptional characteristics” (*Flurkowski 1949*, p. 1). In one of his interviews, the artist himself modestly admitted that before him, “Polish sculpture seemed inexistent” (*Sokorski 1978*, p. 91).

What is more, Dunikowski’s victory represented a political and symbolical character—as a victim of the fascist regime, he spent five years in the Auschwitz concentration camp and after the war, supported the instauration of socialism in Poland and was supposed to become the designer of the first Polish monument erected on former German lands.

The second concept for the monument prepared by Dunikowski completely differed from the first one, as it assumed “the erection on top of the mountain of a monumental structure, raw and noble in its architectural aspects, dominating the entire area and supposed to become the characteristic element of its landscape” (*Brzezicki 1955*, p. 74). The monument was given the structure of a dolmen consisting of four massive pylons, growing out of a common quadrilateral terrace and connected with architraves. A candle cast in bronze on a stone support was to be placed between the pylons, while on the terrace edge—a bronze monument of an archer (Figure 5a) or insurgent (Figure 5b), six meters high, for which the structure was supposed to constitute the background and frame. Modification of the monument shape resulted from the intervention of the expert commission, who were supposed to convince Dunikowski to “resign from performing the relief on the rock ledge, as its dolomite structure was very fragile and subject to erosion” (*Frydecki 1982*, p. 60). The layer bearing the meaning of the monument was gradually developed. Initially, it was supposed to commemorate the history of Silesia, then the history of the Silesian up-

risings, and finally—“Fighters for Freedom and Democracy”, at the same time becoming the “Monument of the Liberation of Silesia” (Brzezicki 1955, p. 74). Already in February 1947, Tadeusz Żakiej, writer and music journalist, wrote that the monument “conceived as a huge menhir from grey granite will crown the top of the mountain with the accent of monumental seriousness and unshakable calm. Four robust blocks growing out of the granite base shall lift flat stone lid relying on it, surrounding the internal part, left uncovered. On eight external fields of these giant blocks, the artist’s gravel shall carve with sharp contour scenes representing the history of fights on this ancient Slavic land from prehistory until the year 1945. The scenes, engraved not deep in flat granite wall, will act as a picture for their viewer, legible also from a long distance. The cuts themselves will be filled with lead in order to prevent the destructive influence of temperature changes. Four internal fields, formed by internal block walls, will be ornamented with reliefs of supernatural size representing: a miner, an ironmaster, a peasant and a Silesian woman. In this way, external walls will be telling the story of national courage and its indestructible defensive power—internal ones, in turn, will glorify Silesian people and its work in the period of peace” (Żakiej 1947, p. 6). In May 1947, it was detailed that on the pylons, from their front, eight “drawings” would be located, illustrating: “the fights of Chrobry’s knights with Germany in Niemcza”, “heroic defence of Głogów”, “from the period of renaissance in Silesia”, “defence of Legnica in the 13th century”, as well as two scenes from the Silesian uprisings, “the pact of Slavic nations” and the allegorical representation of victory (Brzezicki 1955, p. 75). Designs of reliefs as well as four “convex sculptures”, presenting a miner, an ironmaster, a farmer, and a Silesian woman with a child, were accepted on March 28th 1947 (Figure 6b). The choice of commemorated figures was not incidental and represented a propaganda character—it ennobled those industries which constituted the basis of the Polish economy right after the war (mining, metallurgy, and agriculture) as well as the Polish Mother, responsible for the “reconstruction” of a society destroyed by WW2. The sculptures resembling caryatids, 2.75 high, were designed in simplified, geometrical forms and placed by internal pylon walls. It was also planned to ornament the monument with plaques including the symbols of different branches of industry and motives from the world of nature in order to form a frieze. Under the support boards of the architrave, the sculptures of eight “heads from the world of work” were placed (Figure 6a), emphasizing the ternary rhythm of the division of pylons, matching the $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythmic pattern in music. Reliefs of the Grunwald Cross and Silesian Insurgents’ Cross were placed on the stone base of the candle. Final “drawings” on the external walls of the pillars were modified and—as presented in the report on the realization of the monument from 1955—they depicted the “history of Silesian land from the period of the earliest fights of the Slavs with Prussian flood, through the fight of the Silesian people with Germanization, Silesian Uprisings, the liberation of Silesia by the Soviet Army and Polish Army until the current era of fraternity and joint fight for peace” (Sprawozdanie 1955, p. 6). This time, the propaganda message dominated historical facts—the figures of warriors were presented in one place, including the inscription Niemcza 950, while in the year 950, Niemcza belonged to the Czechs, and thus it had been impossible for the Piasts to fight with Germanic tribes there at the time. Another image commemorated a school strike from the year 1934, which, in fact, never took place in Silesia. The remaining “drawings” represented: “Silesian insurgents getting ready for the fight”, “protesting Silesian workers”, “Germanic rapes on Silesian people” as well as motives popular at the time—the “Red Army”, “Polish People’s Army” as well as “international demonstration for world peace” (Figure 6c). Representations designed by Dunikowski would bring to mind the ornaments of early Christian runic stones; the artist assumed that he would create elements carved in granite, “runes [. . .], legible for future generations for many centuries” (Tworowski 1954, p. 17).

