

Not entirely spontaneous present

”Let us look into the history. I have been searching for long, but have not found. There were various gifts - truly. Since archaic times Monarchs, dukes and nobles have been extending presents to each other. Messengers from the far away countries have been bringing gifts for the kings and nobles to captivate or amaze them. However, one nation to another just like that ... to the ordinary people - it has never happened before. We have not managed to find another example of an international agreement like that of 5 April 1952 saying that: the Soviet Union Government makes obligation to build with the help of Soviet Nation strengths and means 28 to 30-storey edifice of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw... Costs incurred with reference to the construction works shall be paid by the government of the Soviet Union...”. Having your eyes accustomed to such frequently used diplomatic protocol phrases you automatically keep on looking for the following part of this agreement saying that the Polish Government in return shall ... that the other party must....

The other party does not exist in the Polish – Soviet Agreement of 5 April 1952. So in return for nothing?... as a proof and expression of friendship?... just for the sake of aid extended to the brother nation? Diplomatic chronicles have never been advised on such values.” – as the Present from Brother Nation was praised by editor Karol Małcużyński on the pages of the Christmas issue of “Trybuna Ludu” in 1952. Nowadays the history is giving a slightly different exposition of the reasons for which such an unusual structure - the Palace of Culture and Science – erected in the centre of the Capital City of Poland.

Józef Sigalin, head of the Capital City Reconstruction Bureau and the Chief Architect of the Capital City of Warsaw in his diary of 1951 of 2 July wrote: “Confidential information from H.M. before the tour of Warsaw with WMM”. He quotes this note in the book published many years after that event. “Warsaw in the years of 1944-80 from the archive of architect”; and explains: on 2 July 1951 Mr. Hilary Minc who was officially head of Economical Committee to the Council of Ministers and Industry Minister in fact being a person of much greater importance called him to brief on “tomorrow special day”. (It was the day after when Józef Sigalin was appointed to accompany Władysław Mołotow – the then right hand of Stalin during his state visit in Poland). Minc informed that Mołotow was to present his invented “right on the spot” proposal concerning a high building construction in Warsaw similar to those newly constructed by the Russians on their territory and which they are so proud of. Józef Wisarionowicz himself decided to offer this gift to Poland. Minc has briefed Sigalin as follows: do not be surprised at the proposal, show a broadly positive reaction and do not become embroiled in any detail.

The very next day when strolling around Warsaw which was then under reconstruction, the talk on the same subject was rather curt: What would you think of building a tower here in Warsaw similar to one of these we are building now on our side? Mołotow said abruptly. – Well, all right – Chief Architect of the Capital City of Warsaw answered according to the briefing instruction, broadly positive and without detail. Thus, the machine was set off into motion.

A month after, 3 August, Deputy Prime Minister Stefan Jędrzychowski summoned architects: Józef Sigalin and Zygmunt Skibniewski to appear before him. Their task was to “prepare Polish proposals for tower construction, gift from the USSR”. Polish conceptual substance was rather symbolic, the only practical information that Jędrzychowski could offer to the architects designing this huge enterprise was the 3 to 4 day span of time to get the project ready and that the construction work should start within half a year and should not last longer than ten years. Vice prime minister explained in a calming way that the best surety for this project can be achieved when following patterns already elaborated by Moscow architects and disclosed in documentation of one of Moscow’s towers. It is likely to be similar to the edifice of Łomonosow University of Moscow. As Sigalin thinks about it – there are no wrongful

intentions hidden under this abusive abruptness of the vice Prime Minister of the Polish Government – it is simply that what the Polish authorities were advised on by Mołotow.

They immediately started tackling with this at the Warsaw Bureau of Reconstruction. However, the architects barely knew on what to start working. They were not even sure if the whole thing was about a younger brother of Moscow University and if the answer was positive - then another question was raised - what height? The main body of cubic space equal to 800 000 m³, or the whole body enlarged by 600 000m³? Or maybe the sender of the gift is going to change his mind and instead of copying the University edifice he may wish for one of the administration Moscow towers? Was it possible to adapt the Soviet Friends origin material to the Polish conditions? Would such adjustment be politically correct then and would the then ideology admit it? Those things the Polish architects did not know, the Polish authorities were undoubtedly also oblivious to such kind of knowledge, and no one dared to ask that kind of questions in Moscow. An attempt to contact Soviet designers of this architecture category would be considered a politically doubtful idea.

Overall – the only information the Polish architects could get were based on an article published in a Russian magazine “Architektura i Stroitelstwo” issue from before two years time. This article was quite instructive, it said a lot about ideological meaning of that edifice without mentioning anything about photos, plans and a scale. Having an eye for those photos Sigalin and Skibniewski knew the only thing it must have been something big.

The building was not the only conundrum for the architects. Its location was still quite a mysterious question. It was beyond any doubt that the gift from brother nation must be erected on the important, key and central site. Well, Warsaw was not yet clear of rubble from the war aftermath, not only had it a centre but also it was not sure where this centre was to be placed.

There were five possible location of offer for the unspecified Soviet tower building. Three of them were suitable for the edifice shaped like the Lomonosow University, the remaining two - suitable for the buildings selected by the Polish architects which were following the patterns of other Moscow giants.

The first two variants were placed on Marszałkowska St, in the same area limited by Marszałkowska St and Chmielna St combined into North-South artery, which later was known as Aleja Marchlewskiego (which did not exist then, and today is known as Al. Jana Pawła II). The main difference between the two variants consisted in location. The first one provided for the construction site was to be situated at Marszałkowska St and for the latter one to be located in between Marszałkowska and Marchlewskiego Streets. The Moscow University but the second location of cubature diminished by 400,000 m³ made both projects. In the high part of the building solid was destined for the National Culture House, in its part from Chmielna St. side was destined for the Youth House and in additional corpus from the side of North-South motor way the Sports and Congress Hall of 12 to 15 thousand people capacity was designed.

The third version proposed by the Polish architects consisted of exactly the same shape edifice of the same as in Moscow function with the same number of universities to be placed in it and the same number of dormitories, with a distinction location – on the other Vistula River bank, near the Praski Port. (The Port itself as the then binding Spatial Development Plan provided was to be moved to the big port planned for construction in Żerań) Moreover, architects took into account the Warsaw construction of the exact copy of the high administration constructed on the Smoleński Square in Moscow or another copy of a high building complex of both housing and administrative function (276 luxurious apartments) constructed on Krasne Wrota. The first building – its creators wanted to have erected in Grochów on Grochowska St and Al. Waszyngtona intersection, the second one – was to be

erected in Mokotów District at the convergence point of three streets: Puławska, Waryńskiego and Rakowiecka.

When presenting their ideas to the authorities, the makers of the studies conducted general and wide-ranging comparative analysis. They evaluated: “infrastructure level of the terrain enabling fast start-up” i.e. : the number of houses to be pulled down, necessary number of substitute apartments, hierarchy of proposed programs fulfilling the needs of Warsaw, or architectonic and town planning influence of the Moscow colossus which it might have on the overall city image as well as the vicinity of this future edifice. It appeared that all those purposes are unattainable. When having considered the scale of city requisites and compliancy with the general plan the “Marszałkowska” variant won. The only worrying thing was how to inscribe something so big into the Warsaw land development plan, in the very central point, something so huge. The Gift with respect to its size - especially when destined for university function – would fit in better in Praga district. The feeling for the style which should be congenial as for architects of the excellent pre-war school, was prompting that locating this colossus in the city centre may affect the esthetic side. However, the inevitable as for the Warsaw spatial and development plan was the extension of Warsaw University – pursuing the goal of general, gratuitous, public and secular education – the extension was primarily planned to be constructed in the area of Żwirki i Wigury Street, but the later change for Praga District would have its own qualities. This location would give a spatial connection with Praga District to the center of Warsaw on the left bank of the Vistula River, that was something that has never been achieved.

You may have a feeling that the authors inserted the remaining two variants into their studies to highlight their zeal without thinking of them as the ones capable of being seriously respected. The leaders of the highest rank were meeting for several days to hotly debate on the selection of the most appropriate variant which was undoubtedly the best one according to the Moscow’s opinion.

August 11, the two teams were debating over this issue: one of the teams consisted of Bolesław Bierut the President and Józef Cyrankiewicz Premier, the other was composed of Jędrzychowski Deputy Premier and this was the team bearing the immediate responsibility. The day after the executives of the highest rank sitting as follows: Bierut, Minc, Berman, Zambrowski took the final decision: having respected the Praga District variant they decided on the Marszałkowska Street one. The justification attached said: construction of huge University edifice would delay the construction of the great Culture House in Marszałkowska Street.

No one has ever considered the individual architecture style for such venue other than Stalin gothic style. Since it was Stalin himself who decided to give this present to us the decision makers seemed to be using that concept which was quite sensible when having taken into account the gigantic cost and the size of this enterprise they would not have coped with for years; if only they hadn’t had such ideological foundation. In the mean time and not without reason, completion of Marszałkowska street reconstruction was approved to be the priority. The MDM construction was being carried out at its peak speed for more than a year. Then the concept to use the Soviet gift for the building-up area of Marszałkowska street on the line segment from Al. Jerozolimskie to Królewska Street which was considered to constitute the proof of industrial attitude. And when the Palace construction would have been completed then we can think of how to somehow arrange its vicinity (the later so-called “the Eastern Wall”) and besides it would have been a good reason for the completion of Marszałkowska and Al. Jerozolimskie intersection. Deputy premier Jędrzychowski was supposed to order PKPG to enter this construction as the 6 – year- plan task list.

All studies written after the year of 1989 consider the birth of the Palace and Culture and contain lots of information on malevolent gratitude of the PRL (Peoples Republic of Poland

former communist Poland name) authorities upon receiving the gift. We must be fair to the PRL authorities for that they “dared to negotiate the function of the venue which Moscow saw as a University Center, however, the PRL authorities saw the Palace of Culture and Science in the same place and moreover they i.e. the PRL authorities requested to have built a hall of 5 to 7 thousand seats capacity.

Since the decision on the level of Warsaw authorities were made it was high time the Soviet comrades had made the similar ones. The task force was set up in order to go on a visit to Moscow. It was composed of: architects –Sigalin and Skibniewski and another one constructor Zencykowski known for successful assistance in preventing the St. Anna’s Church from sliding down. The Delegation main job was getting as much information as they could on Soviet tower buildings, talking over Polish proposals on the gift function with Soviet architects (location, schedule of works, optional alterations or initiation of another project with co-operation of the Polish architects etc.). And finally they were supposed to agree on the date of the Soviet designers visit in Warsaw. The best date would be in two or three weeks after the Polish visit in Moscow.

