

MONIKA PŁAZIAK
Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

The Commercialisation of Polish Socialist Heritage – Tourist, Entertainment and Collectable Products and Souvenirs in the Vintage Style

Abstract: On the Polish market, original and stylised products referring to the era of socialism are becoming popular. These are mainly cultural and entertainment products with both everyday and artistic items being offered and purchased on online auction portals while the production of sentimental memorabilia from the period of the Polish People's Republic is also being developed. At the same time, the growing interest in Poland as a tourist destination among both domestic and foreign tourists is the reason for the increasing curiosity of its socialist past. Therefore, tourist offers based on relics of that era are increasingly being created on the domestic tourist market, however, the quality of these products and services sometimes raises concerns over the quality of the message that they carry. The main question is whether this is only a simplified message based on stereotypes which give the recipient only a truncated and shallow picture of Poland's difficult past. This article discusses the main trends and the conditions necessary for the creation of services and products based on relics of socialism in Poland and is based on sources from Polish and foreign literature, both academic and professional, as well as the websites of businesses and institutions creating such market offers.

Keywords: commercialisation; Poland; Polish People's Republic; product; socialist heritage; vintage

Received: 27 October 2020

Accepted: 7 April 2020

Suggested citation:

Płaziak, M. (2020). The Commercialisation of Polish Socialist Heritage – Tourist, Entertainment and Collectable Products and Souvenirs in the Vintage Style. *Przedsiębiorczość – Edukacja [Entrepreneurship – Education]*, 16(1), 355–368. doi: 10.24917/20833296.161.28

Introduction

In Poland, the initial period after the fall of communism, i.e. the period of political and socio-economic transformation, was characterised by the negation of everything that was associated with the past era. For instance, this negation was evident in the transformation

of lifestyle towards a “Western” one. Products imported from the West became attractive to Poles, and shops replaced old products with those matching the new living conditions considered fashionable. As pejorative symbols, places associated with the previous era, such as Nowa Huta, the district of Kraków identified with a socialist flagship project and all its socialist-realist symbolism, were gradually forgotten and destroyed (Płaziak, 2014; Płaziak, Szymańska, 2016).

It was not until the subsequent years of social and political transformation that interest in the heritage of the past began slowly to appear. This is a typical tendency – objects from the past, reminiscent of the times of youth, acquire sentimental value for adults. Over time, this sentimental significance gains measurable financial value when younger generations appear for whom certain socio-cultural phenomena, buildings and everyday objects become interesting, on the basis of difference from what is now widely propagated and produced. It is assumed that products acquire a vintage character after about 20 years (as indicated by the categories of items in the vintage sections of online auctions). The term “vintage” is associated with the term “retro” and is sometimes used as a synonym for the former. However, it seems that it refers rather to style or stylisation from the past (and not strictly to objects), e.g. to the style of dress or musical style.

Interest in the heritage of the People’s Republic of Poland developed not only among Poles, but also residents of other countries, especially those who during the Iron Curtain had no opportunity to discover the detail of living in a socialist country, as well as among young foreign tourists. The wave of general tourist interest in Poland after its accession to the European Union also favoured a more detailed interest in its past in the socialist period and monuments testifying to those times.

On the basis of this, the value, not only sentimental but also financial, of products manufactured during the times of the People’s Republic of Poland is slowly growing. At the same time, items stylised as if from that time are becoming popular. Special entertainment and tourist products referring to this period have been created on the wave of demand.

The aim of this study is to identify the types of offer of institutions, and tourism and entertainment companies, and to identify popular period products offered on the market for sale or exchange based on the tangible and intangible remains of socialism. The used methods included a review of the information available on the websites of cultural institutions, and tourism and entertainment companies, as well as online sales and exchange auctions and blogs, and collector’s literature.

Research on the use of socialist heritage in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

Most of the research dealing with the ways of using the tangible and intangible heritage of the socialist period in the countries of the former “Eastern Bloc” concerns *communist heritage tourism*. These studies emphasise the growing interest of tourists in the realities of that time. This interest is evident above all among tourists from Western countries, those living outside of the then Iron Curtain, and among young tourists who had not experienced life during that regime.

