

## ABSTRACT

### The Politics of Memory and Nationalism in Contemporary Poland

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Since 2017, Communist monuments in Poland have been disappearing from across the country. Behind their removal is the policy of the Polish Law and Justice administration carried out by the Institute of National Memory (IPN), a highly centralized organization with extensive power over memory politics. This thesis argues that Poland's government engages in the politics of eternity, a term from scholar Timothy Snyder's book, *The Road to Unfreedom*, by using memory policy to portray Poland as at the center of a cycle of victimhood. The IPN supports this narrative through the production of educational and popular culture media that problematically compare Poland's experience of World War II to the Communist era. A case study of two monuments, the Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszów, Poland and the Monument to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army in Warsaw, Poland delves into the differences in adaptability surrounding controversial historical monuments. Questions raised by the Polish monument controversy have broader application to monument controversies worldwide.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

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THE POLITICS OF MEMORY AND NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY  
POLAND

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## INTRODUCTION

Under the cover of darkness one cool summer night of August 2019, a group gathered with one goal in mind: the destruction of a controversial figure with a complicated past. Never mind that the government had already slated this figure for destruction. Zealous patriots gathered that night to pull him off his pedestal, breaking him into bits and chopping off his head. His hands, often painted red to symbolize the bloodshed he had caused, tonight shone eerily white in the moonlight. Planting the national flag in the midst of his crushed torso, the perpetrators stole away back into the night, leaving police to discover the ruins the next day and politicians to either applaud or condemn their actions on social media according to their own political leanings. Police found the victim in the exact position he had been left, looking up at the clear sky, for he was simply one of many similar statues vandalized or torn down that year because of his questionable wartime actions and allegiances. A general, he had fought on the wrong side of Poland's history.

The United States is not the only nation where monuments have become a battleground for competing visions of the nation's past and heritage. Since the fall of communism in 1989, Poland has battled with how its twentieth century history ought to be remembered in the collective memory. In 1989, the hundreds of Soviet-era monuments located in newly independent Poland, previously a member of the Soviet bloc, presented a glaringly obvious problem—should they be removed as symbols of an oppressive regime, or were they simply historical artifacts with more nuance than met the eye?

Beginning in 1989, the Polish government and population came down clearly on the side of removing the monuments. Between the fall of Communism and the present, the Polish government has removed hundreds of monuments once erected as markers of gratitude to the Red Army and Communist figures. A new national narrative emerged, centering around Poland as a heroic nation resisting the twin tyrannies of Nazism and Communism. Monuments to Communist figures clashed with the image the government sought to project.

The statue torn down in 2019 represented just one of many cultural figures memorialized during the Communist period of 1947-1989 who no longer fit the Polish historical narrative. The man it memorialized, Zygmunt Berling, served as a general in the Polish People's Army, the Soviet-created army that fought alongside the Red Army against the Nazis in the Second World War. Poland's Communist party erected a statue in his honor in 1985, the year of the fortieth anniversary of victory in World War II. In contrast, the current Polish administration condemned Berling not only for his cooperation with the Soviets during the Second World War, but also for his support of a socialist, Soviet-dominated Poland. His supporters say his actions, taken under difficult circumstances, saved many Poles from Soviet labor camps.<sup>1</sup> The national government's decision to remove his statue and its destruction by zealous citizens represents one of many cases where the legal and cultural changes that have taken place in Poland since the fall of Communism have affected the physical memory landscape of monuments. This

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<sup>1</sup> Papradak Pietruszka, "Obalono Pomnik Gen. Zygmunta Berlinga w Warszawie," Onet Wiadomości, August 4, 2019, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/warszawa/pomnik-zygmunta-berlinga-w-warszawie-zostal-obalony-zdjecia/wv7kcc7>.

thesis will explore cases like the treatment of the Berling statue in order to better understand Polish memory politics.

Timothy Snyder, a well-known scholar of Slavic and Eastern European studies, well encapsulates the Polish government's contemporary attitude towards history as what he names the "politics of eternity." He defines this term in his book, *The Road to Unfreedom*, as a framework of historical time "placing one nation at the center of a cyclical story of victimhood."<sup>2</sup> In his conception, eternity politicians look not to the future, imagining what progress their nation could make, but to the past for justification for current failures. Eternity politicians hold a fundamentally pessimist worldview. Historically, the idea of the nation as a victim has occupied some place within cultural and literary Polish national identity, and in the region as well. The Polish partitions of the eighteenth century, which wiped an independent Poland off the map of Europe, gave Polish intellectuals and artists ample reason to lament the "martyrdom" of their country and yearn for its golden years as one of the most powerful states in Europe. In the early nineteenth century, Poland's most prominent national poet, Adam Mickiewicz, famously elevated Poland to "the Christ of Nations" in his epic dramatic work, *Forefather's Eve*. In modern history, the perceived Western abandonment of Poland after the Second World War further contributed to this martyr complex. In relation to cultural history, Snyder's term accurately describes a long-standing historical tendency of Polish politicians and cultural figures towards victimhood.

In this thesis, the term "national identity" will not refer to empirically existing traits applicable to individuals of a certain nation, but rather to the way that governments

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018), 8.

and cultural elite seek to define the organized community in relation to outsiders. The thesis will not seek to determine if certain characteristics claimed to be part of the national identity are indeed applicable to the Polish case, or if such a thing as a national character exists. Since the most extensive studies in the 1950s and 1960s, most scholars do not consider national character to be a useful construct as it often finds its base in deterministic stereotypes.<sup>3</sup> Yet, with its long history of partition and resistance, Poland's existence as a nation has long been defined and redefined by its government and cultural elite. Even if the whole country cannot be reduced to a few characteristics, the way the government crafts public policy and interprets history has broad influence on Poland's citizens. This project will focus on the evolution of national definitions and how their changing applications affect society.

This thesis seeks to enter the discussion about national commemoration, regarding it as one of the most pressing public issues for both communities and individuals. Small monuments, plaques, and streets named for famous individuals are ubiquitous in East and Central European cities. Though it may seem that monuments are passed by everyday unnoticed and relatively unappreciated by the public, scholars write that the physical landscape may indeed have an effect on the concept of nationhood, and hence, personal identity.<sup>4</sup> Though sometimes rendered invisible by familiarity, public monuments (statues, street names, plaques, etc.) represent the imposition of a memory narrative upon the physical landscape by the government or other authority. Everyday interaction in

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<sup>3</sup> "Cultural Determinism – APA Dictionary of Psychology," accessed September 1, 2021, <https://dictionary.apa.org/cultural-determinism>.

<sup>4</sup> Bartłomiej Różycki, "Renaming Urban Toponymy as a Mean of Redefining Local Identity: The Case of Street Decommunization in Poland," *Open Political Science* 1, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2017-0004>.

these spaces is, consciously or unconsciously, colored by these narratives.<sup>5</sup> The extent of government power in forming a national narrative and shaping public spaces is therefore even more important to consider for the far-reaching effects it can have.

This thesis argues that the current Polish administration's version of nationalism engages in the politics of eternity. The thesis proposes a framework for implementing a more inclusive view of the nation's past by investigating the work of the Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, or IPN) and controversies surrounding existing monuments. Finally, the thesis examines two approaches to national commemoration: the centralized unified approach taken by the government and IPN, or national approach, and the decentralized approach of local governments, weighing the possibilities of each. Contemporary monument controversies in Poland are compared with debates over how Confederate history is portrayed through public monuments in the United States.

The first chapter gives a brief overview of Polish history culminating in a summary of contemporary modern Polish politics while presenting a critique using Timothy Snyder's politics of eternity and inevitability frameworks. Current events and controversies over monuments and memory demonstrate how the present administration has fallen away from a macro view of memory focused on reconciliation towards using history to support a more exclusive nationalist policy. Examples of historical commemorative practices and monuments will clarify the Polish state's relationship to

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<sup>5</sup> For further reading on the connection between nationalism, memory, and monuments, see Renata Hołda, "Pomniki w Mieście. Pogranicza Pamięci i Historii," *Studia Etnologiczne i Antropologiczne* 13 (February 20, 2013): 57–72; Félix Duque, "Public Art and the Making of Urban Space," *City, Territory and Architecture* 1 (May 1, 2014): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1186/2195-2701-1-4>.

the past and show how the authorities have used both the politics of eternity and the politics of progress in framing national identity throughout history.

In the second chapter, I examine the place of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in Polish memory politics. The chapter investigates the growth of the IPN's dominance in comparison to other memory institutions in Poland and abroad. Most importantly, the chapter demonstrates how the IPN creates a narrative of history that engages in the politics of eternity through its reframing of the Polish experience of the Second World War and the Communist period in media, publications, and policy. This chapter discusses the reasoning behind the IPN's approach and how the Law and Justice party has used comparisons between Communism and the Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II to accomplish political goals.

The third chapter examines case studies of two different monuments that have recently become cultural battlegrounds in the Polish administration's narrative-crafting. I begin the chapter with a comparison of Timothy Snyder's politics of inevitability framework with the decentralized memory approach demonstrated by Ewa Ochman in her book, *Post-Communist Poland—Contested Pasts and Future Identities*. The first case study traces the history of the Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszow, demonstrating that the monument reflects the conflict between the Polish government's push for a centralized national narrative and local memory. The second case study discusses the Monument of Gratitude to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army in Warsaw in order to clarify the differences involved in dealing with a Soviet, rather than Polish Communist monument. To conclude, I compare the decentralized approach to public

memory with the national unified approach to commemoration and contrast the adaptability of the two monuments.

The lessons of Poland's monument controversies are relevant not only to Poland, but also in the United States. The concluding chapter connects the Polish commemoration experience with the current monument controversy in the United States over Confederate monuments, which primarily relate to the way slavery and institutionalized racism have formed the modern memory landscape. Taking into account the priorities in Poland's approach to collective memory, the conclusion will discuss what the United States can learn from Poland's engagement with the politics of eternity, inevitability, and progress.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Politics of Memory and Nationalism in Poland

Since the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, or PiS) party won an outright majority in the Polish parliament in 2015, experts have raised concerns about the state of Poland's democracy. Over the past four years, Poland has declined in measures of democracy. Freedom House is an organization which rates different countries on their level of freedom and democracy based on citizens' political rights and civil liberties. Their ranking system shows Poland continuing to be ranked as "free" though the country has declined seven points in measures of freedom since 2017. Declines have occurred in important areas such as academic freedom, as the Polish government has used Holocaust memory laws to discredit "academics who challenge the preferred historical narrative."<sup>6</sup> What is this "preferred historical narrative"? This chapter will delineate the Polish government's current national narrative and contextualize it within the broader historical stream of Polish thought, beginning with an overview of Polish history. Scholar Timothy Snyder crafts a useful framework for such a task in his book, *The Road to Unfreedom*. In his book, he introduces the terms the "politics of eternity" and the "politics of inevitability." The politics of eternity is a framework "placing one nation at the center of a cyclical story of victimhood" without a specific vision of the future.<sup>7</sup> Adjacently, the politics of inevitability describes "a sense that the future is just more of the present, that

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<sup>6</sup> "Poland: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report," Freedom House, accessed September 26, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/poland/freedom-world/2021>.

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018), 8.

the laws of progress are known, that there are no alternatives, and therefore nothing really is to be done.”<sup>8</sup> Both frameworks emphasize a view of the nation rooted in looking backward to the past rather than forward to the future. Even the politics of inevitability, which appears more present-oriented, understands the future as simply more of the past. While Snyder uses these two negative forms of politics to address nationalist developments, I would like to introduce a third term, the “politics of progress,” to describe a view of the nation that is rooted in looking towards improving the future and what the nation *could* be rather than one rooted in unchangeable realities of the past. This chapter will give a brief overview of Polish history, use these three terms to contextualize Polish commemoration and collective memory since the nineteenth century, and demonstrate how Polish intellectuals have cycled through approaches of the politics of eternity, the politics of inevitability and the politics of progress up until the present day.