It appeared soon that the Polish delegation was treated in the Capital City of the Soviet country dead seriously speaking in the terms of the politics. The three Polish delegates were chiefly visiting the salons of the Soviet power instead of getting advice of professionals they could exchange their views with. Soon after their visit a special conference was organised headed by the Plenipotentiary of the Soviet Council of Ministers responsible for the issues concerning the high building construction. On the Soviet part there were Building and Construction Deputy Minister (who must have been appointed the head of Warsaw construction beforehand) and a group of outstanding architects appointed to provide a study of Warsaw task led by professor of Architecture – Lew Rudniew, the chief designer of Moscow University project. Beside him there were co-designers, State prize winners and several specialist constructors and building organizers in this group. The Polish part delegated three specialists. The rank of the Polish delegation was reinforced by the attendance of the Polish Ambassador in Moscow.

Thus as it soon appeared the whole work of the Polish architects was a waste. However, they got a news: the gift should not be some Moscow tower building duplicate but something completely new, a new edifice plan with location proposed by the Polish government. The USSR hereby shall perform the construction works out of their own materials (some of the materials may be bought in Poland, however, on condition that the whole operation should be done with prejudice to the Polish reconstruction plans) with their own equipment and workforce, led by one of the Soviet engineers. Later the first conference, the first talks and visits on various construction sites of Moscow high buildings took place, all of them followed by another series of two official conferences.

As for the issues concerning the project: it was rather the Marszałkowska location project than the Praga District one. The final decision was to be made after the Warsaw authorities have had it considered. The forms of the whole solid and architectural shape was to be accorded by both Soviet makers and Polish architects so that the venues attributes could be entirely Polish, entirely national. It was Moscow who decided on the portion of task to be performed by the Polish and the Soviet part. The Polish part was responsible for carrying out the following works concerning: infrastructure works on the terrain under the construction site, supply of water, electrical power etc.. And it were the Polish who were supposed to select the site where a new housing estate capable of providing housing to all the Soviet workers involved in the project and in number of 3,5 to 5 thousands people.

The start – up was suggested to commence on the half of the year 1952, performance timing – two and a half to three years. And not more than that!

In the end the Soviets declared that they were waiting for the final proposals of the Polish Government, which were to be made fast and should include the following factors: final location of the High building together with its schedule of works, and the invitation to Warsaw for the Soviet architects.

The Polish Government was as delighted by the results of the Moscow talks as were the Polish architects. Almost at the same time the consultation meeting was held at the Belvedere which took almost six hours. All of the top dignitaries took part in the meeting headed by President Mr Bierut. The participants of the meeting were praised for the results of the talks, specified arrangements were postponed to the following day (it was then established that: the Palace shall hold in its premises PAN [Polish Academy of Science], Congress Hall, Museum of Technology, Youth Culture Club, four cinemas), but still on the same day the Plenipotentiary of the Polish authorities to the construction issues – partner to the Soviet Plenipotentiary was appointed. It was Mr Karawajew vice minister.

Comrade Bierut personally suggested that position to Józef Sigalin. The latter, as he says, rejected that proposal due to an immense scope of already possessed responsibilities concerning design set-up and construction performance. In addition he pointed out to his duties arising from the position of the Warsaw Chief Architect which he was forced to take on against his will. At the same time he proposed eng. Henryk Janczewski for the position of his representative, who showed excellent skill during the construction of A-Z road and spoke Russian fluently. The decision in this matter was postponed. Two days later Sigalin answered a telephoned call at home: we had not taken into account your objection. You will get eng. Janczewski for the position of your office Director... (After many years Sigalin estimated that it was Janczewski who performed almost 90 % of all the necessary works, but officially it was Sigalin who was the Plenipotentiary.)

Mr. Bierut sent a cable to Moscow which was thought to be routine at that time. He expressed the acknowledgements for the gift from the Soviet nation and invited the Soviet delegation over to Warsaw.

They arrived on Sunday, 30 September 1951. The team consisting of 5 people i.e.: Government Plenipotentiary for the Palace Construction and 4 architects: Lew Rudniew, Aleksander Hriakow, Igor Rożyn, Aleksander Wielikanow. They started their visit with touring Polish towns, museums, libraries and theatres. The Guests admired Polish architecture, town – planning, art, culture and landscape. They made an extensive study but only a Russian copy on 15 page of chapter XII was preserved at least in Poland. The study contains description of their impressions in detail. All those impressions concern Warsaw and other Polish towns. Józef Sigalin remembers reading that chapter and being impressed by the thrill coming from every sentence put down by the Russians who were the first time abroad, the first time in the West with the exception of a little bit older than the rest them Rudniew who happened to be in Warsaw once, and spent along time in America once in 1913!

Higher! Higher!

Sigalin remembers talks and discussions with the Soviet architects due to which he was able to specify three essential elements of the Palace i.e. : schedule of works, height and architecture style. The schedule – on the Polish side motion - was expanded by four theatres, exhibition halls, and a separate entrance to the Congress Hall from Emilii Plater Street.

“Those solutions were the hard won solutions attained by the Polish architects, they were sensible and the citizens of Warsaw seemed to like them” - this is the way he evaluates the works in his book. He also adds as if in a way of self criticism that he was the author of the idea which was not supported by the Warsawers – the unbelievable height of the Palace. His recollections move back to the way all the arrangements were made. He invited Soviet architect to take part in the arrangements made on the spot. The team consisting of Architectural and Town – Planning Committee gathered on the right bank of the Vistula river

in the area of Śląsko-Dąbrowski Bridge. There was a light biplane flying over the axis of the Palace to be, the plane was dragging a balloon behind. Our “members of excursion” could communicate with a pilot by the radio. They started their first settings at the height of 100m, and then it went to 110 m and higher to 120m. Upon the moment when the plane reached the altitude of 120m Rudniew said: enough. A dominant silhouette of Warsaw shouldn't be higher than 120 m. But the Polish seemed to be in frenzy megalomania, or they concluded on the free gift to be as big as possible. Anyway the Chief Architect of the Capital City together with his co-workers was shouting “Higher!” after every ten metres. When so many years passed Sigalin thinks that they might have wanted to get higher over all the pre-war high buildings of Warsaw like: “Warszawa” Hotel (before the war Prudential) or Cedergren. Whatever they wanted they succeeded as for altitude. The “Warszawa” Hotel, the pre-war colossus was 60m high, the altitude of which can be compared to the side towers of the PkiN (the Palace) . The altitude of 120 m was destined for the central tower of the Palace – the main solid of this high building. When you take into account the topping tower the whole thing is 160m high. And the crowning touches a seventy metre spire to get to the altitude of 230m.

Sigalin argues that the Polish had their architectural input too. And they made it twice. The first time when still in Moscow they expressed their credo: we have been expecting the architecture to be in a national style. And the second time when they were showing the Russians the most attractive monuments of Kraków, Warszawa, Toruń, Kazimierz, Puławy, Płock, Nieborów, Chełm The Russians admired all the monuments when taking pictures. They soaked with it all like a sponge. On the walls of their spacious studios they put wall paper with grand pictures of the Monuments of Poland and some features of our national style.

When our team paid them a visit in Moscow, as a welcome greeting they heard: it is Poland here at our place. The Soviet architects wanted so much to ascribe Polish national character to their master piece they wanted Poles to like it. However, it was a period in history famous for social realism and since professor Rudniew adored variety and abundance in style the first project of the Palace published in “Sowietskoje Iskustwo” did not resemble anything in distinctive according to Sigalin. The pre-war project of Providence Church by eng. Pniewski was the only clue that could have been traced down. Any other origins and associations of architecture were rather obliterated. Our architects watched it in horror without saying a word. Officially the team of Soviet architects completed their works on conceptual project after 4 months, in February 1952. The Soviet architects invited their Polish colleagues to bilateral discussion. These were the four most important ones: Józef Sigalin, Zygmunt Skibniewski, Zygmunt Stepiński and Eugeniusz Wierzbicki. The authors presented the Poles with their five variants and let them examine the projects within three days and present their opinion afterwards.

The Polish Architects were overwhelmed with the burden of responsibility. Finally after such a short time they approved of three projects only. The two remaining ones were thought to be weaker. The Polish delegates were not happy with any of the projects. The first project was thought to be the best one, because its solid alluded to the Polish tradition. Still this was not completely agreed on. Wierzbicki really doubted if a sole tower similar to the one Russians saw in the City Hall in Chełm would work in case of a high building, a rather enormously high building. Anyway what is its altitude? The opinions were scattered. Sigalin stood firm at his 210 m, the other would rather see it at 170 –180 m. The Delegation did not reach any agreement on the matter of the distance of the new building from Marszłkowska street. Some of them wanted it to be of 170 m , others at 200 m. Their opinion highly depended on the altitude of the future build up area located at those streets. All was put down in writing, all the conclusions arising from that workshop discussion, and the designers took into their account

Opinions of the Poles. The document referred to the following items as common arrangements: 1. – Location of the tower part in the area of Złota Street. 2. The size of Defilad Square was reduced by 100 130 m. The reduction was achieved by moving the parade rostrums away from the edifice. 3. Filling the hollows between low parts of the Palace and the parade rostrums with low green bands and elements of sculpture, set up of pedestals. 4. – High bands of green along Świętokrzyska Street and at the back of Świętokrzyska towards Chmielna. 5. – Solution of the Chmielna and Marszałkowska intersection by creation of moved back oval corners. 6. The vicinity of the building not higher than 30 –40 m, with some high accents of 40 –60 m. 7 – The solution of the Palace solid layout was done lengthways instead of positioning it central. The lengthways direction went lengthways along Marszałkowska street with optional extension of 10 –40 m when taking into account present projects .8 – The altitude of the main solid without the topping part equalled 130 m. The total altitude equals 210 –220 m.9 – TH Congress Hall added to the layout on the axis with two wide entrances and huge cloak rooms. 10. – Scientific part to be located in the top of the solid; Polish Academy of Sciences, Educational Institute, Association for the Adult Education.