Despite the growing interest among tourists in visiting places related to communism, the academic literature on its research aspects is not very rich. One of the first studies was

published by D. Light (2000a, 2000b) which discussed its development in countries such as Romania, Germany and Hungary. The author drew special attention to the controversy between the building of a new post-communist identity by these countries and the growing interest in the communist past among tourists, especially foreign ones.

The phenomenon of communist heritage tourism is studied primarily as a type, or manifestation, of cultural tourism, despite the fact that the term cultural heritage can be used to name only part of the heritage of the socialist period. Moreover, ways of using the legacy and relics of the socialist period sometimes arouse controversy both among the public and the researchers of that period. Among the publications following this trend, the article by S.H. Ivanov (2009) deserves attention. The author analysed opportunities for developing *communist heritage tourism* and discussed five types of communist heritage tourism in Bulgaria: “ideologically overburdened type of tourism, controversial tourism, tourism representing a limited time period of history, tourism representing a personality cult, and tourism connected with the concentration of resources in places related to the communist history in the country (in cities and the countryside)”. Ivanov also proposed a typology of post-communist relics that could be applied to other countries of the former Central and Eastern Bloc (cf. Synowiec, 2016).

Among publications on the development of communist heritage tourism in Poland, an article by A. Synowiec (2016) should be mentioned in which the importance and the ways of using the communist heritage as a tourist attraction in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are discussed. It also indicates the ambivalent relationship between communist heritage tourism and the construction of post-communist identities, taking into account opportunities and threats.

One of the first communist heritage tourist offers was proposed by Crazy Guides from Kraków, which has been organising trips by Trabant cars through Kraków’s socialist heritage since 2004, especially to the Nowa Huta district, which is an undeniable symbol of the socialist era in Poland. Due to the innovative, attractive and even eccentric approach to guiding tourists, taming the realities of life in the tough times of the past era by a jockey and somewhat loose approach to the topic, the company has evoked interest among academic researchers. The tourist product created by Crazy Guides has been described in Polish (Golonka-Czajkowska, 2010), but also in foreign (Knudsen, 2010) papers. The tourist attractiveness of Nowa Huta in the context of its socialist heritage, and not only the problem of dissonance between this attractiveness and the willingness to forget but also the respect for some aspects of this past by residents, has been described in several publications (Matoga, 2015; Banaszekiewicz, 2017; Golonka-Czajkowska, 2013).

The aspect of commercialisation of a special type of artefact from the socialist period in the form of monuments or rather “unobvious places” was pointed out by Wasiak (2010). One such “unobvious place” is Chernobyl, the location of the nuclear power plant meltdown. On the one hand, it is a place marked by enormous tragedy and the suffering of many people. On the other, it is a tourist product for followers of various types of tourism: adventure travel, ecological/extreme tourism, heritage tourism, atomic tourism, exploration tourism, tough travel. Another way to take advantage of a specificity marked by tragedy as a commercial product was to create a computer game (S.T.A.L.K.E.R.), combining learning about a place with the pleasure and safety of virtual travel and good fun. The author draws attention to the important issue that most trips to post-communist places and facilities, e.g. Nowa Huta or the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, are

trips to a past which is a tamed past. However, a trip to Chernobyl (implicitly also to other dangerous places such as North Korea) is a different kind of experience: a direct contact with something unknown and dangerous (Wasiak, 2010: 319).

As noted above, apart from issues of the commercialisation of the socialist heritage in the form of a tourist product, few studies concern other products. In this small group, noteworthy are publications discussing the growing interest in everyday items from the period of socialism and their increasing frequency as objects of desire among collectors of vintage items and among young people who value eclecticism in interior design. For these people, original or stylised additions in the socialist realist style are more frequently sought after (Bryl-Roman, 2010). The real artistic value of items produced in that era, often based on the high-class industrial design (Bryl-Roman, 2010; Bochińska, 2016), is increasingly being emphasised. Z. Grębecka (2010) writes about the popularity of items from the communist period or replicas of such items that can be successfully commercialised in the context of the phenomenon of nostalgia that has appeared after a specific period of time and in the appropriate conditions. This nostalgia, in this case, takes a more precise definition of “ostalgia,” or longing for what is eastern, especially for those in former East Germany (“Ost” in German means east) (Górska, 2010).