### *Poland's History*

Poland has been regarded as a state since the eleventh century, when the first king of Poland spread Catholicism throughout a considerable amount of territory. In the fourteenth century, the Polish and Lithuanian kingdoms joined in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a large ethnically and religiously diverse state with minority rights enshrined in law and home to the largest Jewish community in the world. Historians recognize Poland's constitution as the second oldest in the world. In 1410, the Polish-Lithuanian state fought against the Germanic Teutonic knights in the largest battle of the Middle Ages, the Battle of Grunwald. The Polish-Lithuanian victory cemented the state's

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<sup>8</sup> Snyder, 7.

status as a rising power in Europe. Its power would culminate in the Golden Age of the late fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, which saw the state's territory increased to its largest extent, the establishment of universities, and development in the arts and sciences.



Figure 1.1: Map of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at its Greatest Extent (Maciej Szczepańczyk, 2009, Creative Commons)

Despite its past dominance, in the mid-seventeenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth began to decline in power, threatened by war with Sweden and weakened by external forces. In 1683, Poland joined forces with the Hapsburg monarchy under King Jan III Sobieski against the Ottoman Empire. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth rescued Vienna from siege, and united, the Christian powers severely weakened the Ottoman Empire. While the victory seemed to be a sign of the

Commonwealth's strength, internal disputes and the succession war of 1733 weakened the state. The decline culminated in 1772 with the First Partition of Poland, when Russia, Prussia, and the Austrian Empire divided Poland's outer territory. The last Polish king introduced reforms, including a second constitution, yet such reforms were put to an end with Russian invasion and another partition in 1792. Reformers gathered under Tadeusz Kościuszko in an insurrection which neighboring powers put down, dividing Polish territory yet again in the Third Partition of Poland in 1795. So began 123 years of Polish statelessness.

The loss of the Polish state coincided with the Romantic era and the works of some of Poland's greatest writers. In the nineteenth century, Poland's national poet, Adam Mickiewicz, wrote visionary plays and poems that depicted Poland in a messianic role, brought down by the partitions, but certain to rise again. During the partitions, several important insurrections pushed poets and writers including Mickiewicz to emigrate. In 1830, the November Insurrection attempted to overthrow Russian rule in former Poland. As with the 1846 insurrection, without broad popular support, the insurrection failed, leading to increased Russification. In the thirty years that followed, Russian rule eventually relaxed, yet the fight for Polish independence continued. In 1863, Polish youth began another uprising, the January Insurrection, to fight for independence. This time, the rebellion managed to recruit people of all social classes and spread into Lithuanian land. Despite its failure, Polish grassroots work to preserve the Polish language and culture eventually began to form a unified populace, just in time for the outbreak of World War I.

After Poles from the Austro-Hungarian, Prussian, and Russian Empires fought on differing sides during World War I, the Polish state finally regained its independence in 1918. Political instability, including the assassination of the first president and a coup plagued the short interwar period. Józef Piłsudski, leader of the Polish Socialists and Poland's fight for independence, directed much of Poland's foreign policy after his coup in 1926. He believed in a federal Poland following in the tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth which would include Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and other minorities. His main opponent, Roman Dmowski of the ethnonationalist National Democracy party, envisioned Poland as a unitary state. The two views continued to clash during the interwar period. Poland fought short wars with Lithuania, the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia in its first years of independence in addition to dealing with ongoing internal conflict with Ukrainian nationalists. Though Poland never introduced formal anti-Semitic laws, the influential National Democracy Party advocated anti-Semitic policies and pogroms against the Jewish community continued.

Plagued by conflict, Poland's independence would be short-lived. In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union once again erased Poland from the map with the Nazi-Soviet (or Molotov-Ribbentrop) Pact. A week after the pact was signed, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, triggering the beginning of World War II. In 1940, Soviet troops carried out the Katyń Massacre, targeting and murdering thousands of Poland's officer corps. Meanwhile, the Nazi campaign of extermination almost completely wiped-out Poland's Jewish population, which had comprised nearly ten percent of Poland's population. While Poland's government went into exile during the war, individual Poles interacted

with the war in different ways, though very few collaborated with the Nazis.<sup>9</sup> Poland's Home Army, made up of partisans fighting for the exiled Polish government, formed what many historians claim to be the largest underground army in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Despite being re-established as a state following the end of the war, Poland fell under Soviet domination in the 1940s. Though Poland was never part of the USSR, the Soviet Union provided much support to the Communist Polish government. Communist one-party rule continued from the war's end to 1989.

Economic stagnation and political repression eventually led to larger and more widespread protests in the 1980s as workers engaged in strikes protesting high consumer prices. Out of such protests, Solidarity, *Solidarność*, a labor union banned by the government, grew into a social movement comprising a quarter of Poland's population. Growing protests, coupled with the decline of the Soviet Union, led to the revolutions of 1989 when the Soviet bloc dissolved, and Poland's democratic opposition peacefully succeeded the Communists.

In the twenty years after the revolution, Poland's new democratic government transformed society, transitioning from a Communist to a free-market system, one-party rule to a full democracy, and member of the Eastern bloc to a partner with the West. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. With the transition to a more democratic and free society, more Poles began the process of reckoning with their nation's past and formulating a narrative contextualizing its long and tumultuous history.

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<sup>9</sup> John Connelly, "Why the Poles Collaborated so Little: And Why That Is No Reason for Nationalist Hubris," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 4 (2005): 773, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3649912>.

<sup>10</sup> Gregor Dallas, *1945: The War That Never Ended* (Yale University Press, 2005), 79.

Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–51* (Cornell University Press, 1998), 34.

## *History and Historical Time*

In the end, the facts of Poland's history do not fully tell of how its people view their country today. The events communities choose to remember and how those events connect to contemporary times give meaning and direction to the present. This consciously and subconsciously shaped memory reflects a view of historical time, which in this essay refers to how individuals or societies view the direction of time: whether cyclical, linear, or directionless.<sup>11</sup> The manner in which the current Polish government has chosen to remember the past reflects a certain view of time and the nation's role in history. Throughout the nineteenth century, when nationalist ideology began to take root in Europe, Polish intellectuals began to espouse views of the past that demonstrated their view of historical time. Elites viewed history as telic and progressive, both in a Christian sense and a socialist sense, and later on as non-telic and through a social-Darwinist realist lens. Each group used important historical events such as the partition of Poland and battles that defined Poland's place in relation to other nations as well as national figures such as Mickiewicz in order to reinterpret history towards their goals.

Historian Brian Porter traces the development of Polish nationalism through the nineteenth century, demonstrating that for a significant amount of time, a future-oriented, progressive view of historical time governed feelings of national identity. Polish Romantic intellectual nationalists of the nineteenth century partition era viewed the

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<sup>11</sup> These three views of time I have chosen to highlight represent how different political ideologies view the direction of history. A cyclical view of time sees history as repeating itself, people and civilizations evolve and devolve in a cycle. Many ancient civilizations held this view of time. A linear view holds that history is progressing towards a certain end. Communist ideology, with its clear historical predictions of eventual Communist dominion of the world exemplifies a linear view of time. Finally, a directionless view sees history as neither a cycle nor a progression towards a certain end.

nation as “action,” and the “national will” as something any citizen could participate in—indeed those who participated in revolutionary action for the nation *were* its citizens by virtue of their action alone. Romantic nationalism, the idea that the state derives its power from the organic unity of the people rather than from the ruler, stood in direct opposition to the philosophy of the conservative empires Poles found themselves under throughout partition. Romantic nationalism remained closely tied to revolutionary socialism, which, with its strong emphasis on a definite end of history, clearly pointed to a progressive view of time. Optimism about the future mingled with the necessity for action and revolution. To be a Polish nationalist of any kind under an empire would necessitate a revolutionary outlook and a certain level of optimism. For this reason, and partly as a result of the need to recruit broader groups of people in the fight to regain the nation, Polish nationalism from 1830 to 1863 became more inclusive towards Jews, national minorities, and members of all social classes than it had ever been. Porter states that in the 1830s, “even overtly Judeophobic essays began with the presumption that Jews *could* be Poles.”<sup>12</sup> Previously, such a distinction had seemed insurmountable. Rather than a divide between conservatives, liberals, and socialists, Porter goes on to say that the “real divide” in Polish intellectual life lay between those who saw “a Polish ethnicity, fractured by internal divisions, and those who envisioned a dynamic Polish nation acting in history.”<sup>13</sup> The division reflected differing views of historical time. Seeing history as progressive and action-based reflected a belief in the politics of progress, a focus on what Poland *could* be rather than one limited by ethnic or deterministic constraints. The

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<sup>12</sup> Brian A. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth Century Poland* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 39.

<sup>13</sup> Porter, 111.

implications of a politics of progress view of time created a more open and inclusive society.

Romantic and Socialist belief in the politics of progress can be seen in the ways Poles commemorated and engaged with their history in the mid-nineteenth century. The historical event that possibly loomed largest in the public mind, the first partition of Poland in 1772, became an important part of national commemoration events and memorials as well as an important representation of the politics of progress mindset. The Lwów Exposition of 1894 commemorated the centennial Kościuszko Uprising, named for the Polish nobleman who led the uprising in 1794, through art, a technological fair, and pan-ethnic displays of traditional dress and culture. Thousands of Poles from all over historic Polish territory and from all ethnic backgrounds, including many peasants and children receiving scholarships from popular benefit organizations, attended what likely was a formative event for their national identity.<sup>14</sup> In 1904, several years following the event, Polish peasants in Tarnobrzeg erected their own monument to Kościuszko's peasant counterpart in the uprising, Bartosz Głowacki.<sup>15</sup> The event celebrated a Polish conception of nationality based on hope for a future prosperous state and the inclusion of all people in the struggle to re-establish it.

A few years later, Poles also gathered to celebrate their national poet, Mickiewicz. Four hundred peasant delegations attended the ceremony of his statue's unveiling in Kraków in 1898, along with delegates from Czech and other Slavic lands.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> Patrice M. Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2004), 127.

<sup>15</sup> Dabrowski, 130.

<sup>16</sup> Roman Dmowski, "Letter to Zygmunt Miłkowski," May 5, 1899.

monument built on the solidarity of the previous decade inspired by Mickiewicz's interment in Poland. Peasants from all over the former Poland, parts of modern-day Ukraine, and assimilated Jews sent wreaths to the ceremony linking their own groups with the Polish past. Such monuments and events intertwined inclusive markers of nationality with pan-ethnic and peasant-noble solidarity.<sup>17</sup> Celebrating the national poet and recognizing his patriotism inspired and included people from all across the historic Polish lands, using the past to point towards the possibility of a united future.

While commemoration events of Polish national figures such as Kościuszko and Mickiewicz celebrated what it meant to be Polish through the example of notable Poles, other commemorations defined Polishness in identification with or in opposition to outside groups. Polish commemorations of the relief of Vienna during the nineteenth century emphasized the connection between Polish nationality, Catholicism, and Western identity. The relief of Vienna occurred in 1683 as part of the Ottoman expeditions in Europe. Turkish troops besieged Vienna until Polish troops, led by the Polish king Jan Sobieski, rescued the city and “marked a turning point in the relation of Islam with Christianity in East-Central Europe.”<sup>18</sup> For the commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sobieski's relief of Vienna, Polish activists in the 1880s planned a national commemoration and unveiling of an enormous painting memorializing the occasion. The occasion coincided with the crowning of an icon of the Virgin Mary. The intertwining of the two events infused the commemoration ceremony with a Catholic element and cast the battle as a victory for the Polish Christian nation and the Christian (Catholic) West

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<sup>17</sup> Dabrowski, 135.

<sup>18</sup> Dabrowski, 49.

over Islam. While the celebration did ideologically exclude non-Christians, notably its large Jewish population, from the national community it also emphasized inclusion with the West and community with the various Christian ethnicities living within historic Polish territory.

The politics of progress infused the dominant ideologies of the nineteenth century. Celebrations of collective memory, as reflections of the prevailing narrative of the past, demonstrated a hopeful view of the future focused on including all people in the re-establishment of a Polish state. Romantic and Socialist ideology reflected opposition to the authoritarian position of the Russian Empire and celebrated the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's embrace of more liberal political rights.