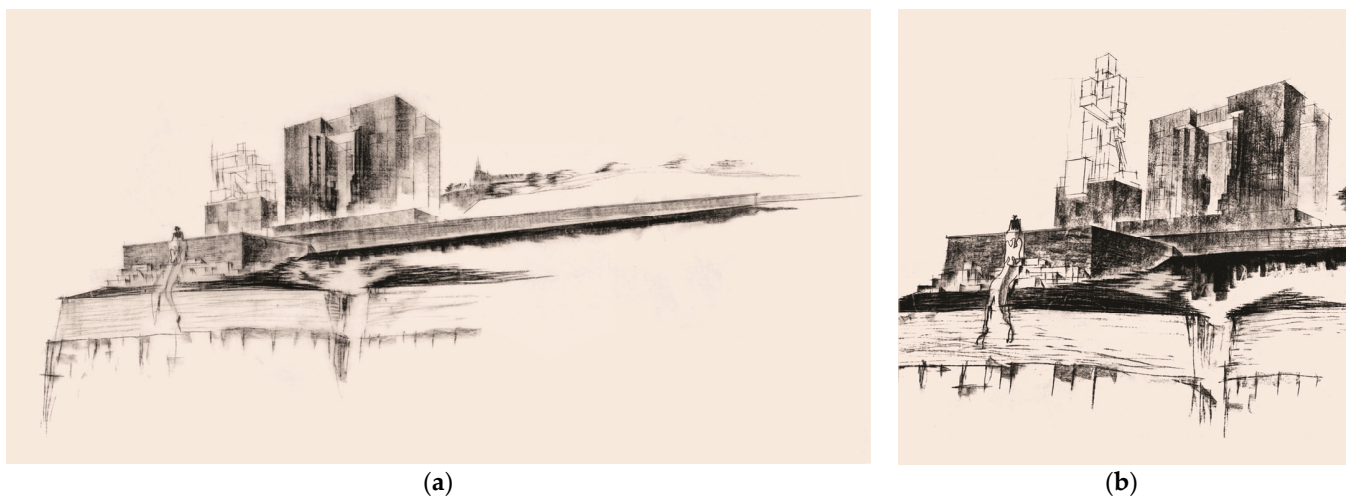


Figure 5. Saint Anne Mountain, the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed; Xawery Dunikowski's design (in cooperation with Andrzej Frydecki), view of the dolmen with (a) the statue of an archer or (b) insurgent, drawing by Andrzej Frydecki, 1948 (Museum of Architecture in Wrocław).