After so many years Józef Sigalin mentions that there some questions were not coordinated to the end and some were left completely uncoordinated. Firstly – according to the notes written down in co-operation – what was the length of the line segment between the Palace edifice and the Marszałkowska Wall. Soviet architects stood firmly on position defending their point of view i.e. laying down the axis of the edifice on the extension of Pankiewicz Street . They were assuring everyone that such a high building “needed to breathe “ and they were also sure that the translation of the axis may the square next to Marszałkowska Street be jammed which could result in an uncomfortable situation for the people gathered on this square and this street. They would have to perk their heads to take a look at the building. Polish Architects wanted to move the edifice by 50 –80 m so that its location would be levelled with Poznańska Street because if the Soviet plan had been implemented, it would have been located too far from Marszałkowska street (by about 300m) and thus wouldn’t have been a vital part of the central Warsaw square “wall”, on the contrary it would have become an isolated point in terms of spatial layout as well as its function. In addition it would have been surrounded with a sort of spatial vacuum of the following measurements: 300 x 700 m – and if this variant had been implemented the Defilad Square would have had the very measurements. I would have been twice as big as the Red Square not to mention Konstytucji Square in Warsaw (160 x 400m).

This argument faded into obscurity when other issues arose like: The Youth House and the tower – the questions that seemed to be unsolved. Nowadays all those questions sound rather ridiculous, let’s cite them: should the Palace of Youth consist of one part or of several ones? Should it be located in one part or spread over several parts of the building? Should the high tower be complemented by four smaller ones?

Finally the Polish gave the Russian designers two days to consider their postulates and draw up new studies on them. Over a day period the Russians managed to prepare not only the two variants illustrated by the plasticine mock –ups (of 1:1000 scale) but also two new projections. The carousel of projects was going on again.

The new first variant – proposed the same tower part as the first old one did, when referring to the lower parts they were the same as in the fifth old variant i.e. four towers but in much closer location to the main tower, the towers were tied on both sides a little but still they were consisting separate parts...

As you can observe the matter of “unwanted” gift for Poland was not easy at all. The authorities had not much to say about the substance of the offer, however, the architects were

fighting like lions to get it in its proper form. One never looks the gift horse in the mouth, but if that horse is going to fall dead in front of your house this is a completely different story.

The time came to end the struggle. The parties decided to compromise. Our party finally agreed on the first variant, at the same time the Russians also approved it to be the best one. They reciprocated the Polish side when praising the Poles for their criticism. The criticism leading them to the best solution they would have never achieved without having heard those words of critics coming from the Polish part. They also acknowledged the Polish Part for their assistance. If you browse through the documentation of that time you may get the feeling that the Polish architects were the only people from the power ring who could run discussion with Moscow on the par level. Unluckily the decisions were not made at the Sigalin's or Rudniew's offices but somewhere a couple of perks higher.

The issue was of such importance that the extraordinary session of KC (Central Committee of The Polish Communist Party) was summoned just two days after the arrival of the Polish team from Moscow. During this session Sigalin presented his report on the common arrangements. (Mainly: the Palace would be built on the Pankiewicz axis) He completed his presentation with the information on the authors arrival on somewhere between 10 to 20 April at Warsaw with the outline of the project in the scale 1:200 in order to allow the time for the Polish government to put these matters through debate and approve. This approval forms a necessary condition fulfilment of which would give the Soviet government possibility to authorise it finally. Secretariat KC approved all arrangements and motions signed in Moscow by the Polish and Soviet architects. The bilateral international agreement was to be signed about 1 May.

The initial of the Palace of Culture and Science - elaborated in detail – was brought to Warsaw by the Soviet team in the middle of April. The Description of the project included “the opening part of the monstrous in size documentation”.

“According to the layout: the edifice of the Palace of Culture and Science is located in the city centre, on a square bordered by the main thoroughfare of the city consisting of Marszałkowska Street, Marchlewskiego Street, Al.Jerozolimskie and Świętokrzyska Street. The square measurements are as follows: from Marszałkowska Street to the railway station building – 500 m, from Al. Jerozolimskie to Świętokrzyska Street – 700m. The edifice of the Palace of Culture and Science building axis converges on the Złota street axis. The main facade of the building is located at a distance of 175 m from Marszałkowska Street bordering line. The square located in front of the Palace is destined for organisation of marches and parades. There are two low saluting bases parallel to the main portico of the designed building. The square on the right and left of the building is arranged with green bands and other facilities. The edifice of the Palace of Culture and Science stands on a pedestal covered with wide rows of stairs, preceded by lawns, fountains and two located separately obelisks. The facades of the building are to be covered with fair ceramics. Pedestals, steps, terraces, entrances and some parts of the first floor are tiled with granite. Architectonic details of columns, low storeys are covered with face brick made of local limestone.

The programme generally breaks into the following parts: The Edifice of the Palace of Culture and Science consists of several centres divided according to their function: Scientific Centre, Museum and Exhibition Centre, The Palace of the Youth and the theatre and performance centre.

The scientific centre is placed in the high part central point of the building.

The Youth and theatre complex is symmetrically located on both sides of the building high part.

The theatre complex is oriented towards Al. Jerozolimskie, and the Youth Palace facing Świętokrzyska Street. The Congress Complex is placed on the main axis of the building with its orientation towards the square at the Railway Station.

The essential factors of the project: from the floor level of the first storey (+/- at the altitude of 3,50m measured from the level of Marszałkowska Street) approximately 210 -220m. The overall area of all complexes is 66 000m² approx.. The length of the edifice (measured along Marszałkowska Street) equals 254 m; the width of the edifice (along Al. Jerozolimskie) 212 m”.

During the period from 18 through 19 April 1952, in the Column Hall of the Council of Ministers in Krakowskie Przedmieście the discussion led by Stefan Jędrychowski Deputy Premier and attended by the Soviet authors of the project took place in the presence of the USSR Government Plenipotentiary. The preliminary project was put through debate. It lasted for 8 hours.

Everyone who played important role in the area of architecture or town - planning was invited. Outstanding construction specialists were also invited. Altogether, the total number of invited persons equaled to 150. A full 150-page shorthand notes copy of that consultation was preserved. It does not provide information on this consultation solely but also constitutes an incentive for studying this epoch of history. All of the sorts of attitudes, way of thinking and speaking as well as ceremonial procedures of those days consultations can be derived from this shorthand notes.

Mr Jędrychowski Deputy Premier commenced the consultation. He welcomed the guests and they spoke one after another with the sequence organized with compliance to their hierarchical significance. As the first, Mr Karawajew started to speak, who was Deputy Minister of the USSR Building and Construction, delegated on the appropriate empowerments basis as Plenipotentiary for the matters of the Palace in Warsaw construction. He briefly spoke about the history of the development of this project. Its chief designer Lew Władimirowicz Rudniew presented the project himself.

He behaved in a posh manner the same as a pre-Revolution representative of intelligence social class used to. He said inter alia: Having acquainted myself with the characteristic features of the future Warsaw plan and having taken into account characteristic features of the Warsaw past we concluded that the project should constitute homogenous picture of beauty which could be combined into an architectonic unity with the Warsaw from its “old days”.

”We” whenever occurred in this text referred to the majority of Moscow architects involved in this project and experienced in high building construction. Then the speaker referred to their (architects’) way of thinking of this task and the way they transposed their thought conclusions onto the sheets of paper in the form of this project. According to them, the most crucial item of this task was the right location for the Palace. Even superbly designed building – as Rudniew used to say to his colleagues – can become a failure if it does not get the right location. It must be linked with the whole town – planning layout and if it does not fit there then it may not be impressive and moreover it can spoil the image of the whole city.

It seems that the Chief Designer really enjoyed the project. You may get such conclusion from the poetic style used when he referred to the project assumptions. “The edifice in its top part is almost thinner than the air just like the pitch of the voice of Ewa Bandrowska –Turska when starting in the silence then ascending crystal peaks of the sound and so are we, we must strive for creating a buoyant style form reaching excellence when ascending from the lower monumental parts of the building.”

Co-author of the project Igor Jewgieniewicz Rożyn gave a thorough exposition of all the specifications. This exposition was a sort of compilation of ideology and technology as it used to happen those days.

”Following the essential assumptions in town – planning and development I must say that we all backed the site chosen by the Polish specialists even though in the historical development

aspect the center of Warsaw was relocated from the north to the south, from its former place – Saski Square down south along Marszałkowska Street.

I would also like to underline the circumstances of building the edifice on the site where the building with apartments to let used to operate. This could constitute a characteristic feature for the city when this site already cleaned would be transformed into a wide-open square with a center destined for the building of the Palace of Culture and Science. It will constitute an essential element of city transformation. I think I let myself evaluate the making of this square with the joint effort of Soviet architects who are building this square and Polish architects who are working on the shape of this historical square giving new looks to Warsaw under reconstruction [...]

Then there is a flow of information concerning specification. "According to the plan its plane covers (as shown on the graph) area located along Marszałkowska Street 150 m away from the bordering line. The backside of the square - the railway station, surroundings – green gardens, parks. The square at the Railway Station initiates a very important thoroughfare of the western part of the city. Altogether, this whole complex constitutes the centre of future Warsaw, I would also like to underline here that a constitutive feature is the direction line of Marszałkowska Street, its extending form. We have been talking this over and over again and we have been trying to create the front part longer but then we concluded that creation of the new future centre of the new city, new Warsaw it wouldn't have been advantageous to limit the centre of the square simply by widening Marszałkowska, and this idea should have been spread wider across the central square. We wanted this place to become the most popular place for the strolls of the Warsaw residents, we wanted the people of Warsaw to come here, to walk here, relax. We wanted to see children playing, fountains spouting water.

We concluded that if we want to solve the high part of the building that was to be visible from any direction this part must be symmetrical thus it may be a square or a circle excluding all other forms. Absolutely, the Palace of Culture and Science will be the dominant of the city for a longer period of time that is why its silhouette should be laconic, simple, fair and equally visible from any direction [...]

The issue of the edifice size emerged. We took assumption that the city of Warsaw is a city of light structure of beautiful and subtle silhouette so we were worrying that too big edifice could overwhelm this silhouette. We have been considering this issue so many times. We assumed the size of the tower to be 41 x 41. In the beginning, we foresaw the tower in the project to be a wider and bigger. When the comrades came to the USSR and talked over this issue, we cut the altitude of the tower and its measurements.

In co-operation with our Polish colleagues, we have been trying to define the highest demanded altitude of the designed building and in the end, we concluded on 220 m. The main body altitude will be 130 m. We understand the responsibility one has to take on when building the edifice of that size. We are aiming at and at the same time hoping for that we are able to achieve the fair, beautiful and sharply outlined silhouette. We want to find a silhouette for this building which would characteristically combine traditional features of the Polish architecture with socialistic architecture and the silhouette which would be impressive [...]

We have been striving and still we strongly intend to carry on designing the building as light, buoyant as possible. We will be trying to portrait the building in our works as an example preserving the best features of the Polish architecture style".

Sounds great, but...