While Polish commemorations of the nineteenth century, from the celebration of uprising against an oppressive empire to the blending of religion and nationalism, focused on Poland's inclusive history and kinship with Western Europe, the Poland of the twentieth century became more focused on defining itself as a unique nation with a distinct people. As nationalist ideology swept across Europe in the early twentieth century, Polish intellectuals reinterpreted the same kinds of historical experiences and cultural figures as they had before but with a less universalizing goal in mind.

The nation-building efforts centered around memory in the twentieth century became more exclusive and limiting in part because the dominant intellectual view of historical time had shifted to a politics of eternity and inevitability. The new century saw a great divide arise between nationalists and socialists over the issue of historical time, with nationalists abandoning a progressive view of history in favor of a hard realism and

socialists retaining belief in historical progress.<sup>19</sup> The National Democracy party (a far-right political party popular in the interwar period in Poland) rejected the idea of historical time for the social-Darwinist view of time as a never-ending struggle for survival forever trapped in the present. The politics of inevitability view of history as directionless easily led to a politics of eternity mindset of continuous victimhood. The need to “free” the nation from its victimhood necessitated ever more extreme measures as threats arose from the outside. The National Democracy party advocated anti-Semitic legislation and Polish ethnic nationalism as an outgrowth of the overarching belief that only the present mattered and that any history remembered ought to be used to fortify and unify the national community against possible threats from the outside.<sup>20</sup>

The analysis of commemorative activities of the twentieth century will discuss the growth of ethnic exclusivity as a marker of politics of eternity and inevitability nationalism. It might seem that a more inclusive society must equal a better society and more exclusive must equal worse. However, this dichotomy does not fully explain the problems associated with eternity and inevitability. In crafting an identity, each nation must focus on defining its own people in relation to other groups. To define membership in the nation as civic rather than ethnic excludes ethnic conceptions of nationality but does not make a nation exclusive in a negative sense. However, ethnically exclusive celebrations of nationality sometimes tend towards politics of eternity narratives of inevitable victimhood. As Polish nation-building of the early twentieth century took on a more exclusive character, the politics of eternity view of a cycle of victimhood

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<sup>19</sup> Porter, 177.

<sup>20</sup> Porter, 235.

intertwined with growing ethnic exclusivity led to a nationalism emphasizing the grievances of another group against one's own. At its most extreme, the emphasis on collective victimization, characteristic of the politics of eternity, even supported the ethnic cleansing of Poles by Ukrainians and Ukrainians by Poles during the Second World War.

Twentieth century nationalists chose to commemorate the Polish partitions in a more exclusive fashion than the way in which Romantic nationalists had commemorated the event. In 1913, Poles gathered to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the January Insurrection. As the nineteenth century commemorations had, the January Insurrection memorial emphasized solidarity between social classes, with its monument portraying a noble insurrectionist in peasant dress.<sup>21</sup> Yet with such solidarity came a growing emphasis on exclusive nationality rather than pan-ethnic solidarity. Polish paramilitaries, growing in number, participated openly in commemorating the January Insurrection. Their leaders spoke at the unveiling of the statue, laid wreaths upon it, and marched their uniformed members through the streets of Lwów for the first time since the insurrection.<sup>22</sup> The paramilitaries exclusively used Polish symbols, uniforms, and the Polish language.<sup>23</sup> They trained around 30,000 Poles, while Ukrainians living in historic Polish territory formed their own separate paramilitary organizations.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Dabrowski, 197.

<sup>22</sup> Bohdan Urbanowski, *Filozofia Czynu: Światopogląd Józefa Piłsudskiego* (Warsaw: Pelikan, 1988), 262.

<sup>23</sup> Jochen Bohler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 34.

<sup>24</sup> Mateusz Drozdowski, "Polish Paramilitary Organisations before 1914 | International Encyclopedia of the First World War (WW1)," *Encyclopedia 1914-1918 Online*, September 8, 2014, [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/polish\\_paramilitary\\_organisations\\_before\\_1914](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/polish_paramilitary_organisations_before_1914).

The participation of mono-ethnic paramilitaries in the commemoration underscored the growing division between ethnicities. Roman Dmowski, the leader of the National Democracy Party, believed that “[Polish] racial material, if not used quickly by Polish civilization for the creation of a Polish national identity and Polish political power, will be swept up by neighboring cultures and remade by them.”<sup>25</sup> National Democracy saw the nation as a malleable entity caught in a ruthless struggle to survive, a struggle as old as time, with no end in sight. The politics of eternity and inevitability perfectly encapsulate the form of nationalism guiding a commemorative event built on amassing power through ethnic unity.

That only ethnic Polish paramilitaries participated in the national commemoration highlighted ethnic divisions to come. In interaction with this re-defining of nationality, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Belarusians living in the former Polish territories began to adopt their own politics of eternity outlook, rejecting union with Poland and the common past in favor of promoting the interest of their own nations. Poland’s relationship to its neighbors demonstrates the difficult interlocking web of oppressor and oppressed relationships inherent to the politics of eternity. While Poles painted themselves as oppressed by the Germanization and Russification projects of the partitions, as Poland adopted a zero-sum outlook, neighboring Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians looked upon Poland as an oppressor seeking the destruction of their exclusive ethnic identities and assimilation into a Polonized culture.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Roman Dmowski, *Thoughts of a New Pole* (Lwów: Altenburg, 1907), 126.

<sup>26</sup> Dabrowski, 183.

Commemorations of the Battle of Grunwald emphasized Polish uniqueness and Catholic identity shedding identification with the West common to previous celebrations. As Poles living in the German Empire faced greater pressures to assimilate from German cultural and political organizations in the 1870s, so grew the need to assert a Polish identity in contrast to the German one. The building of linguistic and educational pressures to assimilate lent an urgency to the Polish celebration of the Battle of Grunwald in 1910. The successor to several smaller festivities in years before, the commemoration celebrated the five-hundred-year anniversary of the 1410 victory of the Polish kingdom over the Germanic Teutonic knights. As the relief of Vienna celebrated something larger than a historic victory, so the Battle of Grunwald came to represent resistance of an oppressed nation to foreign invaders—something that could be applied to the timely battle against Germanization and Russification. The celebration attracted over 100,000 people and celebrated the unveiling of a new monument to Władysław Jagiełło, who through marriage to a Polish queen, united Poland and Lithuania in the fifteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The monument sought to demonstrate that while Germans conquered land through battle and violence, Poles expanded their territory through goodwill and political union.<sup>28</sup> While Western Europeans fought amongst themselves, Poland represented a land of peace and Christian solidarity. Yet even as the festival promoted peace and unity amongst the peoples of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, some Lithuanians protested the “Polonization” of their culture and the increasing pressure to adopt the Polish language.

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<sup>27</sup> Dabrowski, 164.

<sup>28</sup> Dabrowski, 168.

Unlike the participation of ethnically exclusive paramilitaries in the January Commemoration, the Grunwald celebrations celebrated a more exclusive nationalism led by the politics of eternity, but without as great an emphasis on inevitability. While the festival portrayed Polish civilization in contrast to the German culture, it emphasized a vision for the future rather than simply the mobilization of an ethnic population in the name of an ever-present struggle for survival. While German organizations did threaten the Polish language and culture, Poles conducted the celebration with a focus on a peaceful future. They represented Poland as the burgeoning leader of a pan-Slavic movement. Such nationalism pictured Poland as leading a powerful coalition of ethnicities, but one, ideally, above hatred. Piłsudski, leader of the Polish socialists, favored this view. In reality, the dream of a peaceful coalition of ethnicities being led by a Polish vision did not pan out as the most tolerant of the festival goers would have hoped. Instability plagued Poland's short period of independence before the Second World War.

The newest monuments erected during Poland's Communist era post-World War II memorialized the wartime actions of a neighboring power, the Soviet Union. In the late 1940s and 1950s, Soviet garrisons, Red Army soldiers, and later Polish Communists constructed hundreds of monuments of gratitude to the Red Army, so that monuments occupied space in nearly all prominent Polish cities.<sup>29</sup> The monuments remained throughout the Communist period until the fall of Communism and transition to full democracy in the 1990s fostered another period of emphasizing unification with Europe and Western identity. The Polish government's strategy for unification incorporated the

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<sup>29</sup> Dominika Czarnecka, *Monuments in Gratitude to the Red Army in Communist and Post-Communist Poland* (Harmattan Hongrie, 2021), 13.

politics of progress into a plan for re-joining Europe while celebrating Polish uniqueness and leadership.

In *The Reconstruction of Nations*, Timothy Snyder demonstrates how Polish nationalism in the post-Communist era portrayed Poland as a country framed by history, but not defined by it. History could be reflected not only in commemorative events but in the nation's foreign policy. In the 1990s, as the nation formed its foreign policy and strategy for entering the EU, the Polish government chose to break free from living in a never-ending present recycling the grievances of history. Though Polish minorities lived beyond the borders of Poland, perhaps most notably in Vilnius, a prominent former city of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Polish government chose not to pursue a path of ethnic revanchism.<sup>30</sup> Leaders made the conscious choice to reject the politics of eternity by rejecting the use of history as the impetus driving demands or entitlements in the present. Poland's foreign policy focused on entering the EU and leading other Eastern Bloc countries along the same path via the Visegrad Group rather than indulging in the victim complex of the politics of eternity. According to Snyder, Poland went further than simply *not* adopting a certain view of history but took initiative and used history to reconcile with its neighbors, especially Ukraine, after the mutual ethnic cleansing of the 1940s.<sup>31</sup> Rather than simply forgetting history and looking to the future, the Poland of the 1990s looked to the past to deal with some of the most challenging parts of its history in order to serve a higher future goal.

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<sup>30</sup> Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (Yale University Press, 2002), 284-286.

<sup>31</sup> Snyder, 289.

*Today's Poland: A Return to Eternity?*

While Poland's government did carve out a role for itself the 1990s as a leader of the Central and Eastern European nations in forging a path to the EU, today's Poland seems to be working once again towards the formation of a separate, unique identity in relation to the rest of Europe. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, and especially since the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) party's victory in 2015, Polish memory laws have become more restrictive and less conducive to the politics of progress. This section traces the development of important memory laws in Poland that have contributed to enforcing a politics of inevitability and eternity mindset by prioritizing one interpretation of history over all others. The official interpretation the government pushes through official institutions and statements emphasizes victimhood and reintroduces a cyclical view of historical time built on fighting against threats to the Polish civilization.

Poland's most recent memory legislation follows an earlier decommunization process. Following the establishment of the Third Polish Republic after the revolution of 1989, Poland's new government began the process of decommunization, or lustration, of public life. In the first decade after the revolution of 1989, under the watch of the recently created Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) the government renamed over two thousand streets containing names associated with Communist figures or dates.<sup>32</sup> Most of these streets bore the names of particularly unfavorable Communist figures or occupied prominent locations in large cities. The government took down many high-profile

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<sup>32</sup> M. Hałas, "Polityka Symboliczna i Pamięć Zbiorowa: Zmiany Nazwy Ulic Po Komunizmie," in *Zmiana Czy Stagnacja?*, by M. Marody (Warsaw, 2004), 132.

monuments, such as the statue of Vladimir Lenin in Kraków after protests.<sup>33</sup> Despite the removal of so many monuments and changing of so many street names, hundreds more monuments and street names associated with Communism remained. After ten years, the decommunization process slowed to a halt, perhaps because the most recognizably Communist and most publicly unfavorable monuments had already been removed.

In 2009, the decommunization process picked up again after ten years of inaction when Polish law banned the use of Communist symbols in any purpose other than an artistic, educational, or collecting capacity.<sup>34</sup> The law placed Communist symbols in the same category as Nazi or fascist symbolism, which the government also banned. The Law and Justice party proposed the bill, which the center-right Civic Platform, the governing party at the time, approved.<sup>35</sup> Similar memory laws went into effect in former Soviet and Eastern Bloc countries around the same time.<sup>36</sup> However, only two years later the Polish Constitutional Tribunal found the law to be unconstitutional on the grounds of freedom of expression. Communist symbols, never stricken from the memory landscape even after the passage of the law, remained in place despite government efforts to restrict their use. Along with “leftover” monuments, street names, or symbols from history,

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<sup>33</sup> Joanna Kałużna, “Dekomunizacja Przestrzeni Publicznej w Polsce - Zarys Problematyki,” *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne*, no. 2 (2018): 157, <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssp.2018.2.10>.