The tourist and entertainment offer related to the socialist period in Poland

Along with the political and socio-economic transformation, and in connection with Poland's accession to the European Union and the systematic improvement of the living conditions of the population, and thus the possibility of meeting not only basic needs but also more specialised tourist products (such as participation in mass tourism) have emerged to meet the expectations of Polish tourists. For many years in the transformation period, people were focused on increasingly exclusive and distant domestic and foreign destinations. Already in the 1990s, however, there were signs of interest in the socialist history of Poland and the material remains of that period. This interest was evident above all among foreign tourists from Western countries, for whom a visit to a post-socialist country was an experience of something ‘unobvious’, even exotic; a meeting with a world they had not known. They still use tourist packages offering trips to post-socialist places motivated by such motives. In addition young tourists, mainly Poles, born in the years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, are guided by similar motivations – they want to learn something about life in a reality that they did not have the opportunity to experience. However, other motivations are found in tourists from Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe who spent their early years in the communist reality. These tourists have a feeling of nostalgia for the past when they probably did not live as well as now, but due to memories of their youth, they tend to assess that period as the best in their lives. A special kind of nostalgia appears among elderly tourists who spent their childhood and youth in East Germany. This is “ostalgia,” or nostalgia for the East, for the old life behind the Iron Curtain (Górska, 2010).

Communist heritage tourism is a special form of heritage tourism. It applies not only to learning about and experiencing the tangible and intangible heritage commonly recognised as cultural heritage but also to contacts with relics which can often be considered, especially by older residents, as evidence of an unwanted past (e.g. evidence of the persecution and tragedy of the communist period). On the other hand, these places can be

treated as testimonies worth commemorating and honouring (for example, evidence of opposition to the regime). In addition, communist heritage tourism contains elements of other types, especially adventure tourism. This may raise some concern, resulting from the possibility of reducing the heritage of that period to a one-dimensional tourist attraction in the form of stereotypical representation of the realities of life as absurd, perhaps uncomfortable for various reasons, but which allowed life to be quite liveable. Of course, both those who lived in those days and tourists alike would like to avoid such an unequivocal statement.

Several characteristic features of tourist offers regarding the communist heritage can be distinguished: the cognitive aspect of tangible and intangible heritage, the experience of the specific living conditions of the socialist period, and good fun and adventure.

The cognitive value of the communist heritage is associated with the offer of museums, galleries and exhibitions appearing increasingly often in Poland, presenting historical and everyday life exhibitions about the times of the People's Republic. Although the offer of these institutions and projects is only addressed to tourists, it is, at least in principle, a source of knowledge about those times for all visitors. Museums of this kind only began to appear in Poland after 2000, mainly in large cities with the exception of the Socialist Realism Art Gallery founded in 1994 at the Zamoyski Museum in Kozłówka. This museum collects and exhibits not so much everyday artefacts, but the real works of well-known and respected Polish artists of the socialist realism period, as well as posters and coins from 1944–1997 (Table 1).

There are more and more offers to visit Polish cities to experience the heritage of the Polish People's Republic. Visits to museums or exhibitions about that period are only part of the offer, often overlooked, because it does not necessarily fall under the category of good fun (Table 2). Who is the recipient of such an offer? It is often a foreign tourist, but not necessarily – young Poles also seem to be interested in such attractions too. It should be noted, however, that the offer addressed to foreign tourists differs from that intended to attract Polish tourists. Tourists from abroad are to visit what neither they nor anyone in their environment has ever experienced. They are to experience the realities of that era at a basic level, and actually, everything that is presented to them is attractive, so the offer may be based on decoding basic information and experiencing simple sensations, ranging from riding in a Trabant or Syrena car, through looking at socialist architecture, and ending by meeting a “native” in their apartment for “vodka and herring”. For Polish tourists, the offer is more “sublime” (which might be more difficult to decode for foreign visitors) based, for example, on references to films of the communist era, especially comedies and so-called “barejisms” (quotes from films directed by Stanisław Bareja) or the absurdities of socialist Poland (Golonka-Czajkowska, 2010).