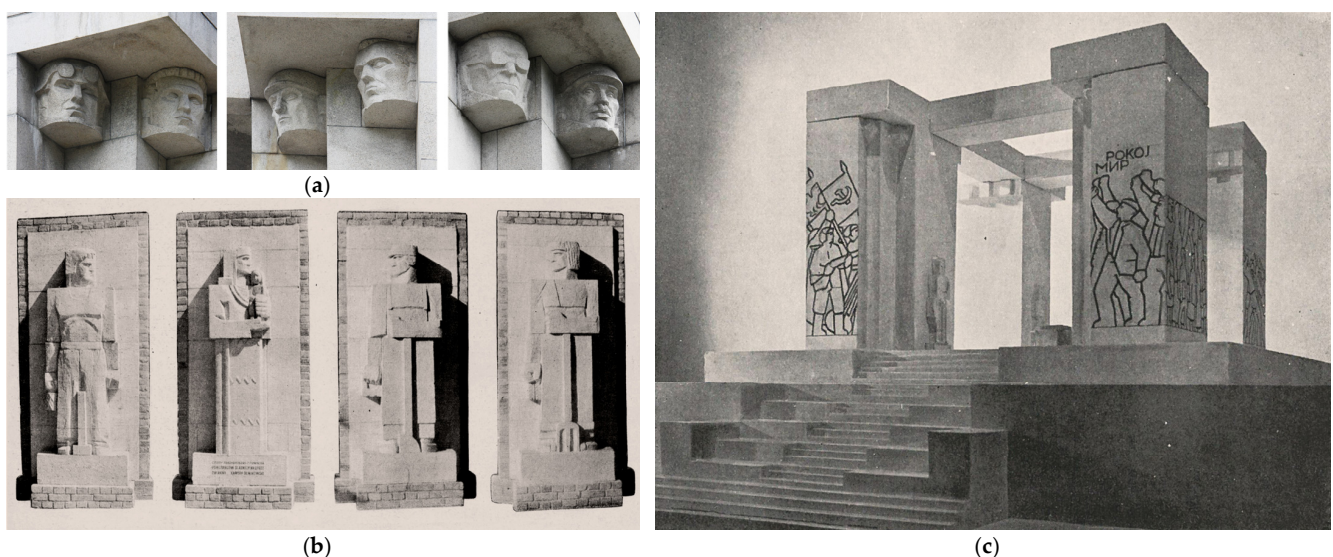


Figure 6. Saint Anne Mountain, the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed, Xawery Dunikowski's: (a) sculptures of the heads placed under architrave (photo 2019, created by authors), (b) models of the "convex sculptures" (Jassem and Minorski 1948, p. 6), (c) model of the dolmen (Xawery Dunikowski i jego uczniowie 1956, p. 18).

6. Architectural Staffage of the Monument to Silesian Insurgents

While preparing both concepts for the monument, Xawery Dunikowski cooperated with architect Franciszek Mączyński, who prepared the architectural and urban planning scheme of the entire project. Mączyński died in April 1947, leaving his work on the project unfinished. A little earlier, Andrzej Frydecki (1903–1989) was delegated to help Mączyński due to his illness. Frydecki studied architecture in Lviv in the pre-war era and, upon the order of deputy voivode Jerzy Ziętek, he was supposed to establish cooperation with the sculptor. Frydecki received from Mączyński drafts of the monument which, according to his assessment, were impossible to be performed. In his diary, he recollected that Mączyński "did not include (. . .) any dimensions, and outlines read with the use of a scale made it possible to think of some kind of misunderstanding, maybe resulting from incapacity due to the illness. According to this indirect reading, monument dimensions announced its excessive scale, unacceptable both due to the thinness of the terrace finishing of the rock ledge as well as landscape conditions" (Frydecki 1982, p. 61). Frydecki assumed

his responsibility as co-designer of the monument version intended for realization. He even wrote that he transferred to Dunikowski “free of charge the design of the monument on Saint Anne Mountain, when after the death of its co-author, architect, he was unable to manage with architectural aspects of the monument” (Frydecki 1982, p. 130). Unfortunately, Franciszek Mączyński’s drawings were not preserved and Frydecki himself recalled that his task consisted of detailing the scale of the monument, providing it with an “appropriate outline by replacing the square in the horizontal plan with a rectangle”, minor correction of the shape of pylons—narrowing their upper part, which would “make [their] silhouette more dynamic”, and that’s it—as the architect wrote, adding—“but maybe it is really a lot” (Frydecki 1982, p. 63). It seems that, upon Frydecki’s initiative, Dunikowski simplified “classicizing” structures of the monument by removing the bases from under pylons as well as cornices from under architraves, as well as facing the side surface of the latter with external support walls. Frydecki intended to prove that “thanks to the open arrangement of architectural structures”, the monument would somehow “mix into the surrounding landscape and its elements to be found here” and it would merge with “its natural base, being the rock massif thanks to appropriate proportions of both subsequent shapes as well as its whole” (Frydecki 1946, p. 5). Interestingly enough, Xawery Dunikowski himself would claim that his aim was to contrast the natural structure of rocks with the geometrized shape of the monument, as the principle of contrast would, according to the artists, lead to synthesis in art (Sokorski 1978, pp. 31–32). In addition, the sculptor did not compare his work to a dolmen, but to the shape of a fallen house, in which “life remained, preserved in reliefs and the figures of those who perished and those who got up” (Sokorski 1978, p. 32). Irrespective of ideological interpretation, Dunikowski’s design would constitute the illustration of the paradigms of monumental sculpture, among which there are for example: generalized structure, reducing the composition to geometric patterns, and applying distinct contours.