<sup>34</sup> “Promotion of Fascism or Other Totalitarian Systems,” 256 § 2, 4 (1997), <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Expression/ICCPR/Vienna/Annexes/Poland.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> “New Provocative Operation to Ban the Polish Communist Party and Communist Symbols,” European Parliament, August 30, 2018, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-004432\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-004432_EN.html).

<sup>36</sup> Vitaly Shevchenko, “Goodbye, Lenin: Ukraine Moves to Ban Communist Symbols,” *BBC News*, April 14, 2015, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32267075>.

“Lithuanian Ban on Soviet Symbols,” June 17, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7459976.stm>.

Poland has an active Communist Party, the KPP (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski*), which uses a hammer and sickle as its symbol. In 2013, the Polish government sought to ban the KPP, which glorifies Stalin and acts as an apologist for the Soviet era for “promotion of a totalitarian system,” though the party still exists today.<sup>37</sup> The effort to lump Communist and fascist symbols into a single category reflected a growing trend in memory policy of externalizing the Polish Communist experience. Just as Nazism had been a foreign ideology viciously forced upon Poland, so the law’s creators sought to portray Communism.

In 2015, the Polish people elected the first outright majority to parliament, the economically interventionist but socially conservative Law and Justice party. A year later, the government passed the 2016 Street Decommunization Law. The law declared that names of buildings, roads, and all public utilities and places given by local government units could not commemorate people, organizations, events or even dates “symbolizing communism or another totalitarian system.”<sup>38</sup> The 2016 law represented the most comprehensive ordinance on the prohibition of propagating Communism since 1989, calling for the removal of over two hundred monuments still displayed in Poland, both Soviet and Polish Communist.<sup>39</sup> It was this law that slated the Berling statue for

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<sup>37</sup> Maria Wilczek, “Poland Moves to Outlaw Communist Party for Totalitarian Links,” *Notes From Poland* (blog), December 9, 2020, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2020/12/09/poland-moves-to-outlaw-communist-party-for-totalitarian-links/>.

<sup>38</sup> Law of 1 April 2016 on Prohibiting Propagation of Communism or Other Totalitarian Regime Through Names of Buildings, Objects, and Public Service Devices, amended on 22 June 2017 and 14 December 2017, *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* 2016 item 744.

<sup>39</sup> Amos Chapelle, “Then And Now: Soviet Monuments Disappear Under Poland’s ‘Decommunization’ Law,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, October 23, 2020, <https://www.rferl.org/a/then-and-now-photos-show-soviet-monuments-disappearing-in-poland-after-decommunization-law/30905305.html>.

destruction in 2019 along with hundreds of remaining Soviet monuments located outside of cemeteries, public spaces the law's provisions excluded.

Following the 2016 memory law, the Law and Justice party passed an even more highly publicized and controversial memory law in 2018. The Law on Historical Expression stated:

Whoever accuses, publicly and against the facts, the Polish nation, or the Polish state, of being responsible or complicit in the Nazi crimes committed by the Third German Reich or other crimes against peace and humanity, or war crimes, or otherwise grossly diminishes the actual perpetrators thereof, shall be subject to a fine or a penalty of imprisonment of up to three years.<sup>40</sup>

After outcry from other countries and Jewish groups, legislators removed the threat of jail from the law later in 2018, but the other provisions remain.<sup>41</sup> While the Polish government claimed that the law sought to protect historical integrity and prevent disinformation (such as the idea that Nazi concentration camps in Poland were *Polish* concentration camps), Israel, the United States, and many European countries sharply criticized the law. While other nations have laws criminalizing Holocaust denial, many worried that the Polish law sought to completely erase crimes and acts of collaboration with the Nazi regime carried out by individual Poles and deny the existence of anti-Semitism in Poland. Poland's collective remembrance of the Holocaust and the place of Jewish Poles in society presents a highly complex memory issue which deserves its own

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<sup>40</sup> Law from 26 January 2018 amending the Law of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation.

<sup>41</sup> Pawel Sobczak, "Poland Backs down on Holocaust Law, Moves to End Jail Terms," *Reuters*, June 27, 2018, sec. Media and Telecoms, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-poland-idUSKBN1JN0SD>.

treatment apart from Communist memory politics.<sup>42</sup> Even so, the government's desire to centralize and exert greater control over the memory narrative of the Holocaust further demonstrates the administration's focus on centralizing memory as a whole.

When considered in concert with the Polish government's current attitude towards Europe and its own minority groups, Poland's memory laws exemplify a larger cultural shift towards the politics of eternity. Removing Communist-era statues and symbols does not by itself signify the enactment of a worldview based on victimhood or the lack of future vision for society, but wider societal policies contribute to such a worldview. Poland's conflict with the EU and policies directed towards immigrants and LGBT people show a larger societal shift towards the politics of eternity and inevitability.

At the height of Europe's refugee crisis, Poland refused to take in any Muslim immigrants. Law and Justice's Prime Minister, Jarosław Kaczyński, consistently portrayed immigrants as threatening Poland's culture, security, and even health.<sup>43</sup> In 2016, surveys showed that approximately 73 percent of Poles viewed refugees from the Syrian Civil War as a threat to their country.<sup>44</sup> While Poland did take in some

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<sup>42</sup> Some scholars have written on remembrance of the Holocaust in modern Poland through monuments and commemorative activities. The two listed below address modern collective remembrance of Judaism in Polish society and a history of public responses to the Holocaust in Poland.

Geneviève Zubrzycki, "The Politics of Jewish Absence in Contemporary Poland," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 2 (2017): 250–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416664020>.

Antony Polonsky, *Polin: Focusing on the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (London: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> M. Krzyżanowski, "Discursive Shifts in Ethno-Nationalist Politics: On Politicization and Mediatization of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Poland," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (2018): 90.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, and Katie Simmons, "Negative Views of Minorities, Refugees Common in EU," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* (blog), July 11, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu/>.

immigrants, only a few hundred refugees from Syria applied for asylum from 2015-2016.<sup>45</sup> For comparative purposes, thirty-one percent of Germans, fifty-two percent of Britons, and twenty-two percent of Swedes viewed refugees as a threat to their country, despite taking in thousands more applications for asylum than Poland.<sup>46</sup> It would seem that rhetoric from political leaders contributed to highly negative public opinion. A 2015 study demonstrated the extensive use of “othering” rhetoric used by prominent politicians to paint immigrants as a threat to the nation. In an analysis of 124 statements and public addresses on immigration made by the most prominent PiS governmental figures from 2015-2017, 79 contained language portraying immigrants as dangerous and threatening.<sup>47</sup> Wide media coverage has surrounded the Law and Justice party’s frequent invocation of immigration as a danger which threatens to victimize Poland’s people and culture. PiS rhetoric further suggests an immutability of differences between European Christian Poles and Muslim Middle Eastern immigrants characteristic of a politics of eternity. To PiS leaders and voters, culture is presumed to be distinct and unchangeable.

As the height of the refugee crisis passed, Polish politicians began to center their rhetoric around the “threat” of a different group. While Poland consistently reminds the media and EU that it decriminalized homosexuality in 1932, same sex marriage remains illegal in Poland. This policy has remained constant, but a recent uptick in legislation

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<sup>45</sup> Karolina Rusiłowicz, “Country Report: Poland,” *Asylum Information Database | European Council on Refugees and Exiles* (blog), November 13, 2015, <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/poland/>.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Jacob Poushter, “Europeans View ISIS, Climate Change as Most Serious Threats,” *Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project* (blog), June 13, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/06/13/europeans-see-isis-climate-change-as-most-serious-threats/>.

<sup>47</sup> Piotr Cap, “‘We Don’t Want Any Immigrants or Terrorists Here’: The Linguistic Manufacturing of Xenophobia in the Post-2015 Poland,” *Discourse & Society* 29, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 380–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926518754416>.

imposing further limits on the LGBT community has provided a backbone to the anti-LGBT rhetoric that many Polish politicians use to frame society as a struggle between a pure Polish society and the “rainbow plague,” to use the words of Krakow’s archbishop,<sup>48</sup> that threatens its survival. In 2020, nearly a third of Poland’s voivodeships, or provinces, passed symbolic resolutions designating themselves “LGBT Ideology Free Zones.”<sup>49</sup> While the resolutions created no additional legal restrictions on LGBT individuals, they demonstrated an ideological hostility towards the LGBT movement, declaring that it “violates the fundamental rights” of “international law” and the “Polish constitution,” and aims at the “annihilation of [Christian] values.”<sup>50</sup> As Catholic Christian identity has intertwined with Polish national identity for hundreds of years, the legislation portrays LGBT ideology (and by extension people) as an existential threat to Polish society. In 2019, a survey showed that thirty-one percent of Polish men under forty view “gender and LGBT ideology” as the greatest threat to Poland in the twenty-first century, surpassing other choices like climate change, the growth of nationalist movements, the demographic crisis, and threats from Russia to earn the most votes out of seven choices.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Lauren Chadwick, “Archbishop Warns of ‘rainbow Plague’ amid LGBT Tensions in Poland,” euronews, August 2, 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/08/02/archbishop-warns-of-rainbow-plague-amid-lgbt-tensions-in-poland>.

<sup>49</sup> Lucy Ash, “Inside Poland’s ‘LGBT-Free Zones,’” *BBC News*, September 20, 2020, sec. Stories, <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-54191344>.

<sup>50</sup> “Declaration No. 1/19 of the Lesser Poland Regional Assembly of April 29. 2019 on Opposition to the Introduction of the ‘LGBT’ Ideology to Local Government Communities,” Marshal’s Office of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship, April 19, 2019, <https://bip.malopolska.pl/umwm.a.1594074.deklaracja-nr-119-sejmiku-województwa-malopolskiego-z-dnia-29-kwietnia-2019-r-w-sprawie-sprzeciwu-wo.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Piotr Pacewicz and Robert Jurszo, “Mężczyźni Najbardziej Boją Się Gejów i Gender, Kobiety Zapaści Ochrony Zdrowia. Wspólny Strach o Klimat,” OKO.Press, September 17, 2019, <https://oko.press/mezczyzni-najbardziej-boja-sie-gejow-i-gender-kobiety-zapasci-sluzby-zdrowia-wspolny-strach-o-klimat/>.

Poland's fight with "LGBT ideology" has not only touched certain regional areas; the conflict has made its way to the European Court of Human Rights of the EU.

Poland's long and tumultuous history has been used as the backdrop supporting ideologies from Socialism to Romanticism to right-wing nationalism. Likewise, Poland's history has cycled through periods in which the majority of society's actors used a politics of eternity or inevitability to justify their ideas of how society should be run. The current Polish administration, from its adoption of a more restrictive memory policy to its rhetoric framing Poland as a victim under attack from outside forces, has continued using the politics of eternity and inevitability to frame reality. The next chapter illustrates current practices of Poland's government focusing on the establishment and actions of the Institute of National Remembrance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Case of the IPN

The time had come for a new head of one of the Institute of National Remembrance's (IPN) regional offices to be chosen. As the IPN is the largest government-funded memory institution in Poland, the choice held weight. The new leader would help manage Poland's vast array of Communist-era monuments and the implementation of nation-wide memory laws. For the post, the IPN chose Tomasz Greniuch, a historian by training...as well as the founder of an ultranationalist group who gave the Nazi salute at protests and organized an event commemorating a Polish politician who had tried to burn down a Jewish synagogue in 1936.<sup>52</sup> In his publications, Greniuch expressed admiration for a Belgian neo-Nazi movement and refused to acknowledge criticism of the salute.<sup>53</sup> He entered office February 9<sup>th</sup> of 2021 and left only thirteen days later after widespread outcry from fellow Poles and from abroad.<sup>54</sup> The appointment of an ultranationalist to a regional authority remains only one of the many controversies that have surrounded the Polish IPN.