A tourist using this offer is very often someone who is already familiar with the key sights of a given city, wanting to experience and learn something new, but also to spend time in a non-standard way. Often it is someone who is visiting the city for the second or third time and is looking for new attractions.

Creating a tourist offer based on relics of the Polish People's Republic is a natural process 30 years after the fall of communism. The passing of time has allowed Poles to distance themselves from this heritage. At the same time, it arouses interest not only among foreign tourists but also Poles, both those who did not experience those realities, as well as older ones who might be sentimental towards the times of their youth and who want to re-experience that era, this time in a controlled way. However, the key question seems

to be the substantive quality and veracity of the message contained in this offer. There is a risk of creating false images of such an era, especially among those who never experienced its realities. There is no doubt that a conscious tourist is interested in facts from the past of the Polish People's Republic, however, from the tourist's point of view, the more attractive the knowledge transferred, the more interesting the offer.

Table 1. Museums and galleries presenting collections related to the period of the People's Republic of Poland

Museum/Gallery (established)	City	Sample topics of permanent and temporary exhibitions in 2018 and 2019	Additional offer/Website
Museum of life in the Polish People's Republic (2014)	Warsaw	"The museum is not intended to present events chronologically but is a background to tell the history and realities of life in the Polish People's Republic."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trips in the historic Nysa 522 vans: "The charm of the Polish People's Republic", "Warsaw adventure" - props - the option of borrowing items from the times of the Polish People's Republic (e.g. for photo sessions) - the organisation of conferences, meetings, lectures - renting of premises, e.g. for photo sessions - the organisation of birthday parties in the style of the Polish People's Republic - https://mzprl.pl/
Museum of the Polish People's Republic (2008)	Kraków	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "One Way. March '68" - "The steelworks stopped. Strike in the Lenin Steelworks 26 April-5 May 1988" - "Inside Poland. Marian Schmidt. Photographs" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collections made available in an electronic version - visiting a shelter as part of the "Underground Nowa Huta" project - workshops for children, museum lessons - lectures - publishing activities - http://www.mprl.pl/
Museum of the Polish People's Republic in Ruda Śląska (2010)	Ruda Śląska	"Set the red sun"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monument park - museum lessons - photo sessions - venue rental - http://www.muzeumprl-u.pl/
Pomeranian Regional Museum of the Polish People's Republic/ <i>Pomorskie Okręgowe Muzeum PRL</i> (2018)	Sępólno Krajeńskie	Themed boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - car rallies - https://www.facebook.com/POMPRL/

At home under the Polish People's Republic (2019)	Toruń	“the goal is to present the charm of this past epoch”	– https://domprlu.pl/
Art Gallery of Socialist Realism at the Zamoyski Museum in Kozłówka (1994)	Kozłówka	– works of famous esteemed Polish artists of the socialist realism period – posters – coins from 1944–1997	– https://www.muzeumzamoyskich.pl/socrealizm

Source: author based on a review of museum websites

Unfortunately, it often turns out that the attractiveness of the offer and the spectrum of experiences outweigh the quality and reliability of the information provided. Therefore, in creating a tourist product based on relics of the Polish People's Republic, it is particularly important not to be guided only by purely market motives, but to pay attention to the proper transmission of information, and avoid underestimating the presentation of the then reality. The presentation of difficult living conditions in this era is often distorted, is definitely insufficient, and even an inappropriate approach to creating a valuable tourist product. Whether a museum or temporary exhibition or an offer of a tour in the footsteps of communism, every product should convey a true message. In this case, the balance between reliable information and the tourist's experience, adventure and fun, is extremely important.