All of the architects who took part in the discussion, without any exemptions, were positively evaluating systematically functional solution shown in layout projections of every storey, they all admired the immensity of Soviet architects work who did so much in such a short time. They also esteemed highly the way of perfect presentation of the project and that was all they said but what did they really think? – shall remain the speakers mystery. If you know how to

read in between the words as people used to do then, you can get the feeling that indeed they were “for it”. Some of them were quite enthusiastic about it while others stayed much restrained.

Szymon Syrkus, architect, was admiring in a very socialistic way: “Not only was this edifice our ever shining star leading us towards transformation of the old Warsaw, principal Warsaw, royal Warsaw, magnate Warsaw, bourgeois, capitalist Warsaw into socialistic Warsaw but also the construction of this edifice would be a strong stimulus for our architecture.... Architects should make the surrounding area of the Palace the most appropriate one...”.

Some people praised the idea of this construction and its program, and their opinion must have been true. Hipolit Rutkowski, architect, said: “When considering the shape of the city we were assuming that the city centre location would generally depend on the scale of Warsaw i.e. administration buildings would be built there. In the meantime there arose a new idea belonging to a completely different category which made us take a decision, which made us think that the previous plans were incorrect”... Or eng. Kazimierz Marzewski, who praised with the following words: “The Program was very complex with a view to multiplied functions and architectural solutions and still this is solution is the only right solution... The pure form and clarity of the plan, its well-aimed architecture, and architectural sequence of draws from a gigantic Entrance Hall through galleries to Halls seem to be outlined in an extremely plain style constituting a transparent exposure”.

You may be impressed by the praiseworthy style of many pronouncements and somehow you get the feeling that it is nothing but the critics hiding behind all those eulogies. That was the typical style of those days e.g. Marcin Weinfeld architect used to say: “The building is a piece of artwork to some extent. It can be perceived as an abundant style of solid form. In this respect it is exposing the culture and mastery of its authors. Since we not only gathered here to praise but also to comment on this project. Let me start by commencing from the essential proposed composition. If we refer to the lower part of the building, so here there may be heard many opinions, it is not high enough. I am not able to agree on that. But, there are questions arising what about relation of the trunk of the tower to its buttresses. Here, we can see a sort of a pyramid. This could have been what the authors intended to make and might have even been right about it. But, when I am not looking at this building from the distance I doubt whether you can think of a central tower as a hub of the whole composition”.

If all that praising and reprimanding could be reduced to the same denominator, it would have resulted in the preference of the Polish architects which was rather the solid of the building than the architecture of detail. “The silhouette of the solid is excellent...” - as Jan Klewin was saying. Or Zbigniew Karpiński: “The resolved composition of solids seems to be right, and that was something we were actually expecting. It is essential in its transformation from smaller to bigger solids. The proportion of altitudes which impact the remaining parts seem to be originating one from another.” Each of those who was praising had his own suggestion as for how to resolve the composition of solids and thus (but not solely) the Soviet authors might have missed all those comments.

The crucial thing that worried many architects was placement of the new building onto the traditional Warsaw Piotr Biegański architect, might be called the most explicit representative city layout. Some of them perceived it as a need others did not. It was of the first group opinion. He said: “I was impressed by the influence of Kraków suggestion on the Soviet colleagues”. Although at the same time he protected himself that the influence of Warsaw inheritance could be visible in the project and that he could see it but it was not as exposed as wanted it to be. “The architecture of Warsaw comes to presence when the project refers to the Neo-Classicism so characteristic in Warsaw School example. The typical Warsaw School theme consists in zooming in all the parts diminishing in the distance and this maneuver was to increase the size of the building – and that architect Biegański found in that project. But

this should have been followed by some sets of architectural elements more closely combined with traditional Warsaw architecture". His opponents thought that "traditional Warsaw features" are not so important. Some of them like Stefan Tworowski argued that there was no need to underline the Warsaw character because the most important feature is resemblance to the Polish style in general even with exemption of the Warsaw style and greater resemblance of Kraków style. The character of the Polish soul should be visible and that is the feature which was to be taken into account before all others and these are the things to be more elaborated, adjusted and underlined than others."

However, there was no agreed opinion about the character of the building. Tadeusz Zieliński said: "The authors were striving to give the outside line of architecture of the building the Polish national character, but I feel a kind of alienation here. What does it consist in? Following the opinions of a group of my colleagues this alienation consists in some lack of moderation of elements, and this kind of moderation which is characteristic for the Polish style in architecture. I have been worried about the immense amount of composition elements. This is what should be limited, moderated". Many debaters have exerted a considerable pressure to moderate the abundance of forms and ornaments of the designed Palace. "It seems - Marcin Weinfel said - that this design needs much more moderation and restraint in its form because we are used to seeing that kind of moderation in all architectural forms surrounding us. The composition we are referring to now is so rich that it does not need such great abundance of decorative element". The architect here was also safeguarding himself in the following way: "Perhaps not everyone would share my opinion at this stage...". In fact no every one shared his opinion; it will remain a secret if it was for the sake of self - interest or other. Just like a young architect, Edmund Goldman, who responded to all admirers of moderation: " I would like to warn you all against insensible approach to the abundance of detail You should be keeping in mind that during all those years we have been setting our architecture to fulfill the needs and satisfy the taste of the bourgeois and snobs, people who shamed the depth of their emotions, who were felt embarrassment towards feelings of emotions as well as expressions of emotions. However, we are not building anything more for such people, now we are building for the ordinary people, country people who hold the power now and who desire magnitude and entirety, as well as the depth of their emotional expression... If this edifice could be judged by the Nation, the Nation shall be happy with its abundance of forms and here and now it is the voice of the nation which constitute the only criterion for us". But even him - as if by a chance - he added: "All that I have just said here does not mean that if we removed some of detail, the composition would be less impressive, this could even increase its generally impressive function"...

To surprise all the gathered Goldman gained support of the main designer. Lew Rudniew presented his opinion during the discussion: "Referring to the characteristics of the Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań etc architecture. It is all right, very good, but as for us the only important issue stays the attitude of the whole nation towards the project. We should add the feeling of a maximum of warmth, love and human being respect to our project - so that anyone - both adults and children would want to come here and to relax in this place...". Later however, he concluded broadly and tactfully: "It seems that this interesting critics may be the substance on the basis of which we with all our efforts will endeavor to investigate and analyze again the whole project."

We can call it a skilful way - as it seemed then - when Zygmunt Skibniewski compromised on and concluded in the following way: " I entirely agree all my colleagues saying that every architectural detail presented here is basically an amount of notes, but not yet architectural projects. Having considered serious attitude of authors to the final design of detail I know that 6 week span of time is not enough to get the design ready. If I may add my comment to the comments of my colleagues, I would join them with a request to pay less attention to direct

interpretation of the architectural, historical detail of our architecture in their further works. I believe that their creative effort will produce design of detail harmonized effectively with Polish tradition in architecture as well as the global one”.

The authorities thought of this appeal to be too audacious as Aleksander Wolski Deputy Minister had to respond defending the Soviet concept, or he might have been convinced to do so: “ If we refer to the issue of detail which have lately been a matter of concern to me I think that placing this issue on the level of our architecture being moderated in detail may lead us into the same path of errors the same ones that were made by our colleagues i.e. Stepiński, Jankowski, Knothe and Sigalin. They made them when they were trying to break the dullness of detail by introduction of the whole series of unique details but referring to history. We remember that their endeavors encountered criticism saying that they were alluding to XIX century Classicism. And we know the way it worked out. It was too dull, too flat, and too meager. That is why if we tried to discourage our Soviet colleagues from adding boldness, exuberance of life which can be revealed in details, we would have chosen the misleading path (...). As for the search of homogeneity of the detail I would rather share favorable comments of my colleagues, but the search of ideal form would not cramp our experimenting we could sample attics or classicist porticos”....

The Polish party gave two kinds of resume to this consultation. The first one was presented by Józef Sigalin the Palace Construction Plenipotentiary on the Polish part. Jędrychowski Deputy Premier formulated the latter. Sigalin said in his too long pronouncement that inter alia: “The issue of detail is rather inconsiderable in comparison to the uniform body of the building and its significance in the city. During the debate – he said – we had various says in this matter, however, we all cared for the flawlessness of the central building of the city center. I’ve got the feeling that the Soviet comrades meant that kind of pronouncements”. Deputy Premier Jędrychowski by virtue of his office had honour to formulate the official recapitulation. “In the respect of the building silhouette our standpoint got a univocal expression – he said - Most of us declared that he proportions of the designed building are harmonious, perfect and beautiful, and that it would be difficult to improve anything in this perfection however there were some standpoints indicating the optional alterations in the design.

The next thing which should be highlighted and which was highlighted by all persons attending and which may be thought of as a unanimous declaration pertaining to the building plan which was resolved in a classically perfect way, classically simple, with features of extraordinary purity. [...] some comments referred to the detail only. The opponents were mainly concerned with two issues. The first standpoint referred to the “Warsaw like” point of view – demanding the architecture of the Palace allude to the Warsaw style and be more “Warsaw like”. The latter originated from the “moderation and restraint” group ideology. These were the most radical standpoints in the project matter criticism. However, it seems that the representatives of both of these standpoints underlined that the architecture of the building is a typically Polish architecture and that the authors succeeded in alluding to the best traditions of Polish architecture as well as creating a new masterpiece, symbolizing our new magnificent epoch. If we were to consider some of this architecture details we could observe that there were lots of different opinions and a number of comments, but I would like to repeat here that the authors themselves thought that details constituted the element which should have been reconsidered.

I think that I am empowered by the conclusions of this discussion to say that the general opinion of the whole project could be called positive, approving and could be the basis of Government approval of this project, the entire approval which could be granted irrespectively of divergent comments.

The conclusions of the discussion will be reported in a possibly most detailed way, however to the synthetic extent, at the Government session concerning grant of approval for this project - and definitely with a full account of critical comments together with their standpoints which were outlined there.”

The final pronouncement – made on behalf of the Soviet part i.e. G.A. Karawajew - was plenteous of courtesy: “To terminate the conference and on behalf of the Soviet Architects delegation let me thank you for the high appraisal of our collective body effort on the building design assignment. I am also taking this opportunity to express particular acknowledgements to comrades: Sigalin, Skibniewski, Stepiński and Wierzbicki all of whom when staying at our place in Moscow made a number of valuable comments, this way providing advantageous advice to the authors of the edifice project which was thus immensely improved.[...]

Allow me consider all your speeches given here as approvals of this edifice design which we submitted, in principle.

This may constitute an excellent example of ignoring the discussion conclusions – “say whatever you want, we may agree, and we’ll do it our way”.