As a centralized government commission overseeing the commemoration of the events of the twentieth century, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) has been at

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<sup>52</sup> Maria Wilczek, "Israel Protests Appointment of Former Far-Right Activist to Head Polish State History Body," *Notes From Poland* (blog), February 12, 2021, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/02/12/israel-protests-appointment-of-former-far-right-activist-to-head-polish-state-history-body/>.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Joanna Jakubowska, "Pro-Fascist Director of Poland's Remembrance Institute Resigns after 13 Days," [www.euractiv.com](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/pro-fascist-director-of-polands-remembrance-institute-resigns-after-13-days/), February 23, 2021, [https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short\\_news/pro-fascist-director-of-polands-remembrance-institute-resigns-after-13-days/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/pro-fascist-director-of-polands-remembrance-institute-resigns-after-13-days/).

the center of the Law and Justice party's efforts to remake memory politics. This chapter will show the growth of the IPN's power as a memory authority and proximity to the government since the beginning of the Law and Justice administration. It will then contextualize the IPN among other organizations outside Poland and in relation to other domestic institutions. Finally, it will examine the reasoning behind the specific approach to memory taken by the IPN, and thus the Polish government, and the political goals of Law and Justice in using IPN-produced educational materials. The IPN's materials demonstrate how the organization and the government have sought to externalize the Communist experience by comparing it with the Nazi occupation of Poland.

Since its establishment by the Polish parliament in 1998, the IPN has always been tied to the state. Since Law and Justice assumed power in 2015, the association between the two and the power accorded to the IPN has grown ever greater. In 1998, the act establishing the IPN gave it a founding mission: the documentation and prosecution of Nazi and Communist crimes from 1945-1989 and research of modern Polish history. Openly included in its charter is the duty to commemorate Polish "struggle and martyrdom."<sup>55</sup> Clearly, Poland's government embraced the tradition connecting Polish nationhood to identity as a martyr nation. The president of the IPN would be directly chosen by the Polish *Sejm* (the lower house of parliament) with the same term and term limits as the president of the Polish nation. Upon entering office, the IPN president must swear to serve the "Polish Nation" in his role.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Institute of National Remembrance, "The Act on the Institute of National Remembrance," ch. 6b §53j (1998), <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-institute/documents/327.The-Act-on-the-Institute-of-National-Remembrance.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Institute of National Remembrance, "The Act on the Institute of National Remembrance," ch. 2 §12 (1998), <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-institute/documents/327.The-Act-on-the-Institute-of-National-Remembrance.html>.

Along with its intimate relationship with the government, the IPN's allotted budget, received directly from government revenue, has also increased in recent years. In 2020, it received 423 million zloty (about 98 million U.S. dollars), an increase of 81 million zloty from the year before.<sup>57</sup> In comparison, in 2017, Poland's government spent only a little more than the same amount allotted to the IPN on all its environmental protection efforts combined.<sup>58</sup> Government spending on the maintenance of all public museums and information archives not managed by the IPN only totaled about thirty percent of the funds directed to the IPN. To maintain monuments across Poland, the government spent less than a third of what it did on the IPN.<sup>59</sup>

The IPN exercises its government-given power over the memory landscape of Poland in noticeable ways. The IPN has the authority to catalogue and recommend Communist-era monuments for removal and assist local authorities in relocating them, as it did in 2016 when it marked over two hundred monuments of gratitude to the Red Army for relocation. While local governments hold the final word on whether to accept the IPN's assistance in removing monuments, most choose to follow the IPN's directives. As recently as March of 2022, the IPN president presided over the demolition of an obelisk in Chrzowice which featured a red star and in inscription glorifying the Soviet army,

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<sup>57</sup> Adam Leszczynski, "Our Dear IPN. For What Do You Need as Much as PLN 423 Million from Our Taxes in 2019?," January 3, 2020, <https://oko.press/nasz-drogi-ipn/>.

<sup>58</sup> Bartosz Kociejko, "We Convert the State Budget to the Institute of National Remembrance. How Many Right-Wing Historians Do You Need to Protect Polish Nature?," OKO.Press, January 12, 2018, <https://oko.press/przeliczamy-budzet-panstwa-ipny-ilu-prawicowych-historykow-trzeba-by-ochronic-polska-przyrode/>.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

calling it a symbol of totalitarianism akin to the swastika.<sup>60</sup> Since the Law and Justice party's election, the IPN has advanced removal of hundreds of similar monuments as well as the implementation of the controversial Holocaust law of 2018, which penalized the use of the adjective "Polish" to describe Nazi concentration camps in Poland.

### *The IPN Among Others*

Memory organizations like the IPN are not unique to Poland. After the fall of Communism, memory organizations targeting the legacy of Communism emerged all across East and Central Europe. The post-Communist countries are home to various government or privately funded memory institutions and activist groups, some similar to those in Poland, but others lacking the same central, government funded and established institutions. The Polish parliament's creation of the IPN in 1998 preceded other European nations' creation of similar institutions by about ten years. From 2005-2015, other post-Communist countries began to create government funded memory institutions and commissions to commemorate victims of the Communist era or to investigate its crimes. Some countries, including Romania, Ukraine, and Hungary created memory institutions similar to the IPN, established by the government, receiving government funding, and taking a visible role in national commemoration and education (as well as stirring similar controversies).<sup>61</sup> Other countries established government-funded museums or

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<sup>60</sup> Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, "Demontaż Pomnika Armii Czerwonej – 23 Marca 2022," Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, March 23, 2022, <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/161753,Demontaz-pomnika-Armii-Czerwonej-23-marca-2022.html?search=10885739471>.

<sup>61</sup> Andrea Pető, "The Illiberal Memory Politics in Hungary," *Journal of Genocide Research* 0, no. 0 (September 3, 2021): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2021.1968150>; Sharon, "Nazi Collaborators Included in Ukrainian Memorial Project," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/nazi-collaborators-included-in-ukrainian-memorial-project-656253>.

associations for victims of Communism. These include Germany's International Association for Victims of Communism, the Confederation of Political Prisoners of the Czech Republic, and the Estonian Vabamu Museum of Occupation and Freedom. Even the United States Congress established the nonprofit Victims of Communism Foundation in 1993 to research, commemorate, and educate U.S. citizens on the abuses of Communism around the world.<sup>62</sup>

Poland's government and private groups in Poland also seek to play a role in shaping the nation's memory of Communism. In 2017, the Polish parliament established the Witold Pilecki Institute, named for the hero of World War II who first told the West about the crimes of Auschwitz only to later be executed by the Polish Communist government. The institute dedicates itself to studying "the Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes" with a focus on remembering Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust.<sup>63</sup> The Witold Pilecki Institute's vision intersects nicely with the IPN's. Besides being similarly government-established and funded, both seek to highlight the heroism of Poles and draw comparisons between the Nazi and Communist eras. The Witold Pilecki Institute has also faced some of the same criticism as the IPN, for overemphasizing Polish martyrdom and minimizing Polish antisemitism and the suffering of Polish Jews during World War II. In 2021, when the Institute offered its Witold Pilecki International Book Award to a Jewish author, she declined the prize stating that while the Institute had provided generous support to some Holocaust scholarship, it also contributed to the

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<sup>62</sup> "About," Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://victimsofcommunism.org/about/>.

<sup>63</sup> "The Institute." Instytut Pileckiego, accessed March 5, 2022, <https://instytutpileckiego.pl/en/instytut>.

suppression of historians who sought to show the “complex and indeed tragic aspects of Poland’s wartime past.”<sup>64</sup>

Among non-governmental organizations, Poland’s KARTA Center maintains the nation’s largest archival record of the twentieth century. Its goals include promoting tolerance and democracy and popularizing the recent history of Poland. The KARTA Center also co-founded EUSTORY, a European network that promotes a history competition for youth. A subset of KARTA’s collection, the Index of the Repressed, a database containing records of Poles deported to forced-labor camps in Siberia, became subsumed under the IPN’s jurisdiction in 2013. The IPN has used records from KARTA in several of their exhibitions, including one on the Polish underground state in 2020.<sup>65</sup>

Alongside governmental institutions and independent organizations, Poland’s local governments have an important role to play in arbitrating the memory politics landscape. Local governments have the final say in monument removal or modification and have sometimes resisted the IPN’s decisions. In the town of Drawsko-Pomorskie, residents protested the IPN’s slating of a local monument for removal. The monument, two Soviet tanks with a plaque that read, “to the soldiers of the Red Army who fell in the battles for the liberation of the Drawsko land” had grown into more a symbol of the town and a beloved childhood playground of its residents rather than a war monument.<sup>66</sup> After

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<sup>64</sup> Dr Eliyana Adler, “Essay: I Declined the Pilecki Prize to Support Brave Polish Historians Under Threat — Detroit Jewish News,” <https://Thejewishnews.Com/> (blog), November 24, 2021, <https://thejewishnews.com/2021/11/24/essay-i-declined-the-pilecki-prize-to-support-brave-polish-historians-under-threat/>.

<sup>65</sup> Institute of National Remembrance, “The Polish Underground State exhibition,” Institute of National Remembrance, March 4, 2020, <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/exhibitions/4017.The-Polish-Underground-State-exhibition.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Nancy Waldmann, “Cultures of History Forum : Local Memories Dismantled: Reactions to De-Communization in Northern and Western Poland,” March 23, 2018, <https://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/politics/local-memories-dismantled-reactions-to-de-communization>.

residents showed their support for the monument, the mayor made the decision to remove the plaque and Soviet insignia, but to leave the tanks standing.<sup>67</sup> Resistance to the monument's removal by a local organized group succeeded, but overall, most towns have accepted the IPN's directives without protest. Over two-hundred monuments of gratitude to the Red Army have been removed from small towns and cities across Poland and stored until they can be placed in a planned museum of the Cold War on a former Soviet military base in north-west Poland.<sup>68</sup>

### *The IPN's Narrative*

The IPN's goals in crafting a narrative separating the Communist experience from Poland and comparing Communism to Nazism encompass three main points: diminishing responsibility, celebrating pride, and taking political action. Portraying Communism as a foreign tyranny dilutes the Polish nation's responsibility for crimes committed during the Communist era or its hardships by painting Poles as victims of a Communist government they did not want and fought against at every opportunity. This process of externalizing Communism simplifies complicated history in Poland. While it is impossible to say that the Polish people, acting in complete freedom, adopted and supported Communist policies and alignment with the Eastern Bloc, it is likewise difficult to prove that Poland's government was comprised of Soviet puppet leaders who always acted in the interest of the Soviet Union and never in what they perceived to be Poland's national interest. In 1993, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Poles freely elected a Communist

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> "Soviet Troop Monuments in Poland to Be Moved to New Museum," *BBC News*, June 28, 2016, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36656226>.

coalition of leftist parties after dissatisfaction with Solidarity's governance. During and after the era of one-party Communist rule, there were always Poles who sincerely advocated Communism as the best path towards national success, or those who believed that alignment with the Soviet Union presented the best option to protect their country's independence. While the intricate question of Communist legitimacy in Poland is beyond the scope of this thesis, it will operate according to the view that Poland's political leaders during the Communist era operated in a highly restrictive geopolitical landscape, but that they did exercise some control aimed at protecting Poland's national interests.