For the reasons of composition, the monument was located on the edge of the rock, from its western side (Figure 7a). In this way, just like an ancient temple in cult sites, the monument was perfectly visible from a distance, dominating the open-air theatre situated below as well. The special structure of the facility followed the terrace arrangement—the open work monument cubicle was placed in the top point, on the two-level platform connected by stairs, in the corner of which a rectangular base of the Insurgents’ sculpture was installed. Below, one could find the path, shielded with a full railing from the southwestern direction, which led to the corner balcony rostrum, situated one more level below. In this way, the composition of the facility was based on the contrast of juxtaposed rectangular vertical elements as well as horizontal cubicles and layers whose raw structures would “grow out” of the rock at different levels. Stefan Flurkowski, already quoted before, expressed his critical opinion on the surroundings of the monument, as in March 1949, he wrote that “the hill edge itself requires some corrections. Developing some urban and architectural suggestions here constitutes a misunderstanding. Horizontal lines of the walls and rostrum destroy harmony, unexpectedly crossing vertical lines, forming the rhythm on which the entire structure of the monument, invented by the Artist, has been based” (Flurkowski 1949, p. 1). From the east, a walking path led to the monument, designed in a way for the monument, visible at a distance, to constitute the culminating point of the composition axis. The path finished on the square set up in front of the monument, closing it with a quart of the circle from the south, and its central point corresponded to the southeastern top of the monument’s main structure. According to the development plan prepared for the area, pedestrian and vehicle traffic was clearly separated. An automobile route in the form of a loop was designed within the eastern section of the area together with a parking lot. The pedestrian zone was separated by stairs with their location emphasized by a pair of blocks—“border posts”.

Frydecki also developed the unrealized concept for the arrangement of the crypt, placed directly beneath the monument plinth and intended to serve museum purposes. Details concerning the final dimensions of the monuments, its structure, and construction

materials to be applied were provided in the Report on the activity of the Executive Committee for Monument Construction. In this way, the entire monument was nearly 10.77 m high, with the height of the lower platform amounting to 0.6 m (with a surface of nearly 336 m²); upper platform—1.1 m (surface 327 m²); pylons—7.8 m; and the architrave—1.2 m. The clearance of the underground chamber was 4.5 m high. The monument frame, together with the foundation plate and load-bearing walls surrounding the underground section, were performed from reinforced concrete and the part of the monument over the ground was covered with pink granite plaques, extracted in Szklarska Poręba. The lower platform was tiled with “artificial stone boards manufactured locally” and its plinth from the northern and western side was made from limestone.