Table 2. Selected travel offers in the style of the Polish People's Republic

Name of the event	Organiser	City	Description / website
Tours of Warsaw in the style of the Polish People's Republic	Automotive and Technology Museum in Otrębusy	Otrębusy/Warsaw	Trips around Warsaw by Jelcz buses (so-called “cucumbers”), and Trabant, Syrena and Warszawa cars http://www.muzeum-motoryzacji.com.pl/
Communism Tour (alternatives: Communism Deluxe, nuclear shelters, Trabant hire, socialist greetings, Kalashnikov shooting range, etc.)	Crazy Guides	Kraków	– 150 min private trip – old school Trabant – Crazy Guide, or a relaxed guide – a driver – fascinating architecture of Nowa Huta – https://www.crazyguides.com/pl/
The absurdities of the People's Republic of Poland (integration event), the People's Republic of Poland forever alive (urban games), the Trail of the Polish People's Republic by Jelcz “Cucumber” bus, the Trail of the Polish People's Republic (school trips)	WPT 1313 Warsaw Tourist Enterprise	Warsaw	“The past period is an inspiration and a mine of ideas for creating programs, so you can still feel the spirit of those years and travel in time”. http://wpt1313.com/pol

Trip in the footsteps of communism	Adventure Warsaw	Warsaw	“Do you want to find out what gifts we got from “Uncle” Stalin? How was Warsaw rebuilt after the war? How did propaganda create reality? Why did the Solidarity revolution break out and what happened next? Jump into a Nysa van and you’ll learn everything!”. https://adventurewarsaw.pl/
In the fumes of the Polish People’s Republic	City Event Poznań	Poznań	A trip on a historic bus around Poznań https://cityevent-poznan.pl/
Communist Warsaw / Communist Kraków	AB Poland Travel	Kraków, Warsaw	“Sit comfortably in the seat of Nysa 522, the iconic van of the socialist era and explore Warsaw!”. https://pl.abpoland.com/

Source: author based on a review of tourist companies’ websites

Compared to the tourist offer, a typical entertainment offer based on relics of the Polish People’s Republic, for both the creator of the product and its recipient, is definitely less demanding. Simple entertainment modelled on the customs and fashions of that period, using original objects or stylised props, turns out to be relatively easy to develop. And the recipient seems less demanding than a tourist, by definition at least seeking to learn something unknown. Although, of course, a typical entertainment offer can complement the communist heritage tourist package. The most frequently offered entertainment products referring to that era include restaurants, cafes and clubs with period decor based on historical originals. Usually, the atmosphere is complemented by the menu and music, as well as occasional themed parties, usually of a dance nature (Table 3).

Table 3. Selected offers of restaurants, cafes and bars in the style of the Polish People’s Republic

Name/City	Specification/Website
PRL Cafe / Piła	DJ parties https://www.facebook.com/PRL.pila/
SETKA Bar / Wrocław	The atmosphere of bars from the movies ‘Miś’ or ‘07 Respond’, the buzz of lively conversations on all sorts of topics, the smell of home cooking and the unpretentious atmosphere are the hallmarks of the SETKA bar. The Bar invites customers 24/7. Steak tartare, tripe, ‘vorschmack’ and meat in aspic are some of the main proposals of the SETKA Bar. Hot and cold dishes and of course a frozen “one hundred” of vodka served with cucumber in brine. For a snack, for taste and for company. ‘Ladies’ and ‘amateurs’ of other drinks will also find something for themselves, the place also serves wine and non-alcoholic drinks, and of course hot coffee and tea. Non-bourgeois prices, but quality – yes. The interior of the place is a time machine. A long counter and bar stools, equipment inspired by the classic small Fiat, posters and photos from the era.

	<p>The spirit of the People's Republic of Poland is also evoked by props offered to customers in the form of savings books and vouchers, entitling them to consumption without the participation of living cash.</p> <p>From the conviction that we have moved into the socialist reality of Poland in the 1960s, we will be cheated by a certain fundamental difference as nothing</p> <p>From the conviction that we have moved into the socialist reality of Poland in the 1960s, we will be cheated by a certain fundamental difference as nothing</p> <p>From the conviction that we have moved into the socialist reality of Poland in the 1960s, we will be cheated by a certain fundamental difference as nothing</p>
Propaganda Restaurant / Warszawa	<p>Our cuisine is inspired by traditional Polish dishes in a modern European style. Only the decor reminds us of those times. The names on the menu refer to that period but are not a reflection of the then menu</p> <p>http://restauracja-propaganda.pl/</p>
The Ministry of Herring and Vodka/Łódź	<p>Low prices, simplicity, the music of the 1980s</p> <p>http://msiw.eu/</p>