Created in 2020, the IPN video, *I Was Born in Poland* demonstrates the externalizing aspect of the narrative perfectly. Portraying the "birth" of the Solidarity movement, the video shows a huge boot with a hammer and sickle on the sole crushing Poland. We see that the boot belongs to a member of the faceless Citizen's Militia (the police force during the era) bearing shields and batons advancing upon a crowd of protestors. The video shows a crowd holding up crosses and Polish flags inside a church as resisters of the regime. Different images of protests and strikes merge until they converge into a map of all of Poland. The audio at the end declares: "They won, because they stood united, that's why they call me Solidarity."<sup>69</sup>

The video portrays the Polish nation acting as one unit against the tyranny of Communism. As heroes of the video, Poles gathered together at protests, in churches, and in strikes to resist Communism, all bedecked with the Polish flag. Meanwhile, the Citizen's Militia appears in their historical uniforms, save for the Soviet hammer and sickle symbol on the underside of their boots. Faceless, shadowy, and surrounded in red

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<sup>69</sup> IPNtvPL, *I Was Born in Poland*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQMxvZa8WFk>.

smoke, they are clearly the antagonists of the video. In this portrayal of Solidarity, the IPN makes a division between the patriotic Polish nation and the “Soviet” enemy, despite the fact that the Citizen’s Militia was made up of Polish citizens, some of them former Home Army members of the underground resistance. Foreigners viewing this English-language video or even young Poles might well believe from appearances that the Soviet Union controlled Poland as an occupier while the Polish citizens joined together in Solidarity to fight back.

The consequences of diminishing Poland’s responsibility for Communist actions and alienating “true Poles” from the Communist past create real societal consequences. Almost forty-five percent of Poland’s population was eighteen years old or older at the fall of Communism in 1989 and has a living memory of the era.<sup>70</sup> Many younger citizens would likely have heard about Communist society from a relative with living memory of the period. The idea that Poland was a bleak land controlled by a foreign ideology and governed by “Poles” in name only before the true freedom-loving Poles came together in a revolution ignores the complications of the era. When Communism collapsed, economic reforms brought improvement, but also great upheaval and suffering to many common people. To claim victory over the repression, inefficiency, and censorship that the Communist regime engendered is reasonable, but it is something else to claim that those who supported Communism or lived good lives under Communist rule are not true

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<sup>70</sup> “Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100,” PopulationPyramid.net, accessed April 2, 2022, <https://www.populationpyramid.net/poland/2016/>.

Poles. Poland already ranks as a highly polarized society.<sup>71</sup> Externalizing and compartmentalizing memory of an entire era does nothing to improve that polarization.

Lessening responsibility for Communism also affects how the Polish state takes responsibility for the treatment of Jews during the Communist era. The IPN timeline of Polish history presents a narrative that minimizes Polish antisemitism and puts the blame for abuses of the Jewish community on the Soviets. In 1946, Polish soldiers, police, and ordinary citizens viciously attacked and killed over 42 Polish Jews and injured 40 more in the Polish town of Kielce. Many of the victims had been survivors of the Holocaust. This attack is known as the Kielce pogrom, considered one of the stains upon Poland's history.<sup>72</sup> The IPN gives the event a thorough treatment in its timeline of Polish history compared to most other events and stridently refutes the view that the pogrom stemmed from longstanding Polish antisemitism.

First, the IPN timeline questions the validity of Jewish testimony linking wartime experiences to post-war Polish antisemitism, stating that because most Jews left Poland before the Communists fully took over, they did not realize that that “the Jewish question’ was only a pawn in the political games the Communists were playing” and that Communists purposefully created situations for Polish-Jewish tensions to arise.<sup>73</sup> The

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<sup>71</sup> Joanna Fomina, “Of Patriots and Citizens: Asymmetric Populist Polarization in Poland,” in *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Andrew O’Donohue (Brookings Institution Press, 2019), 126–50.

<sup>72</sup> “The Kielce Pogrom: A Blood Libel Massacre of Holocaust Survivors,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed March 12, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-kielce-pogrom-a-blood-libel-massacre-of-holocaust-survivors>.

<sup>73</sup> Mateusz Lisak, “The Kielce Pogrom and the Post-War Period in Selected non-Polish Publications,” Institute of National Remembrance, accessed March 3, 2022, <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/articles/7186.The-Kielce-Pogrom-and-the-Post-War-Period-in-Selected-non-Polish-Publications.html>.

article goes on to claim that non-Polish authors leave out the fact that the victims of the pogrom also included non-Jewish Poles.<sup>74</sup> Other sources do recognize that two non-Jewish Poles were killed, but the IPN chose to emphasize the deaths of these two non-Jewish victims, likely caught in the crossfires of the attack, when discussing the targeted violence experienced by Jews across Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>75</sup> While the IPN article presents an array of perspectives from Polish historians without committing to one view, the author ends the article stating that the differences between Polish and non-Polish scholarship on the issue has provoked a question of which was worse, Communism or Nazism, and whether Jews or non-Jews “suffered more.”<sup>76</sup> That conclusion demonstrates a desire to avoid acknowledging Jewish suffering or wrongs committed by Poles by redirecting the focus to an abstract question of which group faced worse victimization by outsiders. Even if non-Jewish Poles did suffer more under Nazism or Communism than Jewish Poles, answering that question would not at all address the original question of how non-Jewish Poles had treated Jews. The questioner seeks not an answer, but rather to deflect from the question at hand.

Aside from minimizing Polish responsibility for the treatment of Polish Jews under Communism, this question likewise minimizes the experience of uniquely Jewish suffering. Rather, the narrative subsumes it under the experiences of the entire nation because a few non-Jewish Poles were killed during the pogrom or because “everyone” suffered under Communism, just as “everyone” suffered during World War II. The

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<sup>74</sup> Lisak, “The Kielce Pogrom and the Post-War Period in Selected non-Polish Publications.”

<sup>75</sup> United States Holocaust Museum, “The Kielce Pogrom.”

<sup>76</sup> Lisak, “The Kielce Pogrom and the Post-War Period in Selected non-Polish Publications.”

comparison sweeps away the nuances of how collective suffering affected different groups. If the Poles themselves were an oppressed group under the Nazi occupation or under Communism, how could they be oppressors of Jews? Ironically, the Communist Soviet Union that the IPN opposes so much adopted the same outlook towards Jews in the Soviet Union.

While comparing Poland's Communist experience to the Nazi occupation seeks to minimize responsibility for negative actions, it likewise contributes to a parallel goal: increasing the perceived heroism of the resistance to the Polish Communist government. Many Poles are proud of the heroic acts of the Polish Home Army and individual Poles during World War II; Poland's part in the war has ranked among the most pride-inspiring historical events in surveys since 1965.<sup>77</sup> The IPN's webpage features articles celebrating the Polish Home Army and resistance movement in every section.<sup>78</sup> Certainly, many Polish actions during the war ought to be celebrated. Those who saved Polish Jews and joined the resistance put themselves and their families in enormous danger. Associating the resistance to the Communist government with such heroic actions and with a comparatively clear-cut struggle of good versus evil elevates the resistance to Poland's Communist government to a higher level. Just as the Polish nation "fought as one" against the pure evil of the Nazi regime, so the nation fought together against the evil of the "Soviet" Communist regime.

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<sup>77</sup> Barbara Szacka and Marjorie Castle, "Polish Remembrance of World War II," *International Journal of Sociology* 36, no. 4 (2006): 17.

<sup>78</sup> Institute of National Remembrance, "Institute of National Remembrance," Institute of National Remembrance, accessed February 21, 2022, <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/>.

One example of the “heroizing” narrative of resistance to Communism is the IPN video, *The Unconquered*. Presented in 2017, the short film portrays the history of the Polish nation from 1945-1989. The video is quite popular; the Polish-language video boasts over six million views and the English video two million. *The Unconquered* has inspired dozens of reaction videos from people all over the world. Along with the timeline it chooses to cover, the video’s message is best represented by one scene from the short film (Fig. 2.1).



Figure 2.1: Still from *The Unconquered* presenting heroic Poland caught between two tyrannical regimes (IPN, Fishladder, Platige Image Studio, Juice 2017)

As we follow the narrative, the video shows how famous Poles worked together to resist the Nazi occupation. Yet, as the video claims, the war did not end for Poland in 1945. Rather, a different occupation began. The video delineates the Iron Curtain in red under the Soviet star, making it appear as though Poland fell under Soviet rule. A robotic hand emblazoned with the Soviet star crushes strikes across Poland. The final words state, “the Iron Curtain falls, the war is over.” In this narrative, not only is the Communist era

likened to the experience of World War II, it is explicitly a continuation of that war. The same wartime heroes who fought against the Nazi occupation and rescued Jews are portrayed on equal footing with those who resisted Communism.

The IPN's timeline of historical events post-1945 in Poland portrays a version of Polish history during Communism which highlights similarities to the foreign occupation of the Second World War. The timeline claims that the Soviets subjected Poles to "totalitarian enslavement" imposed on them by puppet leaders who represented Soviet interests in Warsaw.<sup>79</sup> Portraying Poles as slaves of a foreign occupying power makes it seem, as in *The Unconquered*, that those who resisted the Communist regime acted in the same capacity as those who resisted the Nazi regime. While many Polish dissidents did face extremely harsh consequences for their actions, it would be incorrect to claim that the millions of striking Solidarity members acted facing the same consequences that ordinary Poles who resisted the Nazi occupation and protected Jews faced. While those who resisted Communist inhumanity ought to be celebrated, they ought to be celebrated on their own terms, not as a continuation of wartime heroism.

Law and Justice's efforts to centralize memory of the Communist era have more obvious political outgrowths than simply changing how citizens may view the past on certain holidays or upon seeing a specific monument. Placing Communism, a leftist ideology, on an equal level with Nazism creates an association between Polish leftist parties and a foreign, malicious, and anti-Polish narrative. This point has been clearly seen in judicial reforms implemented by Law and Justice in 2015, when the

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<sup>79</sup> Jarosław Szarek, "8 May 1945 – Polish perspective," Institute of National Remembrance, accessed March 3, 2022, <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/articles/7333.8-May-1945-Polish-perspective.html>.

administration cited the need to eliminate “Communist era mentalities” as part of its reasoning for lowering the age of retirement for judges for all but those whom the president viewed as satisfactory.<sup>80</sup> These political efforts demonstrate that the work of the IPN and legal efforts regulating the portrayal of Communism have relevant societal effects. While the EU may have forced Poland to roll back its judicial reforms, convincing society that the Polish Communist government was akin to the Nazi occupation of Poland acts as a justification to implement stronger measures against the vestiges of the Communist system (or to exaggerate what qualifies as a vestige of that system) and even other leftist parties. Though it only attracts about three hundred members, the Polish government has still twice sought to ban the Communist Party from seeking elections.<sup>81</sup>

While the IPN is not the only memory institution in Poland, it receives by far the most government funding and support. For the past twenty-four years of its existence, the IPN has left a noticeable mark on Polish society. The IPN has worked to support the Law and Justice Party in its aims to redefine Polish memory of the Communist era, from preparing to remove over two hundred monuments to Communist figures to helping implement a Holocaust memory law all in the name of supporting a positive version of Polish history. While these policies might appear the domain of historians, they have a deeper societal effect. Comparing the Communist era to the Nazi occupation of Poland has proved the justification for modern “decommunization” policies. The next chapter

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<sup>80</sup> Alistair Walsh, “What Are Poland’s Controversial Judicial Reforms?,” DW.COM, May 11, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/what-are-polands-controversial-judicial-reforms/a-51121696>.

<sup>81</sup> Marcin Pietraszeswki, “Komunistyczna Partia Polski pod lupą prokuratury,” gazetapl, July 6, 2017, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,22062923,komunistyczna-partia-polski-pod-lupa-prokuratury.html>.

will discuss in greater detail the how the IPN's centralized policy of remembrance relates to the politics of eternity and compare it to a more decentralized approach. It will conclude with a case study of the removal of two Communist-era monuments and the complex intertwining of the government, IPN, local governments, and the Polish people themselves in the world of memory.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Monuments at the Crossroads

The government's use of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) exemplifies a centralized approach to collective memory, which aims at its standardization. Supporters of this approach desire that across Poland, people would remember the same version of Communism. In practice, however, simple IPN policy often meets with a complicated web of local memory policies and widely varying views on Communist history. While the IPN's centralized promotion of one historical narrative encourages a politics of eternity, the approach of local governments to memory highlights a second, more decentralized path. This chapter utilizes Ewa Ochman's book *Post-Communist Poland—Contested Pasts and Future Identities* to further explain the utility of this second approach to memory, which allows for a comparison between central and local approaches to memory politics. The chapter utilizes the cases of two monuments, the Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszow and the Monument of Gratitude to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army in Warsaw. After contextualizing the monuments' historical background, the chapter explores in depth the contrasts in memory policy surrounding them. Finally, the chapter compares the national unified approach with the decentralized approach to commemoration.