Two days after this discussion was so fruitfully completed during the session of the Government Presidium in attendance of the President Bolesław Bierut and other members of the Political Bureau the Resolution no 307/52 by the Government Presidium of 21 April 1952 on the Architectural Draft of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw was adopted” which was read as follows:

”When the draft has been presented by the head of the construction Deputy Minister G.A. Karawajew together with the project authors L.W. Rudniew and I.E. Rożyn and the architectural discussion conclusions have been reported by Ph.D. St. Jędrychowski Council of Ministers Deputy Chairman together with the main architect of the Capital City of Warsaw eng. J. Sigalin upon this moment the Government Presidium approved the architectural draft of the Palace of Culture and Science. Simultaneously the Government Presidium paid tribute to the authors for the extraordinary suitability of the Palace of Culture and Science draft formulation.”

The document was signed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers – Józef Cyrankiewicz. Many years after when Jozef Sigalin was writing his biography as an architect of Warsaw, in the end of the chapter on the Palace project, he regretted that all criticizing comments were submitted in reports by Jędrychowski – and most of all his own comments (esp. those referring to architectural details) which the government “took cognizance of “ never constituted the subject of the discussion. In his opinion it happened due to the only possible reason i.e. the government acknowledged the Soviet architects acceptance of comments and their implementation accordingly in their further works. The Resolution of the Council of Ministers on this issue did not include the slightest reference to this end. “ In circumstances like that it may be understood but it is difficult to resist another way of thinking that if this Resolution univocally and tactfully had mentioned the criticism of detail we would not encounter this criticism of detail every day now, the criticism which is appropriate and applicable here. “ – eng. Sigalin concludes on his biography chapter so closely concerning the creation of the Warsaw Palace.

At present –from half a century perspective – you may say - and most of architects and art critics admit it also – that those details became the Palace drawbacks. The things which may offend your artistic taste are e.g.: attics of monstrous size which were considered to be a sort of salute to the Polish traditional architecture, in the way that was perceived by the attics designers in Kraków and Kazimierz, and as a result of this approach their enormous size made a caricature out of it. The embellishment of the façade decoration, which was supposed to resemble the folk, or country style, made the folk to christen the Palace by the name of “an elephant wearing lace knickers”.

On the other hand - exceptionally functional aspect of the Palace followed by a routine which induced the Warsawers to accept the Palace as a landmark of the every day landscape made the doubtful artistic taste of the Palace decoration almost invisible. Those who are not able to tolerate its unusual silhouette may quickly return to the nooks and crannies somewhere in Poland or in the world, to the places where the Palace cannot be seen from.

And whenever you happen to ask an architect about architecture style the Palace was built in he may answer just like Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński did: in little-polish ... [Little Poland – a region of Poland]

II. Socialistic Construction

A detailed chronicle of the Palace Construction was drawn up in writing for the sake of the descendants. Two years after the Palace was set to use a team consisting of from ten to twenty scientists who had an eye for the whole construction performance published the results of their work (555 pages, amply illustrated with photo documentation) which was an abbreviated edition of a several volume publication of the same title edited by PWN.

On recommendation of the Government Presidium the Polish Academy of Science organized a special Research and Development Station on the construction site. The researchers employed there were supposed to collect information on applied construction, material, organizational and technological solutions in order to forward it to be implemented on the Polish construction sites. Obviously there were no towers under construction at that time in Poland. There were few of them in Europe. The Palace of Culture and Science was then in the late 1950s rated as the second highest building of Europe.

The book on the Palace of Culture and Science – as the authors assured – was of technical character, it mainly focused on organization, technology and general construction assumptions of particular sorts of works. You can find there loads of information on materials, technology and laboratory research methods which were never applied in Poland. Has this instruction ever been useful to the Polish construction operators, and what was the extent of its application? - the estimates are close to nil.

As for Historians, the records coming from the book “Całe życie z Warszawą” by Henryk Janczewski may be of service to them. The book contains both information and anecdotes. Eng. Janczewski was Deputy of the Plenipotentiary of the Government responsible for the Palace of Culture and Science construction issues Mr. Sigalin and at the same time Director of his bureau. It is him – as Sigalin maintains – who supervised the Polish part of the task regarding construction works.

There were a few tasks only which the honor of doing fell to the Polish Party. According to the international agreement, the Polish party was obliged to provide a construction site with the necessary infrastructure for the start-up. They were also obliged to perform all works concerning the vicinity of the Palace and to build two thoroughfares. The terrain, which was destined for all that to happen, looked tragically then in 1952. Eng. Sigalin defines it as: “dessert full of protruding stubs” . Eng. Janczewski remembers facts. On the side of Al. Jerozolimskie there was a deep excavation trench of the narrow-gauge suburban train crossing this site, on the other side of Pankiewicza street there was a blown-up Railway Station. Eng. Janczewski conceived or rather made it up in the way of scientific argumentation the idea of covering the narrow-gauge train excavation trench with a ferroconcrete plate. Nowadays it is quite obvious, since there were already plans to build an underground suburban train station located between Emilii Plater street and Marszałkowska Street, suburban train station called Warszawa – Śródmieście. But then it was the time when this idea seemed to be shocking. When Mr. Janczewski forwarded his idea to eng. Sigalin, Mr. Sigalin said that he himself was not able to make that decision himself without its further authorization. This lies at the disposal of the most superior authorities – thus those most superior authorities made that decision and in fact there were two of them.

”On a gloomy, November day - as recollects Plenipotentiary Bureau Director – I met Józef Sigalin at the excavation trench of the narrow-gauge train, Mr. President Bolesław Bierut was another present person. The three of them inspected the trench full of the remnants of the Railway Station steel construction, there were bent steel beams and also those made of ferroconcrete, remnants of the carriages. Eng. Janczewski presented the following arguments “in respect to the access to the Palace and necessary arrangement of this terrain this excavation trench of the narrow-gauge train should be covered especially when there are future plans of building an underground station there. The President asked one question only: “So, how much would that be?” “No more than 90 million Polish zloty.” – said the author of the concept. And the answer he heard was very abrupt: “Out of the question. We do not have that amount of money!”

However after the three days time eng. Sigalin forwarded a message to his Director that Bierut approved his proposal after a consultation. It may have appeared that in case of the area surrounding the Palace money did not matter. Nobody was concerned with some money calculation at that time. National Bank Director comrade Karpiński advised the descendants on investment planning, namely the ministers gathered at Hilary Minc and whenever he approved or thought of something they were referring to be right, he used to say simply: Director Karpiński will arrange some money to this end. The strangest thing when we are looking at it now and when we consider our point of view, the breath taking news goes like that: Minc was one the best economist, thoroughly educated, before World War II he studied both in Poland and in France, and also worked at the office of Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski... Perhaps it was the after war stay in the USSR that put economical ideas out of his head...

As the steel hardened...

The Soviet Directors Board on the Palace construction started its own organization in January 1952. The head of the construction site was appointed eng. G.Karawaje and his two deputies and the main engineer of construction were experienced in Moscow high building construction comrades. The other members of the Board included supply and transport specialists as well as completion works specialists. In the middle of the year the Board was set to full operation in Warsaw, but its employees were commuting from the USSR.

According the agreement of 1952 the cost of the whole Palace construction was to be incurred by the Soviet party, all accounts settled with their money and with Soviet materials. Still these free materials comprised those which were unavailable in Poland and the cost of the transportation would have been much bigger than their price in Poland, thus the Russians were supposed to buy here (bricks, gypsum etc.). A special enterprise dealing with International Commerce was established and named: “DAL”, the Board of Directors of the Construction entered into a suitable agreement with this enterprise. Let us hear how engineer Janczewski’s list in detail comprising all the goods purchased by the Russians, price of those goods. It was all set up to convince us that the recipients never got a rebate or discount. However, delivery of all the materials required by the Russians was often troublesome for the Polish party - especially stone materials.

The recipients required the most beautiful kinds of marbles and limestone, multicoloured granites e.g. light grey granite from Strzegoń, pale pink and black one from Szklarska Poręba. All those materials were to meet high quality standards. There were lots of things pronounced unfit, sometimes all those misunderstanding turned out to be comic. Eng. Janczewski remembers that when the scientists, ours anyway, disqualified limestone from Pińczów. The Russian Architects needed it to build a monumental portico equipped with around 20 columns in its frontal edifice they also needed that limestone to window frames in the central part of the Palace. The stone was undergoing strength tests at the Institute of Construction Technology. The tests included congealment test and it failed as for there were required 25 cycles, but it sustained 10 only! Strangely enough there were lots of buildings made of this

limestone and it was lasting over a number of centuries, here we can mention: Paulites Church, The Printing House of Arians and St. Anna Chapel.

Eng. Janczewski together with eng Fedorowicz who was specializing in stone went to Pińczów, the authorities allowed them to cut off stone cubes from the monuments. It appeared, however, that those cubes did not sustain the congealment test again. The ITB (Institute of Construction Technology) was convinced only by the proof of several hundred years life cycle of the monuments' limestone and thus it may be suitable for the construction purpose.

To arrange the area around the Palace, especially the Defilad Square mosaics, several kinds of colour stone were required. The Miękina mine started to produce dark red porphyry cubes. There were also mines producing quartzite and sienite cubes to fulfill the PKiN requirements. The intergovernmental agreement scrupulously defined the Polish and Russian obligations. Therefore the following details were i.a. determined: number of workers each party should provide (3,5, - 5 thousands - Russian, 4 thousand – Polish) their wages and method of payment (the Russians could pay as they liked) and their accommodation. It was determined that the Polish Government should build a Hotel Center in Wola District at Elekcyjna Street for the Polish party needs only. The Soviet Builders should dwell at the “Friendship” housing estate located in Jelonki District. Our scientists from PAN (Polish Academy of Science) appointed to work at the site argues that the Russian designed their housing estate in perfect and exemplary way.

Both the workers' houses (each house could accommodate 60 people) and houses accommodating engineers and technicians' families were built of prefabricated products. Their lifestyle was arranged as if they were staying at the Hotel. There were two canteens, shops, Culture Club with a library (1500 people used it on average), performance hall of 700 seats capacity and finally the artistic interests circle room. There were sports teams activated at the Club. Everything had been ready before the Soviet engineers and workers arrived at Warsaw.

The issue of Soviet – Polish accounts settlement was regulated on 30 April 1952 during the conference called on to this end and held at Deputy Premier Stefan Jędrychowski' place. The rules were thoroughly drafted all purchases which were necessary with a view to the Jelonki housing estate building which were made in Poland. The purchases were regarded as a mandate of work upon which a bill should be drafted with the exception of PKP (Polish Railways) which would be settled on the clearing basis directly with the Soviet Railways. It was also written down that the Construction Ministry should deliver relevant number of Polish construction workers and the Industrial Construction Ministry - installation specialists. The Polish workers wages were calculated according to the standards and rates binding in Warsaw area, and the Russian workers were paid in compliance with their rates and standards. The authors of this agreement must have apparently forgotten to put down the rules on due amounts for the public and religious holidays. It was thereby agreed that the due amounts were to be calculated and paid by the Soviet party.