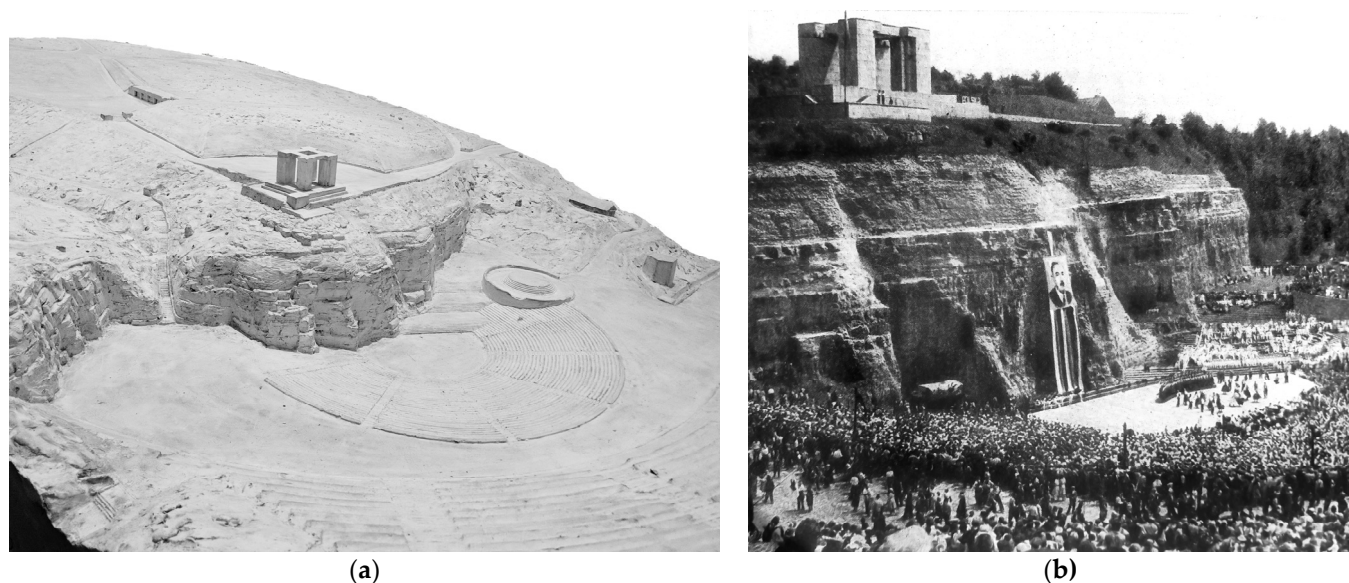


Figure 7. Saint Anne Mountain, the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed, (a) development of area, model (National Museum in Warsaw, MKr 116 MNW, photo created by authors), (b) the monument unveiling ceremony, on the rock—a portrait of Bolesław Bierut (Pomnik Czynu, 70, photo Stefan Arczyński).

Construction of the monument took a lot of time and as late as in 1953, Xawery Dunikowski began the “carving” of reliefs on pylons. Nearly two years later, on June 19th 1955, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of “regaining Western Lands”, Aleksander Zawadzki, one of the initiators of the erection of the monument, and since 1952 Head of the National Council, officially unveiled the monument (Figure 7b). However, it was incomplete, as its key part—the sculpture of the Insurgents—was missing, which was justified on the one hand by cost-cutting, while on the other, by extending the monument's symbolical character.

7. Xawery Dunikowski and the Method of Socialist Realism in Art

In the period when Xawery Dunikowski was involved in work on the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed, socialist realism was introduced as the applicable artistic method in the countries dependent on the Soviet Union in the postwar period. The main assumptions of the “new art”, which, according to Lenin's interpretation, was supposed to constitute the “unity of content and structure” that “is understandable for the masses”, were presented in Poland in February 1949. Socialist realism was defined as the “work of an artist consciously building the socialist system of the future, the aim of which is to transform people into fighters for justice and progress, fighters for human happiness. For this reason, the art of socialist realism is the art of social masses, and not the art of sophisticated asocial aesthetes, this is why the language is commonly understandable, it is the objectively verifiable language of realistic representation of things and events” (Krajewski 1950, p. 20). In practice, artworks had to be adjusted to the models of monumental sculpture introduced

in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. According to the words by Vera Mukhina, creator of the “Worker and Kolkhoz Woman” monument, treated as a flagship socialist realism work, humans should be the main character of a monumental sculpture—giant historical figures (defenders of the motherland, artists, scientists, writers) or working people who “trace new ways of socialist manufacturing” (Muchina 1952, p. 30).

It is worth recalling here that the author of so-called Monumental Propaganda was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov himself who, in 1918, described the significance of artistic activity in building new socialist culture and enumerated historical figures that can and should be commemorated with monuments, plaques with reliefs, or commemorative boards. Magazines related to this industry used to write that “the originality of a monumental sculpture consists in the fact that this art expresses in big artistic structures joint human ideas of the era, common to all people, it presents the most important historical events, the development of our reality and the deeds of outstanding historical figures; it uses image composition of heroism, sublimity and triumph” (O rzeźbie 1952, p. 24). The special educational and propaganda role of monumental sculptures was also emphasized and for this reason, impregnating the works of art with ideological messages was more important than their aesthetic aspects. According to Lenin, non-figurative art would not be understandable for the working class, and thus, artists were called to search for inspirations in the artistic heritage of 19th century realism, which was perceived as the “basis of genuine art” and was attempted to be synthesized with the use of a conventional message. As Vera Mukhina explained, “convention provides the image with expressiveness and clarity, explains it, makes it sharper and more easily reaching the consciousness even while watched only cursorily, and at the same time ensures its decorative features” (Muchina 1952, p. 30).