#### *Eternity, Memory, and Decentralization*

The IPN's founding mission statement includes an explicit call to study Polish national martyrdom. Connecting the stories of the Second World War and the Communist era exacerbates the tendency to portray the Polish nation as a martyr and victim of history. A focus on celebrating Polish martyrdom captures the essence of the politics of

eternity. Seeing the past as a history of victimhood and martyrdom, it becomes easier to see the future as more of the same. When Polish politicians, and society at large see themselves as leaders of a martyr nation betrayed by the West and betrayed by outsiders, their view of the future may tend to insulation and distrust of the other, as has been seen in Polish society's attitude towards Syrian refugees and Polish politicians' distrust of the European Union.<sup>82</sup>

The problems of the IPN's emphasis on Polish victimhood aligns with the martyr-centric politics of eternity. As the IPN equates Jewish and Polish victimization in the Second World War, its website also insinuates that the perceived overrepresentation of Jews in government during the Communist era somewhat justified antisemitism during that time.<sup>83</sup> Any organization seeking justification for antisemitism may raise concern, but in a centralized organization such as the IPN which has control over memory policy all over Poland as well as the budget to create educational materials and media pieces with millions of views raises a different level of concern. The victimizing rhetoric of the IPN further contributes to the politics of eternity. As a people perceive themselves to be victimized, they are less able to see how even as a persecuted group, their group may have oppressed other groups or how other groups may have been persecuted in a different way that deserves separate attention. Rather, the focus on the victimization of one's own group leads to an obsession with the past and the inability to take responsibility for problems of the present.

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<sup>82</sup> Simona Guerra, "The Polish People Support the EU – It's Their Government That Continues to Antagonise Brussels," *The Conversation*, accessed April 11, 2022, <http://theconversation.com/the-polish-people-support-the-eu-its-their-government-that-continues-to-antagonise-brussels-170324>; Jacob Poushter, "European Opinions of the Refugee Crisis in 5 Charts," *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/>.

<sup>83</sup> Lisak, "The Kielce Pogrom and the Post-War Period in Selected non-Polish Publications."

The centralized IPN policy towards managing public memory also contains system-level problems as a result of its centralization. Were historical truth so easy to discover and make clear to a large audience, no issue would need be taken with a unified approach to commemoration. The true problem lies in the difficulty of determining historical truth and communicating history to the public. When contemporary politics draws on the past to create future policy, the incentives to simplify history into politically useable material become greater. When a government supported institution exercises as much power as the IPN, the dangers of its being swayed into a propagandistic rather than truth-seeking institution grow higher.

In contrast to the IPN, some local governments in Poland have taken a different approach to memory. While local governments may invoke some of the same politics of eternity ideas as a more centralized government organization, their size limits their effectiveness in promoting that worldview. Furthermore, smaller governments often need to be more responsive to the people and the diversity of thought in their region. Rather than one national organization of scholars setting the tone for the entire country, local commemoration often takes on a more personal and regional approach to memory. This localized approach to memory can be illustrated in Ewa Ochman's book on post-Communist monuments in Poland. In 2006, she embarked on a case study of local monuments in Upper Silesia, a region of southern Poland, in order to study how local memory policy played out in practice. Her findings on local memory policies provide a counterpoint to the IPN's policies.

First of all, Ochman demonstrates how decentralized memory legislation in Gliwice, a city in southern Poland, created opportunities for greater inclusion and more

personal memory projects. She describes how in 2000, in commemoration of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gliwice receiving the status of a township, the city erected a monument in memory of all Gliwice victims of war and totalitarianism. Through its wording, the monument included civilians from the majority ethnic German Polish city who had been victimized by the Red Army after World War II, people whose lives and struggles were not commemorated officially anywhere else in Poland.<sup>84</sup> While not seeking to exclude any group from the collective memory or to claim the equivalence of suffering between different groups as a justification for historical mistreatment, Gliwice's new monument created a place where the citizens of their specific city could relate to their own history.

Decentralized memory policy in Gliwice likewise allowed for the evolution of memory, promoting the politics of progress rather than the politics of eternity. Since 2000, the city has celebrated the Day of Europe on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Rather than commemorating the end of the Second World War, the festival now celebrates Poland's integration with Europe, inviting Europeans from Gliwice's twin towns to celebrate. The city's people have been enthusiastic and supportive of this initiative.<sup>85</sup> Gliwice's government, as a smaller entity than the Polish national government, has been able to adapt to evolving memory narratives and create opportunities for its citizens to celebrate the future together while remembering the past.

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<sup>84</sup> Ewa Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland-Contested Pasts and Future Identities* (Routledge, 2013), 116.

<sup>85</sup> Ochman, 115.

*The Polish Case: The Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszow*

The Monument to the Revolutionary Act was designed by a Polish artist and erected by the Polish Communist government on May Day of 1974.<sup>86</sup> Seven years earlier, the Rzeszow Polish United Workers' Party had established a committee to oversee the monument's creation and chose the rector of Krakow's Academy of Fine Arts, Marian Konieczny, as its sculptor. On one side of two stone "leaves" the monument features Nike, goddess of victory, her arms outstretched, flag in hand, and mouth open in the call to revolution. On the other, three revolutionaries: a worker, peasant, and soldier look stonily into the future. The choice of these three figures reflects the Communist alliance between these three parts of society, though the soldier's helmet more closely models a Soviet style rather than Polish.<sup>87</sup> At the top of the monument, the city's coat of arms, added in 2002 to distance the sculpture from its Communist history, graces the tips of the leaves on a copper plaque. Two of the four plaques at the base of the large sculpture read, "Your heroic deed-immortal fame-our infinite memory," and "In tribute to the heroes of the revolutionary struggle for the People's Poland Society of the Rzeszow land," an inscription penned by the President of the Polish Writers' Union in Rzeszow, Zbigniew Domino.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Pomnik Czynu Rewolucyjnego w Rzeszowie

<sup>87</sup> Sławomir Gawroński et al., "A Relic of Communism, an Architectural Nightmare or a Determinant of the City's Brand? Media, Political and Architectural Dispute over the Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszów (Poland)," *Arts* 10 (January 26, 2021), 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts10010008>.

<sup>88</sup> Text in Polish reads, „Czyn Wasz bohaterski – sława nieśmiertelna – pamięć nasza bezgraniczna” and „W hołdzie bohaterom walk rewolucyjnych o Polskę Ludową Społeczeństwo Ziemi Rzeszowskiej”

After the fall of Communism in 1989, the monument joined hundreds of other Communist monuments awaiting a verdict on their fate. In 2006, the Rzeszow government transferred ownership of the monument and its grounds to a local monastery of Bernadine monks. They had previously owned the land where the government chose to construct the monument before it was confiscated from them at the beginning of Communist governance. It is currently the only post-Communist monument in Poland owned entirely by monks, who reside in the Wniebowzięcia Basilica.<sup>89</sup> As such, the monks exercise control over the monument's future, though they have shown no intention of removing it. The IPN has held that the monument glorifies leaders who contributed to the establishment of the People's Republic of Poland in Rzeszow, and therefore glorifies Communism and totalitarianism and should be removed.<sup>90</sup> However, thousands of Rzeszow citizens, artists, architects, and even the city mayor have signed a petition calling for the preservation of the monument.<sup>91</sup> The people of Rzeszow have continued to give new meaning and interpretation to their monument aside from simply calling for its preservation. In 2018, as the Women's Strike movement spread across Poland sparked by new abortion laws, the Monument to the Revolutionary Act became a focal point for protestors in Rzeszow. For a day, the monument even appeared to be listed on Google

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<sup>89</sup> Gawroński et al., "A Relic of Communism, an Architectural Nightmare or a Determinant of the City's Brand? 11."

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> "Monument to the Revolutionary Deed (Monument to Revolutionary Fights)," accessed March 19, 2022, <http://monuments-remembrance.eu/en/panstwa/polska-2/506-pomnik-czynu-rewolucyjnego-pomnik-walk-rewolucyjnych-2>.

Maps as the “Monument of the Women’s Revolutionary Act in Rzeszow.”<sup>92</sup>



Figure 3.1 Monument to the Revolutionary Act (Monuments of Remembrance, accessed March 19, 2022)

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<sup>92</sup> Gawroński et al., “A Relic of Communism, an Architectural Nightmare or a Determinant of the City’s Brand?” 13.

In many ways, the journey of the Monument to the Revolutionary Act from Communist symbol to beloved city icon and meeting place for women's protest exemplifies the politics of progress. The monument has avoided removal like so many other post-Communist monuments as a result of its unique situation and reinterpretation by the public. Its large size and unique shape have made it a recognizable symbol of the city and gained it the support of many citizens while its prominent place and enormous size make it a challenge to remove without noticeable change to the city's landscape. Public reinterpretation of the monument has created an example of another path outside of removal that local governments might take in navigating memory politics. For monuments that have lost their significance as Communist symbols and which do not openly commemorate totalitarian leaders, redefinition into a new symbol can transform a monument into an extension of the people rather than a relic frozen in time.

*The Foreign Case: The Monument to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army*

The monument to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army was built over the grave of twenty-six Soviet soldiers who died fighting for the liberation of Warsaw from the Nazis in 1944. Three Polish sculptors completed its construction in 1946, one of whom would go on to create a monument to the Polish underground state, which opposed Communism, in 2011.<sup>93</sup> Another sculptor, Józef Trenarowski, a former member of the

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<sup>93</sup> "Ceremonies of Unveiling the Monument to the Soldier of the Polish Underground State of the Hrubieszów Land 1939 - 1945," August 11, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160811101708/http://duchateau.pl/?uroczystosci-odslonienia-pomnika-zolnierza-polskiego-panstwa-podziemnego-ziemi-hrubieszowskiej-1939-%E2%80%93-1945,77>.

Polish Home Army, also created the famous Brotherhood of Arms statue in Warsaw, which portrayed Polish and Soviet soldiers together as joint defenders of Poland.<sup>94</sup>

Crafted of sandstone, the monument featured a relief of a Soviet soldier, a banner and Communist star, and two plaques. The plaques read, in Polish and Russian, “Eternal glory to the heroes of the Red Army who fell in the fight for the liberation of Poland’s capital, Warsaw.” On the back of the monument, a poem by the Polish poet Tadeusz Kubiak commemorates the sacrifice of the Soviet soldiers who died fighting in Poland.

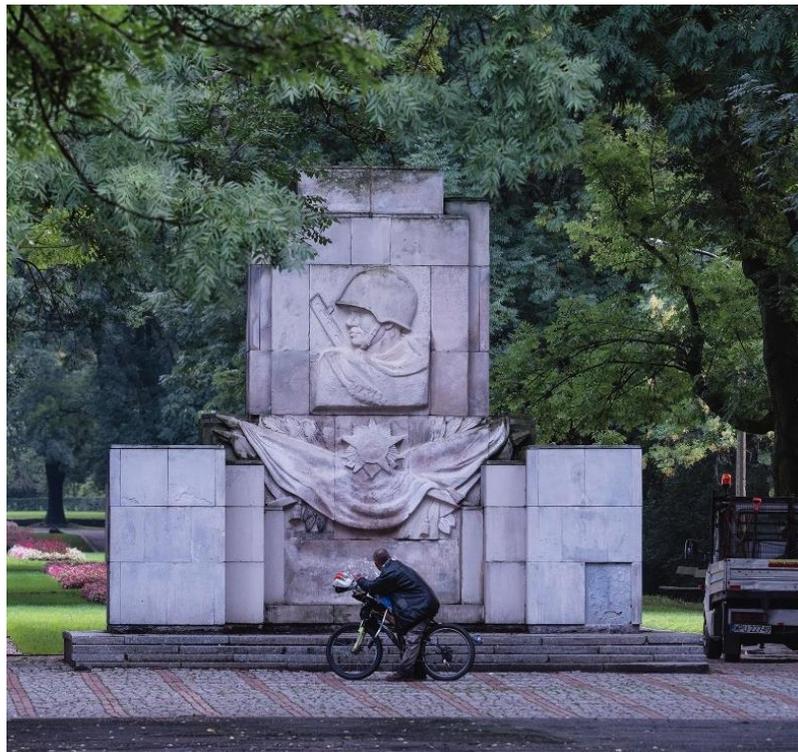


Figure 3.2 Monument to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army (*Then and Now: Soviet Monuments Disappear Across Poland*. Amos Chapple, 2020, Radio Free Europe)

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<sup>94</sup> “Powstańcze Biogramy - Józef Trenarowski,” Warsaw Uprising Museum, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.1944.pl/powstancze-biogramy/jozef-trenarowski,46302.html>.