Did those records allow us to avoid any other misunderstandings? The descendants have never heard the answer to that. Even of there were some – none of the parties was willing to reveal them. Just for the sake of friendship and its symbolic expression!

Symbolically - 1 May 1952 – the first Soviet Bulldozers set off to work. They started casting foundation on 21 July and finished October 4 just to commemorate the 35 Anniversary of Revolution in advocacy of XIX KPZR Congress (Communist Party of the USSR). And it became a rule. Every quarter there was some date worth commemorating with an even more intensified effort, skyrocketing level of standards or more relentless work competition. When you start analyzing this phenomenon you are mesmerized that the Palace has not crumbled down but has remained in such a flourishing condition.

”Due to the Covenant and Goodwill of the Soviet Nations The Peoples Republic of Poland is feeling secured better than ever, secured against the invasion of Imperialists, Neo Nazis and their American Patrons. It is now when The Peoples Republic of Poland is able to take the advantage of the great benevolent and sincere aid of Great Soviet Country in order to develop Poland industry, its economy and to adopt impressive achievements of the Soviet Science and Technology. The particular, fraternal and inequitable expression of the Soviet Nations aid, its most exquisite manifestation of cordial care provided by the Great Friend of Poland – Józef Stalin – in the form of their worthy gift for Warsaw – the construction of the Palace of Culture and Science (applause) . Allow me from this tribune of our Sejm (Polish Parliament) from the place where I am standing here and now to send over to the Soviet Nations and their Great Leader expressions of our gratitude and let me salute them fraternally on behalf of our Nation (strong, tempestuous applause)” - this was the way Bolesław Bierut was speaking at the Sejm when delivering his expose on 21 November 1953 as a Prime Minister of the coming into existence Polish Government. Momentously elected Parliamentarians dared to break this speech with applause no more than three times – including as “Trybuna Ludu” noted down - twice then when he was speaking about the Palace.

Palace became a flagship of propaganda of the years 1952 -55. The day after the Bierut speech, the newspapers communicated that: “Third storey assembly of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw completed”. Pictures illustrating the works progress presented the skeleton of the Palace invariably decorated with a banner saying in big capital letters of Cyrillic alphabet “Glory to the Great Stalin”. Trying to be sophisticated magazines headlines showed “artistically performed model of the Palace of Culture and Science located in Płock in Floriański Garden, or The “Sugar” Palace - a model made of sugar placed in the coffee shop window on the corner of Nowogrodzka and Marszałkowska Streets in Warsaw.

The propaganda exploited the Builders of the Palace for the Perpetual Goodwill of Brother Nations as intently as the Palace miniatures. Since the very first days of the construction works commencement they had to meet with youth of Warsaw, Cadets – Walterowcy [veterans of the Civil War in Spain whose commander was dubbed Walter], Capital City Teachers, members of the Branch Association of Service Cooperatives, children from the day-center in Górnosłaska Street ... etc and at the same time working in three shifts.

It was extremely hard every autumn since the span of time between October and November was pronounced “the Month of Polish –Soviet Goodwill Reinforcement” which naturally made them even more obliged to attend frequently various political actions.

If only it had been sufficient – the 8th anniversary of Warsaw Liberation set in and some overzealous journalists retrieved Red Army soldiers among the Palace builders. They had already been here in 1945. “The Soviet Soldiers with ease characteristic for the people being aware of their historical role, Liberators of the Nations with a mastery gained in outnumbered battles were defeating Hitler oppressive troops. Each of them strived relentlessly to perform his battle field task at the either twofold or threefold scope of their endeavour. One of the reconnaissance soldiers Fiodor Ałafierdow was bringing every time a very new intelligence on the enemy. Katyusha operated by Aleksy Janisejew made the Nazi troops horror struck. And Anna Lubszyna spurred all military hospital staff into fight for every life and attempt of saving every wounded soldier from death.” – Michał Grodny wrote and this story appeared in every newspaper all over the Poland. Now the builders may include one responsibility more to their already over extended list which were recollections from the Liberation action.

In spite of all that propaganda and politics mixture frenzy, the works were proceeding at an incredible pace. At the turning point of November and December newspapers were communicating the commencement of the fifth storey assembly. In the nearby area of the construction site a viewing platform was erected. The Warsawers together with visitors could admire the birth of a masterpiece straight from the platform.

Besides the propaganda effect and so-called good follow – up example - observation of the Soviet builders activity succeeded in some specific effects like – a new mortar and concrete storage bin or an appliance leveling the concrete reinforcement steel. The Polish engineers and technicians straight away from the observations of the Palace construction site adopted loads of loads innovative solutions, well innovative as for those days. As you perhaps know the idea of “intellectual property” did not exist then, and you could widely use the experience of Brother Nation which besides reinforced the Goodwill and that was appropriate in every respect.

During VII Plenum of the KC PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party) Edward Ochab called upon to enhance the influence scope of the Statue of Everlasting Goodwill : “ In press and oral agitation we are usually restricted to enhance the significance and consequence of the great gift which the Palace constitutes itself. The gift expressing firm goodwill and magnanimous aid of the Soviet Nations extended to the People’s Poland. We should be speaking more about the equipment, great deal of appliances and machines, about the advantage it has for our builders, our technicians, about the advantage our architecture will gain due to new methods implementation according to a new so far unknown techniques” In fact approximately 4 thousand Polish had an opportunity to work during the Palace construction and to become familiar with such solutions. When the Palace propaganda had its days around one million people attended talks on political or scientific role of the Palace, the talks which were organized by TPPR, NOT and TWP associations.

Everyday life of the Soviet builders of the Palace was also to become a source of patterns suitable to follow-up. There was a housing estate built in Jelonki Distric by the name of “Druzba” (Russian word meaning friendship) to fulfill their needs, and the communist propaganda mercilessly exploited this “druzba” to become a pattern for all the Polish builders to follow. Since drinking beer or other kinds of unsophisticated entertainment were not the only tasks the Soviet workers devoted to their spare time when they put away trowels and welder masks. They used to read belles letters, complete correspondence course studies, play chess or recite Pushkin. And naturally they were tolerating a whole myriad of Polish journalists who subsequently shared everything they saw with craving – for – news people. They somehow missed information on a shop fully supplied with a variety of goods where for some kind of commission a considerable group of Warsaw residents did their shopping.

In the middle of December, it said in the Press that 3 thousand tons of steel had already been installed on the construction site. When the first week of January was through there were already 4 thousand tons of steel. A month later this figure was twofold and the main body of the Palace reached the sixth floor altitude. In the end of February, the workers started to fill the skeleton with bricks – in the first instant the bricks were imported from the USSR, but later the Polish brickyards launched the similar product following the Soviet recipe.

Everything was going smoothly to some extent. The authorities approved none in 32 mailed projects regarding the design layout of the surrounding square. Polish architects did not yet know how to prove to be equal to the task and provide the gift from the Great Friend with suitable arrangements of the area adjacent to the Palace.

The issue was of even greater significance since the Great Friend of Poland passed away from the terrestrial vale of tears. Thus, the new Patron was granted to the Palace and the workers expanded their list of representative responsibilities.

”Mute were their steps when the builders of the Palace of Culture and Science of Józef Stalin were striding in leveled lines. All of them fulfilled with grief, but not entirely lost in pain proceed to pay posthumous homage to their great Teacher, the Dearest Leader and their Beloved Father. Their profound muteness covers all of their immense bereavement as well as their invincible and unbreakable fortitude.” – these were the observations of Barbara Zawada a student of Warsaw University communication of which she shared with readers of “Głos

Pracy”[Labor Voice]. Two weeks after the funeral of the Palace founder the Foundation itself reached the height of 8th floor. The end of March fruitfully initiated the 10th floor assembly.

The death of Stalin reinforced ideological construction foundation. The builders were expected to intensify their efforts and the Polish architects were demanded to submit another idea of the adjacent area arrangements, the adjacent area of the something that was sincerely given straight from Stalin’s heart – as if it were a diamond requiring a frame.

The year after this memorable agreement which impressed Karol Małcużyński so much was signed the PRL [Peoples Republic of Poland] authorities made a decision on design layout of the area surrounding the Palace i.e. the center of Warsaw. Eng. Ryszard Piotrowski, Housing Estate and Town Construction Minister announced it. “There will be multi storey and multi function houses of 3 million m³ cubature” – he announced.

The builders of the Palace did not stay idle. On occasion of 1 May 1954 all of the builders pledged themselves to perform 200% of their standard workload. It was natural that the Polish workers could not have lagged behind and thus they expressed their dignified answer. The Municipal Water Supply System Plant set to conditioning work of the terrain surrounding the Palace construction site, this Plant announced its commitment in restructuring the whole water supply system in the centre of Warsaw in order to provide not only the Palace but also the future buildings of its vicinity with water supply according to the government plans.

The month of August was foreseen to observe the asphaltting of the segment line of Świętokrzyska Street from the point of Marszałkowska St. to the point of Nowy Świat St. the winter was foreseen to observe the general renovation of the central terrain, removal of the remaining rubble, foundation etc.

Quips – some touchy, some missed.

The elites joined the master work of glorifying the Symbol of Goodwill. Jerzy Andrzejewski when taking part in a discussion on a Ministry of Culture budget for the year of 1954 wrote “In the heart of our country, in the heart of Warsaw they have been building, erecting the walls of the gigantic Palace of Culture and Science of Józef Stalin. This magnificent gift coming from the Soviet Nation to the Polish Nation symbolizes grandeur of socialistic culture, symbolizes its care related to the significance of science and education. Let the grandeur of the Palace become for all of us an inspiration in building new socialistic culture.” Wiech was scoffing at the Hotel “Warszawa” - a pre-war skyscraper in the columns of “Przekrój” Magazine: “Who and where can you scrape when you’ve got 16 storey building at your disposal and moreover in the vicinity of the Palace of Culture and Science”.

However, the ecstasy was not so common. Leopold Tyrmand noted down in his diary, that the people of Warsaw soon christened the Palace “Pekin” [a pun coming from the Polish pronunciation of PKiN i.e. Palace of Culture and Science abbreviation]. “This pun is a real hoot, it revokes an innuendo of a reticent net of brothels located in a tenement house on a corner of Złota Street and Żelazna Street which was dubbed that name in the pre-war period.”