Xawery Dunikowski did not support the idea of introducing the principle of socialist realism in Polish art and did not agree with its main slogan of the “unity of content and structure”, as he himself applied in his works the rule of “unity of contrast and discrepancy” (Sokorski 1978, p. 32). Even though the artist used to take an active part in the conferences and exhibitions of visual artists organized by state authorities, what is more, after the war, the state represented by the Ministry of Culture and Art was his only patron. Dunikowski was the most famous sculptor cooperating with the socialist government and his works, also from the pre-war period, were inscribed—which was not fully justified—into the politically desired realistic trend. The artist’s earliest sculptures constituted nearly naturalistic representations, and according to critics, “Mother’s” bust (Figure 8a) showed during the exhibition in 1902 represented “all characteristic features of a withering body” (Treter 1924, p. 12). His next works would bring him closer to impressionism and the works by August Rodin, considered by the Polish artist “the greatest modern sculptor”, the one who “created the synthesis of figurative and spatial thinking, ancient art and Michelangelo’s art, impressionist breath and realistic attachment of a human to the earth” (Sokorski 1978, p. 27). This does not mean that Dunikowski completely rejected realism, as he limited himself to the omission of details, according to Rodin’s rule that “anything that is irrelevant does not belong to the field of art” (Treter 1924, p. 13). The attempts of structural generalization and synthesis became particularly visible in the cycle of sculptures “Pregnant women”, the most important of Dunikowski’s works from the early 20th century (Figure 8b). Later works were monumentalized by the author; he would also refer to Polish Romanticism, visual artists from the Young Poland period, and even local avant-garde. After one of the presentations of the artist’s sculptures in Paris, André Gide wrote that “[in his works] Dunikowski in particular remains himself, even if he is the descendant of the entire artistic path of a human” (Sokorski 1978, p. 17). Already before the end of WW1, Dunikowski assumed the function of “national artist”—in 1917, he prepared the design of a symbolical tomb of Bolesław Śmiały, a Polish king from the Piast dynasty, and in the years 1925–1928, the sculptures of “Wawel Heads”, being the portraits of contemporary Poles (Figure 8c), were supposed to complement the gallery of 16th century heads ornamenting the ceiling of the Deputies’ Hall at the Wawel Royal Castle. In the

interwar period, Dunikowski would refer in his artistic activity to religious motives, search for the source of folk art, placing theme among ancient Slavs, and at the same time, would carve portraits, among others, the head of a “Bolshevik”, which was interpreted in postwar socialist Poland as his expression of support for the idea of the October Revolution. Soon after the end of WW2, the artist sculpted the “Worker’s Head”, in which, in turn, the announcement of socialist realism in Polish art was noticed (Figure 9a). Dunikowski’s ideological involvement actually did not translate into the form of his works and the artist remained loyal to personalized realism and his love of simplification and synthesis. The monuments of revolution leaders, Lenin’s bust from 1949 (Figure 9b) and the sculpture of Stalin from 1954 (Figure 9c), would go beyond the framework of socialist realism. “Lenin’s Head” was presented during the exhibition in Moscow but before, members of the Department of Culture of the Soviet Union Communist Party discussed whether Dunikowski’s expressive vision would match Soviet imaginations of the Bolshevik leader. Stalin’s monument was considered too avant-garde to be realized.



Figure 8. Xawery Dunikowski, sculptures: (a) “Mother”, 1899; (b) “Pregnant women III”, 1906; (c) Female Head from the cycle of the “Wawel Heads”, 1925–1929 (National Museum in Warsaw, Królikarnia, photo Ernest Wińczyk).