After its completion, the monument experienced numerous changes. As the Nazi occupation and the wartime experience had practically annihilated Warsaw, when Poles rebuilt their capital city after World War II, they relocated and modernized parts of it. The location of the monument would become a central traffic circle in Warsaw. In 1968, Poland's Communist government moved the monument of gratitude to Skaryszewski Park and the graves to a cemetery built in 1950 by Poles specifically as a permanent resting place for Soviet soldiers buried in various parts of Warsaw. The monument became one of many decorating the urban park. It remained there for decades, until the IPN and the law on decommunization put the monument on a list of monuments commemorating totalitarianism in 2017.

A few months after the deadline for the monument's removal, on October 17<sup>th</sup> of 2018, authorities dismantled the Monument of Gratitude. Dust flew as machines tore off its face and carted the enormous stone slabs far away to the Polish Museum of the Cold War in Podborsko, a city in northern Poland. There, the IPN planned to incorporate the monument into a display on Soviet propaganda in Poland during the Cold War alongside other relocated monuments and plaques from around the country. The IPN would provide context and an explanation of the purpose of each monument within the frame of Soviet propaganda in Poland.<sup>95</sup> Today, the space where the monument once stood stands empty; no other monument has replaced it.

Unlike the Monument to the Revolutionary Act in Rzeszow, the Monument of Gratitude to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army in Warsaw did not inspire petitions, groups,

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<sup>95</sup> "Demontaż Pomnika Wdzięczności Armii Radzieckiej w Parku Skaryszewskim," Onet Wiadomości, October 17, 2018, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/warszawa/warszawa-znika-pomnik-armii-radzieckiej-w-parku-skaryszewskim/sd0qjzn>.

or other forms of grassroots organization among the Polish public. Instead of Polish dissent, the only real opposition to the removal of the Soviet monument came from the Russian Federation. Russia's Foreign Ministry called the removal of the monument a "rewriting of history," claiming that the monuments represented not an ideology, but the sacrifices of ordinary people.<sup>96</sup> Seeing the Russian government as the only actor voicing such a strong opinion, Poles may have been even less sympathetic to the monument.

Several differences between the two monuments may help explain the public interest one inspired over the other. One of many monuments in an urban park, the monument in Warsaw did not have the same centrality and size to make it a recognizable landmark and public meeting place as the Rzeszow monument did. The Monument to the Revolutionary Act may also have benefitted from its unusual and creative design. A simple square monument featuring a Soviet soldier perhaps proved too difficult to disconnect from its original purpose. Furthermore, the monument's subject matter proved too rigid to be reinterpreted in the way that the Monument to the Revolutionary Act became a symbol of the Women's Strike.

Of the two monuments, the monument in Rzeszow inspired more public feeling, whether for or against, despite facing no imminent threat of removal while the monument in Warsaw left hardly a trace. Despite differences in creativity, artistry, location, and size that may help explain the differing public response, the last explanation is most compelling. The two monuments differ most fundamentally in their adaptability. Polish sculptors, and prolific ones at that, constructed the Monument to the Soldiers of the

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<sup>96</sup> "MSZ Rosji Reaguje Na Demontaż Pomnika Wdzięczności Żołnierzom Armii Radzieckiej: To Przepisywanie Historii Na Nowo," October 17, 2018, <https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/583366.warszawa-ipn-demontaz-pomnik-wdziecznosci-zolnierzom-armii-radzieckiej.html>.

Soviet Army, but their creation remained completely anchored in time. The Soviet army, the fighting in Warsaw, the city's so-called liberation, all were concrete historical events, the Soviet soldiers very much real. The idea of a revolutionary act, however, left much more open to interpretation and redefinition. Aside from the plaques, only the figures of the three revolutionaries, peasant, worker, and soldier pointed to a specific historical context. Even these categories though, allowed for flexibility in a way that the Soviet soldier did not. Why should the towering leaves, the goddess of victory, and three representatives of Polish society not come to represent a "monument to the women's revolutionary act" as they did during the women's protests?

The two monuments' differences in adaptability bring out another important question considering public memory. The monument in Rzeszow could survive because residents divorced it from its original meaning and context. However, should this have been the case? While the monument may come to represent something new, it cannot be completely separated from its roots as a monument constructed by a Communist government to glorify a Communist revolution in a certain city at a certain time. The IPN would argue that the monument can never evolve, that it will always remain in essence a monument glorifying totalitarianism. Who, they would argue, would defend retaining a monument featuring swastikas or glorifying the Nazi regime even if its meaning had "evolved" over time? Certain symbols carry too much historical weight to be capable of redefinition. While some of Poland's Soviet Communist monuments cannot be redefined and are rightly transferred to a museum where historical context can be provided, there are exceptions.

Monuments whose symbolism and artistry do not anchor them so strongly to a certain time or ideology do have the ability to take on new meaning. While the removal of monuments glorifying the Soviet army for its actions in Poland may be justified, so is leaving in place monuments such as the Monument to the Revolutionary Act or the Soviet tank monument in Drawsko-Pomorskie which have taken on new meaning and whose symbolism never honored a specific leader. If the question now lies in determining which monuments have taken on new meaning and ought to stay and which do glorify a totalitarian system of the past, who better to decide that question than local governments which are closest to the people and to their own monuments? The people of Rzeszow, Drawsko-Pomorskie, and Warsaw know best which monuments represent them and ought to remain or change. Their redefinition of certain monuments exemplifies the politics of progress, that changes are possible, and the past need not always dictate the future.

## CONCLUSION

### Communism and the Confederacy

It was a sweltering August day; protestors and counter protestors packed the streets, sweating in T-shirts and tank tops, shouting at one another, and hoisting flags. Tensions had been high all day until they reached a violent head that afternoon. Counter protestors screamed and tried to run, trampling flags and signs as a car plowed into the crowd, killing one person and injuring a dozen more as people were crushed and tossed aside. The whole nation would be shocked by the events of that day. The flashpoint for the violence? The removal of a controversial monument of a general who had fought on the wrong side of history. This time, not a Zygmunt Berling who had fought with the Communists, but Robert E. Lee, the most well-known of Confederate generals.

Poland's political struggles over monuments and public memory of a complicated era may bring to mind a similar political struggle in the United States over monuments to the Confederacy. The statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia represented one of hundreds of Confederate monuments that remain in public spaces, not counting public roads and schools that still retain names related to the Confederacy.<sup>97</sup> While Communist and Confederate monuments differ, the Polish monument controversy can shed some light on the American situation. The United States can learn from Poland's engagement with the politics of eternity, inevitability, and progress in relation to monuments.

Firstly, Americans ought to think about the politics of eternity and inevitability when they imagine their vision for the country. This thesis has argued that Poland's

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<sup>97</sup> Ryan Best, "Confederate Statues Were Never Really About Preserving History," FiveThirtyEight, July 8, 2020, <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/confederate-statues/>.

government, through the IPN, has engaged in the politics of eternity by casting their nation as a victim and martyr of both Nazi and Communist aggression. The danger of this narrative of victimhood lies in a failure to take responsibility for the actions of one's own people. While the removal of Communist monuments does not constitute a wrong in itself, in many cases, monument removal has taken place as an outgrowth of the externalization of the Communist experience. While Communist monuments do often represent complicated historical figures and a system that resulted in many horrors and injustices, removing them on the basis that they are monuments to a foreign occupation results in a misrepresentation of history. Removing monuments while claiming that all people in Poland faced the same victimization throughout World War II and the Communist era erases misdeeds that could be addressed as the nation reckons with its past.

In the U.S., the danger of eternity and inevitability politics lie not so much in externalizing historical experiences and making one's own country into the constant victim of foreign aggressors, but rather, like Poland, in the failure to take responsibility for the actions of one's own country. Unlike Red Army statues built in Poland only a few years after the end of World War II, the vast majority of Confederate statues in the United States were erected between 1900 and 1920, decades after the end of the U.S. Civil War.<sup>98</sup> While most Red Army statues in Poland marked the graves of Soviet soldiers, most of the Confederate monuments served a different purpose. In the same way that the Polish Monument to Brotherhood in Arms glorified the joint struggle of Poland and the USSR in World War II until its removal in 2015, the Confederate monuments

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<sup>98</sup> Best, "Confederate Statues Were Never Really About Preserving History."

glorified the actions of an “outside” power (the Confederacy) and the system they fought to protect. Both types of statues memorialize not the tragedy of individual deaths and sacrifice, but the society and values that both fought for. In the case of Confederate monuments, that society constructed itself around white supremacy and slavery.<sup>99</sup>

Efforts to distance responsibility for white supremacy and slavery from U.S. history usually come in the form of minimizing the two factors’ roles in the construction of monuments. While in Poland, the abuses and repressions of the Communist government are attributed to a foreign occupation, the blame for slavery and repression of black Americans falls on the past. Monuments are said to represent history and heritage. In the same way that Poland cannot take responsibility for a system forced upon it by the Soviet Union, so the modern United States “cannot do anything now” about the evil of the past, so the narrative goes. Such an outlook encapsulates the politics of inevitability, the idea that because of the past, nothing can now be done. Yet there is another way to view monuments in Poland and the U.S. by focusing on who they represent and what they say about the future.

The difference in adaptability between Polish monuments such as the Monument to the Revolutionary Act and monuments commemorating Soviet soldiers and leaders provides a lesson to the future of the American situation. The two demonstrate that some monuments may be able to adapt to new meanings while others may not. Certain monuments that do not display any Confederate imagery, like the many plain columns and obelisks still around the country, might be reinterpreted and adapted to the modern day. Those that openly represent Confederate generals or prominent supporters of

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<sup>99</sup> Alexander H. Stephens, “Cornerstone Speech,” American Battlefield Trust, March 21, 1861, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/cornerstone-speech>.

slavery, like monuments to the Red Army, lack flexibility and adaptability and ought to be removed for the message they promote. Some raise concerns that removing monuments erases history and that the presence of Confederate helps the public to reflect upon America's legacy.<sup>100</sup> Monuments, however, do not need to remain in places of honor to teach the public about the past. The U.S. may continue to follow Poland's example (as some parts of the country are already doing) by retaining Confederate monuments present in cemeteries or kept in a historical capacity (such as in museums) as Poland does with monuments to the Red Army, and moving monuments located in public places to these locations.

With the greater availability of information and growing public interest in statues and memory politics, the situation in Poland and the U.S. provides occasion for hope in the politics of progress. As conversations around the difficult parts of the nation's history and path forward become more public, the occasion for reconciliation grows. Bitter conflict has ensued, and continues, over statues and the ideas they represent, both in the new world and the old. While conflict tends to draw the most hateful and extreme views out of the shadows, it also demonstrates that society is reckoning with those views, growing, and changing. People question what the future ought to be, rather than engaging in a cycle of self-victimization or believing that the future holds no alternatives. Let both countries remember the importance of working towards a future that holds promise and hope for all their people.

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<sup>100</sup> Rob Natelson, "Why Removing Historical Monuments Is a Bad Idea," Text, *The Hill* (blog), September 20, 2017, <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/351227-why-removing-national-monuments-is-a-bad-idea/>.

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