Władysław Broniewski [poet] called this masterpiece by Rudniew “a drunk confectioner’s nightmare”. Gerard Philippe made a sarcastic comment on it : “Small but tasteful”. Soon after the opening of the Palace there was a riddle made up: “Which is the most beautiful place in Warsaw? Surely it is 30th floor of the Palace, why? Because you can’t spot the Palace from there” and words of a song that was sung to the tune of the national anthem: “What by the alien force was brought we will have it dismantled by dawn”.

Such tendencies were talked over only in the most trustworthy circles, but just after the death of the Patron and the opening of the building. In the meantime, in the year of 1953, 400 thousand people took part in the 1st May march embellished with the huge Palace of Culture model carried by the Soviet builders. In the end of May the newspapers were communicating the assembly of 13 storey and 11 thousand tones of steel. Enthusiasm was increasing as visibly as the Palace.

In addition "Słowo powszechne" [Catholic newspaper] by PAX in its issue of 19 May 1953 allowed a malicious comment on the series of lectures on the Palace construction which the Polish engineers assisting the construction attended as lecturers. "The Construction Unions and Central Boards received the invitation to the lectures 12 days in advance and were so intently propagating the event that 120 in 400 invited people appeared" in this way "Słowo Powszechne" was seeping its venom. In response other newspapers published an article entitled "The Great School of Innovations".

Whether informative or not – the construction was definitely not behind the schedule. In the beginning of June we could observe 15 storey assembling. Simultaneously the Palace builders faced a new serious task: the Month of Massive Spread of Lines for the Polish – Russian Association. Within the period of that month, in turn the excursion groups from the country were coming to enjoy the magnificence of the task and creation relation. As a reciprocal activity rendered to the builders of the Palace they had to listen to the Band of Mandolin Players from the Sway and Velvet Production Plant in Calisia.

In the first week of July when the works reached the level of 100 m above the ground, the workers from Pińczów Quarries in their July act made a pledge to deliver 400 m³ of above the scheduled target.

On 10 July the Soviet Builders completed the construction of 20 floor and a moment later on occasion of the 22 July public holiday introduced by the Polish People Authorities the Builders made a pledge to complete the 27 storey construction instead of scheduled 25 one. Unluckily in August the Builders were at the 26 storey construction.

The press tried to cover somehow this propaganda defeat focusing in their everyday communication not on the number of the storey but on the altitude of 110 m – but the trace of "ignominy" remained. However, the representatives of the brother nation got it over in the following month: in the middle of August they reached the 29th storey and in the end -30th. The 14th anniversary of The World War II breakout the Soviet people and their Polish counterparts welcomed on the 31 storey. Media tried to hide the delicate matter of falling behind the schedule at Public Holiday with some dose of humor.

"Two participants of Warsaw tour on the way home were arguing: I am telling you, they are building the 31 storey of the Palace of Culture. – Oh, come on they are still on the 30th – By the way when were you comrade visiting the construction site? – On Saturday – he answered. – Then you should not be surprised. On Saturday the thirtieth storey was being assembled, but when I was visiting the site on Monday the assembly of the thirty first storey started."

The following month which was the "Month of In-Depth Polish and Soviet Goodwill from 8 October through 8 November 1953" Warsaw started with the completed 34 storey building. But, the Builders set the anniversary of the October Revolution - 8 November 1953 to be the deadline of the steel structure together with a spire, external walls, the central spire walls and the Congress Hall Dome.

On 5 October the 38 storey and the Congress Hall Dome assembly were completed. In the middle of October they started to erect 42 storey, the week after they started to assemble the spire at least in assumption harking back to the pinnacle of the Florian Gate in Kraków however when zoomed in it resembled crystal ball at the ceiling of the dance floor at "Kolorowa" Restaurant. The Press was choking with emotion when relaying "modern school directions and methods of labor" which the Polish builders could learn on the scaffolding of the Palace.

When the magnificent size of the Palace became visible, the state intensified its efforts towards better advertising of the masterpiece. More and more excursions were being driven across the construction site. And the builders had to travel more. They had to meet the residents of Olsztyn, workers of Płock, the youth of Kraków, workers of Gdańsk Shipyard, workers of the Folk and Artistic Head Association, community of Lower Silesia and finally

with Bolesław Bierut himself. In spite of those mandatory trips they managed to fulfill their obligation, all done in order to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the October Revolution, and thus the Palace was growing higher and higher until it reached clouds in the sky. The day before the anniversary Bolesław Bierut accompanied by KC PZPR [Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party] and the Government.

At night before the anniversary celebrations the silhouette of the edifice started glowing and its glow was full of colored shades, but unfortunately for the Communist Propaganda with its contour alluding to the most popular Christmas symbol – Christmas tree. "The Soviet Builders supported the firmament with a spire of lights proclaiming the victory of Great Fraternity Case." – A weekly "Po Prostu"[Just] relayed on 17 November 1953.

The Press was juggling with listings presenting the number of tones of materials used during the construction, the number of railway carriages used to carry all those materials, the number of housing units which could have been built out instead of the Palace, the immense distance which the peak of the Palace is visible from, measured to be about 50 km. This may prove the extent of the changes in the ambience and skyline of the city. Who would care now seeing the Palace of Culture and Science from Mińsk Mazowiecki?

Naturally, it were not only the builders who committed themselves to perform the tasks commemorating the Revolution Anniversary. The Sculptors and the Stone Masons from Toruń of course who had already succeeded in MDM square decorating made a pledge to deliver 550 sculptures. In Kowary Plant the overscheduled Smyrna carpets were being woven. To fulfill the Palace decoration requirements "Braz Dekoracyjny" [Decoration Bronze] Cooperative launched a series of inner decoration elements, and a team of 14 horticulture specialists set off to the territories of the western Poland in order to select a thousand of honored old trees with a view to replant them in the grounds of the Park surrounding the Palace.

The Palace rose from the altitude of 26 m to 227 m within a year span only, which was eagerly noted down by the Press and the Palace was growing higher and higher. The construction of the main entrance started a 16 m² of ceramic wall boards of elevation were set up.

In February, they started completion of decoration works. All necessary decoration elements like: furniture, elevators, marble, chandeliers and sconces were being delivered from the Brother Nations of the USSR and of course from the Polish Production Plants, Mines and Service Providers, too. In the second half of March the PZPR [Polish Communist Party] Congress Delegates expressed their relevant amazement when visiting the construction site. The final dilemma concerning the project of area surrounding the Palace was not yet resolved. According to the plan the area was named Józef Stalin Square. On the turn of the winter and spring of 1954 – the final completion works took place and the last remaining rubble was removed. Simultaneously an exhibition was opened at the Great Theatre Halls. There were 10 new designs of the Eastern Wall development on display.

On 11 April 1964 when Gala concert was taking place on occasion of the 2nd anniversary of Polish – Soviet agreement pertaining to the Palace of Culture and Science construction "was executed. The remaining two scaffoldings were disappearing from the vicinity of "Pekin". The papers were glorifying revolutionary technical solutions, like "central cooling" i.e. "air conditioning" speaking in the way we do now. In those days and according to the journalists it was invented by the USSR Work Hygiene and Professional Disease Institute "for the sake of men at work" and they also invented another device called "electric vibrator" used for...compacting concrete.

In May "Józefina" Glass Works launched 1,5 tone chandelier. In June, the Congress Hall construction arrived at a basic stage of completion. The Soviet builders were in the process of building a diving tower at the Palace swimming pool, the theatre was also under construction

works at the Youth Palace. The Polish authorities approved the draft of the City Center construction design.

September, which traditionally was dedicated to the construction, became also the month dedicated to strengthening Polish Soviet Goodwill. There was a curtain installed at the “Dramatyczny” Theatre (at that time called The Polish Army Theatre), and in the same time the wooden floors of the Industry Museum (now known as Technology Museum) were being scraped.

Each and every fact of similar nature was announced by the Press to the Polish citizens who were desperately craving such sort of information. In the meantime a new obstacle or rather obstacles surmounted meaning statues. The Palace considered, as the Statue of Friendship was unimaginable without additional statues. Thus there was a statue on one side of the entrance to the Palace personifying the statue of Adam Mickiewicz chiseled by Luwdika Nitschowa , on the other side of the entrance there was Mikołaj Kopernik by Stanisław Horno –Popławski. The niches in the walls around the Palace displayed the statues personifying the allegorical virtues being in compliance with the Marxism Leninism Ideology - all of those statues were performed on the basis of the bulk order at Azierska Ceramic Plant named “All –Lenin Union of Communist Youth Association in Estonia”.

The only one star missing was the statue of the Founder. The Stalin Statue Design Competition was not concluded satisfactorily. The statue was to be erected in a central point of the square and exactly in front of the Palace. Amongst the shortlisted designs one seemed to distinctive enough – a design by Xavery Dunikowski. Accordingly Stalin was heightened by a concrete tribune at which he was standing. The whole sculpture consisted of roughly hewed granite solids. The huge boots constituted the base of the sculpture and the face at its top had a definitely nasty countenance. Stalin’s cheeks were slightly puffed out as if our much regretted and passed away Father of the Nation was spitting onto this whole nation as well as the whole world.

During the project opening procedure – as one of the witnesses recalls – Berman and Motyka averted their eyes with disgust and Józef Cyrankiewicz was the one who sniggered.

It was not the first failure of Dunikowski in the case of the projects for the Palace, since he had already been proposed to design the allegoric figures. However, it appeared that Sigalin had thought of seated figures. “ - Why should they be like seated blockhead dummies in their armchairs? You can tell how terrible it could look.” – Dunikowski uncompromisingly commented on the seated figures project pretending that he had no clue of how distinctive Stalin’s statue would have been if accompanied by seated figures. Sigalin, however, defended his point of view arguing that a man can be taken seated, in an upright position and when kneeling thus we do not have a greater choice. Nevertheless, the comment on kneeling inspired Director Motyka (later Culture Minister) to submit a sculpture project in which the Soviet –Polish Goodwill would assume the shape of an angel blessing the alliance. Ultimately, the author of sculpture “Družba” [Russian word meaning friendship] became Alina Szapocznikow. “Družba” consisted of two workers who were proudly holding a flag. N.B. this statue disappeared from the Palace premises in the beginning of 1990s and nobody knew how it happened. When we take into account three premises: the Palace is a very well – guarded building, secondly this statue was of rather enormous size and lastly it would have never fitted into somebody’s pocket.