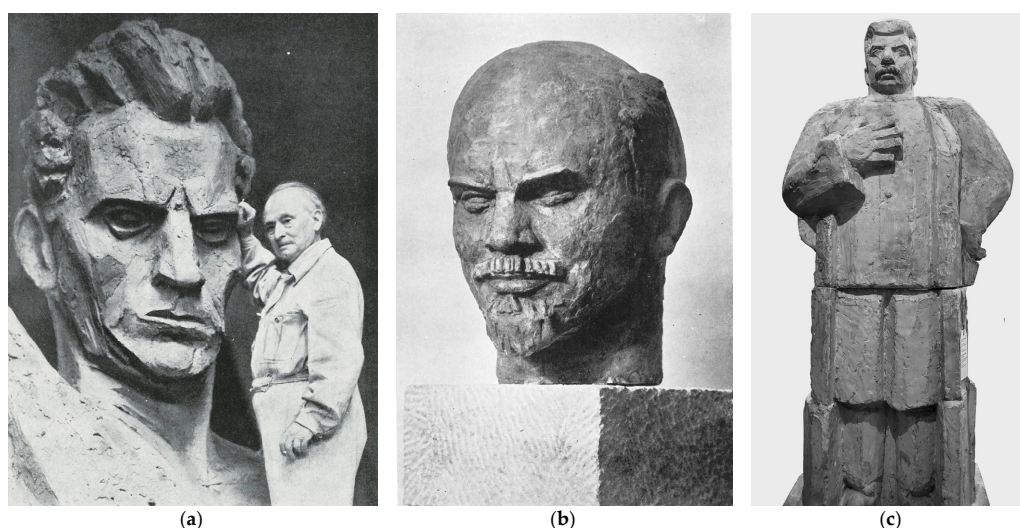


Figure 9. Xawery Dunikowski, sculptures: (a) “Worker’s Head”, 1946 (with artist himself); (b) “Lenin’s Head”, 1949 (Xawery Dunikowski i jego uczniowie 1956, pp. 19, 27); (c) Stalin, model, 1954 (National Museum in Warsaw, Królikarnia, photo created by authors).

8. Epilogue, Conclusions

The construction of the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed was initiated by the veterans of the Silesian Uprisings, who would seek the commemoration of their fallen fellow insurgents. Initially, they would not even consider the erection of a new monument, but opted rather for a specific "adaptation" of the mausoleum of German soldiers. However, the project was taken over by the representatives of state authorities, who gave the initiative a propaganda dimension. The administration of the so-called Regained Lands—eastern border regions of Germany annexed to Poland in 1945—would promote the message of the "indissoluble connection with the lands and people living here, which returned to the motherland after six hundred years" ([Przed manifestacją 1946](#)). In the course of time, the commemoration of insurgents became an addition to manifesting the support for socialism with its affirmation of the working class, industrial modernization of the country, and in particular—"cooperation" with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which in fact constituted total political as well as economic dependence. After the unveiling of the monument in 1955, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the "Recovery of Western Lands", the former Thingstätte was used for the organization of state ceremonies, folk festivals, and artistic performances. In 1988, Saint Anne Mountain, together with its immediate vicinity, became part of a landscape park, established in order to protect the morphology of the area together with its fauna and flora. Hiking and the infrastructure connected with this activity were planned to be developed within the area of the park, but the events of 1989 blocked the implementation of this idea. After political transformation in Poland, the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed fell into oblivion, and only concerts were organized in the open-air theatre from time to time. State support switched to church institutions and the Franciscans benefited from this fact by importantly extending the pilgrimage center connected with Saint Anne's cult.

In 2016, at the initiative of the Polish right-wing government, the Act prohibiting the promotion of communism, which includes the order to remove from public space the monuments commemorating "individuals, organizations, events or dates constituting symbols of communism", came into force. The Monument of the Insurgents' Deed on Saint Anne Mountain was considered an object of this kind, as, on one of its pylons, Dunikowski sculpted soldiers of the Red Army and Polish People's Army, over which flutter the banners with the sickle and hammer—the symbol of "proletarian dictatorship". The replacement of stone plaques including the sculptor's original "drawing" was seriously considered, but fortunately, the legal status of the monument, together with protests not only of the scientific community, but also of a large group of citizens, blocked destructive attempts by the authorities. The citizens of Silesian cities would not give their consent for changing the names of streets and squares named after the politician Jerzy Ziętek, but also *spiritus movens* of the erection of the monument either. The Monument of the Insurgents' Deed found itself within the collection of works of art labeled as "communist heritage". While the remnants of the Nazi Thingstätte do not arouse vivid emotions nowadays, the significance of Dunikowski's statue has become a political issue, obscuring its artistic value. The peripheral location of the monument saved it from being demolished, but this does not help it survive. In cities, the "unwanted heritage" is usually treated as an element of modern spatial management, which sometimes becomes its symbol, as is the case with the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw or the Monument of Revolutionary Deed in Rzeszów ([Gawroński et al. 2021](#)). The future of the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed remains uncertain due to the lack of funds or ideas for using it. It could seem that the centenary of the outbreak of the Silesian Uprisings, which falls in May 2021, could constitute a motivating factor for the renovation of the open-air theatre and the monument itself. However, the reality looks different and witnesses of the complex history of the region are threatened with destruction (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Saint Anne Mountain, the Monument of the Insurgents' Deed today (photo 2019, created by authors).

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