To recap the Stalin’s statue has never been made up. No ideological reservations were expressed as for the projects were designed in compliance with the epoch standards, and thus here they come: “ Stalin when looking into the distance”, “Stalin when extending greetings” . However compliant all those projects were not found worthy the purpose they were guided by. The issue of the Founder’s statue became delicate. Eventually when XX Congress of

KPZR (Soviet Communist Party) put an end to the Stalinism era, consequently disposed of this impolitic problem.

Autumn of 1954 brought in the subsequent feats in the area of work competition and performed in order to commemorate the Great October Anniversary. It was Bukietow Brigade, which went down in history when fixing marble facing boards onto the surface of Congress Hall columns. They performed 280% of their daily scheduled workload. In the sun of their glory, assisting Brigade warmed itself too. It was Brazowski Brigade who “when we take into consideration the workload indicator was almost catching up with Bukietow”.

It was announced all over the country that e.g. an auditorium is established on the 12th floor, the President of PAN [Polish Academy of Sciences] studio is set up on the 25th floor and the Goodwill Hall was located on the 32nd. Winter did not slow down the work progress moreover the Powiśle Power Plant started heating supply to the edifice. The final six months of the construction works as viewed in the Propaganda announcements were characterized by the tone of expecting something anxiously just like we do before Christmas.

The segments of the edifice were phased into use in February 1955. The segment consisting of Sport Museum and Theatre was placed in the front line. In April The Polish Army House Theatre, Young Warsaw Theatre and “Lalka” Puppet Theatre took possession of their own halls. Cleaning the site still dedicated to Stalin was the only thing to be done. For over several decades now this site has been called Plac Defilad [Defilad Square].

It was not later than the second half of July 1955 when the completion works were still underway as well as fitting works. A modern telephone switchboard was installed (it was operating for 40 years), the conference halls and studios were furnished. Most of it was done in order to as usual commemorate the Great Day of 22 July 1955. It was the day of the Great PKWN Manifesto Anniversary [commencement of the Communist Power in Poland]. The ceremony of handing over the edifice from nation to another was scheduled on that day.

”Swarming crowds approach”

21 July 1955, 4 p.m. sharp the USSR Ambassador Pantelejmon Ponomarienko together with the PRL Government Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz both of them being seated at the table set outside the PKiN and in front of the main PKiN entrance signed the protocol of the Palace of Culture and Science Cession.

On 22 July the Palace became available to “the whole society of Poland”. And this was the moment which Communist Propaganda turned into something resembling the instant when the Biblical Jews found their Promised Land. In 1952 when the Palace silhouette still remained unknown, “Architektura” monthly inserted the picture which was aiming to display that lofty long – time – prospective moment followed by a commentary: “when swarming crowds of citizens approach the Palace of Culture and Science then this instant requires the Palace architecture to be conspicuously open, and this quality is redressed by porticos and portals of the Palace and the impression made by its artistic style leading the guests into lofty ambience full of presentiments for such a significant and substantial experience which can be equaled to those of spiritual nature we can encounter only on the inside”. Here it was.

”They open wide and richly decorated double doors of the Palace “ - “Trybuna Ludu” relayed. After that the celebration started. The Soviet Builders received several thousands of medals, congratulation letters “from the dwellers of the villages, towns and cities throughout Poland” which were delivered by 800 cyclist in relay.

The Construction completion however did not terminate all the Propaganda responsibilities of the Palace. Apart from the functions defined in its name e.g.: rendering services to the Science and Culture (physical education inclusive). Additional function delegated to the Palace was aimed at easing off the work on “the ideological segment”.

The Social Science Institute was located on the 8, 9 and 10th floors, Editorial House of the Marxism-Leninism Classics Publication was on 11th floor and the Association for the Adult Education on 12 and 13th floor.

Apart from the disgust coming from Stalinist propaganda roughness, apart from the political purposes the whole construction was subdued to, it would be almost impossible to be untouched by the pace of works. Obviously if only it had not been the case of such great political importance, the case of investments which eliminated all other state plans and actions this incredibly fast pace of works would have never been achieved.

For ages most of the construction trouble have been resulting from the shortages of materials, subcontractors' misunderstandings, absence of workers or their either too early or too late arrival. These problems never existed at the Perpetual Goodwill Symbol construction site. Anything and everything including workers, equipment was ready in an instant. Therefore the perseverance and work discipline of thousands of people who were brought to the foreign country, who were treated instrumentally and who were constantly being involved in a variety of political farce deserve respect.

16 people died in accidents during the construction works. They are buried on the Orthodox Cemetery in Wola District of Warsaw. The Palace Management Board employees have been taking care of their graves. To this day....

Since the opening the Palace has been acting as the Central Administration Building of the Capital City. After a month from the inauguration, the Palace welcomed V Youth and Student World Festival.

On 24 October 1956 the Stalinism fell at the its foot – when Marshall Rokosowski was running away from the mass rally starring by Gomułka. He sneaked away from the Tribune and escaped through the Palace.

During the period from the III Convention to the moment of ordering the flag out of the Congress Hall the delegates of the Polish Communist Party used to meet there.

On 12 December 1981 it was here where the Polish Culture Congress was discontinued due to Martial Law and was not adjourned.

Through all those years all and every celebrity visiting Warsaw had to tour PKiN. Nikita Chruszczow initiated this tourist routine. We are honoured to list: Shah of Iran Reeza Pahlavi, Ho Chi Min –Leader of Vietnam, Kim Ir Sen – leader of North Korea.

The premiers of the plays by Gombrowicz and Mrożek took place there. The biggest stars were singing here on the Palace stage, let's name just a few: Louis Armstrong, Marlena Dietrich, Jan Kiepura, Leonard Cohen, Yves Montand, Paul Anka who having found out about Kennedy's murder had to stop his performance because was not able to sing.

Jurij Gagarin who lent out over the balustrade said: “so far from the earth” although he had already been further. In 1987 The High Mass was celebrated by the Pope John Paul II. It was held in the centre of the Defilad Square. We can multiply the examples of celebratory life of the Palace . It is not surprising that the Palace have to be reliably guarded. The employees of the Palace Security Department had to keep their occupations and the place of work in secret even when among their families. In spite of the “internationalist” character and Soviet customs the very first names of the first employees in the Security sounded similarly to other branches of life: Mr. Glass, Mr. Bishop and Mr. Can. All of them brave patriots who managed to deny the President Bolesław Bierut to enter the Palace, when he wanted to visit the new possession without prior notice.

After the period of political thaw “when Gomułka was at power, the swarming crowds of citizens” without prior check out were let into the Palace just like that. Let's refer to “swarming crowds” and as we can see they were nothing but trouble e.g. artistic wooden floors of the Palace ...A kind of museum slippers were one of the trials to save them (i.e. floors) but the Folk unaccustomed to museums fell and hurt themselves painfully.

The stairs were covered with carpets - and the Folk were falling from the stairs apparently unaccustomed to the carpets. In the end the Folk were allowed to tread mud into the floors. However the Palace security was reliable, they were not able to prevent various kinds of “free riders” from coming into the Palace. A young bump Marek was wandering around the nooks and corners of the “Wiedza” [Knowledge] Cinema. Another time a woman with a child and a folding bed moved into the reception lounge.

Ms Hanna Szczubetek invaluable chronicler of the Palace of Culture and Science who is said to know everything about the Palace recalls with affection all the incoming correspondence addressed to the PKiN. “The Palace was treated – especially in the country – as a specific kind of superior power. People were complaining to the Palace about their local (powiat and communal) authorities and the Palace was requested to take a course of action on... moreover there were some senders who confessed.” Unluckily the Palace remained silent.

A separate chapter in the history of the Palace shall be represented by suicides. The site was the viewing terrace before the safeguarding grate was installed 8 persons committed suicides. There was a French man among them who thought of the Palace as a more prestigious place than the Eiffel Tower. The last in a series was the suicide committed by a young scientist from PAN who had been fired due to collaboration with the then underground “Solidarity” during the Martial Law period.

In spite of the passing years there was an everlasting subject of the architectural shape for the Palace and a space around it and this never ending dispute on it was going on. In 1981 young architects from Hong Kong who happened to be attending International Congress of Architects Convention brought up a plan to cut the main solid of the Palace into chunks and scatter them all around the Palace ground. The systemic change initiated the flow of suggestions. Some of them were almost as sophisticated as the above mentioned.

Some American millionaire wanted to dismantle the whole edifice, have it shipped and reassembled at his place – just like his fellow American millionaires did in the case of the Loire Valley Châteaux. Poland refused to sell. Then the next millionaire of Polish origin appeared who craved for turning the Palace into the Business Center at his own expense. It did not work out either.

In 1991 a competition on “domesticating the PKiN” was announced. This competition just like the other - when referring to the Palace failed. A concept of surrounding the Palace with a circular boulevard was put forward. Fortunately for the Palace, this concept has never been developed. In 1996 the mind of some artist gave birth to the concept of painting the elevation of Stalin’s Gift rainbow like. This idea however, won the heart of Marcin Świącicki the then President of the Capital City of Warsaw. Nobody else’s heart was won. Two years later the very President made up an idea to build “the crown of the earth” around the Palace. “The Crown” should consist of eight sky scrapers aimed at intercepting the Palace image. And luckily for the Palace again no one intended to invest in it.

Czesław Bielecki architect, better known as an AWS [Post “Solidarity” Party] deputy together with a Satirist Mr. Jacek Fedorowicz lowered the tone a bit and decided to build a higher building than the PKiN in order to establish the Museum of Communism there. It was the then president of the Capital City of Warsaw Paweł Piskorski who defended the Palace Goodwill and declared that as long as he could be having a voice in the matter he would not allow anyone or anything harm the Palace. Under the auspices of the President the solid of the Palace was completed with four gigantic tower clocks dials, the viewing terrace was modernized and became Warsaw Multimedia Gallery, a number of Halls underwent the rejuvenation operation. (All innovative alterations and facilities are mentioned further in the offer).

When staying in the framework of Farewell to Communism we have to mention that in March of 1998 PKiN was transformed from the State budgetary unit into a sole shareholder company

belonging to the Capital City of Warsaw. The overall control of the Palace was entrusted to the Former Deputy President Mr. Paweł Bujalski. Mr. Lech Isakiewicz assumed the management of the Palace in December, 2002.

In spite of the competition going on the market the Palace has been remaining the highest, the biggest, the most popular building in Poland and those features make the Palace win all the popularity polls. It can be described as a well-off 50 year old, rather stable and a little bit worn-out as it happens in the lifecycle. Whatever we may say here the Palace constitutes irreplaceable part of Warsaw and the only landmark for the lost tourist somewhere in Ursynów District showing him/her the way to the City Centre.