Source: author based on the review of websites of gastronomy and entertainment facilities

Events, especially corporate, at the business venue or outside, in the style of the People's Republic of Poland, organised by various agencies and increasingly becoming one of the more permanent offers in the whole range of attractions (Table 4), are becoming popular. At the same time, the use of artefacts remaining after the communist period for typically entertainment purposes may raise even more doubts than when using the communist heritage as a typical tourist offer. It seems that as part of creating an entertainment product in the style of the Polish People's Republic, its commercial aspect is the sole imperative. One can only hope that, despite everything, the recipient of such an offer, in addition to having fun, will casually get acquainted with the realities of life in Poland in socialist times. However, in this case, it is difficult to have an insight into the quality of this knowledge.

Table 4. Selected offers of entertainment events in the style of the Polish People's Republic

Event	Organiser / city	Description/ website
Integration in the style of the Polish People's Republic in Kraków	Integracyjne.pl Kraków	<p>"sightseeing by cars from the era, guided tours of communist buildings, snacks of the Polish People's Republic, and all this presented in a humorous way by our perky guide".</p> <p>https://integracyjne.pl/integracja-zwiedzanie-prl/krakow</p>
Warsaw – an evening in the style of the Polish People's Republic	Panienskie.pl Warszawa	<p>"Let us take you for a trip around Warsaw in the fumes of the absurdity of the Polish People's Republic. See what our socialism was really about. See the evening in the style of the Polish People's Republic. See gifts from "Uncle" Stalin and learn how Warsaw was rebuilt after the war".</p> <p>https://panienskie.pl/PRL-paniensi-wycieczka/warszawa</p>

Polish People's Republic (company picnics), Communism is coming back (themed evenings)	Red Star Adventure - the whole of Poland	"Participants of the event taking part in games we organise will be awarded party decorations and souvenirs. We provide perfect decorations in the style of the Polish People's Republic. Animators take part in the evening (1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Militia, bar worker, Communist youth organiser, and Civil Defence) create a typical atmosphere of the time of communism". http://www.red-star.pl/
--	--	--

Source: author based on a review of entertainment companies' websites

Collections of everyday items "from the era" and the production of stylised souvenirs

Based on sentiments towards the times of the People's Republic of Poland, collectors' interest in authentic equipment and various objects and works of art from that period has been born. Over the decades, they have taken on a vintage character and are becoming increasingly appreciated elements complementing the decor of contemporary apartments and other premises from the "period". Often these are collections developed as a hobby, but also a source of income. Especially design (applied art) collections – signed equipment, objects and furniture from the socialist period can be sold at great profit. The value of a well-designed series, projects recognised by experts, but also occasional series or authored by specific designers is also increasing (Table 5).

Collections of posters from the socialist period of the so-called 'Polish poster school' are gaining popularity. In the grey reality of post-war Poland, high-quality artistic posters appeared on the streets, characterised by individual style, an unusual painting form and the free play of the imagination and a wealth of emotions. Posters created by outstanding artists were raised to the rank of art and posters from that period are successfully sold, both as original and high-quality prints. Theatre, circus and film posters, designed by Mroszczak, Tomaszewski, Pałowski, Olbiński, and many others, are very popular at on-line auctions such as Patyna.pl and Allegro.

On the wave of interest in the past, more and more souvenirs referring to those times are being produced. They are based on old or new designs but kept in the former style. These are usually small items, i.e. postcards, bookmarks, magnets, mugs, notebooks, T-shirts, tote bags, etc. (e.g. Love Poland Design).

As it has turned out, the resumption of production of once-popular, well-designed and functional objects and equipment can also prove profitable. Below are examples of the production of several famous models from the socialist period: "Relaks" shoes (reactivation: Wojas company, 2013); Brulion notebooks (reactivation: Ania Piesiewicz/Pisak Studio); RM58 armchair, designed by Modzelewski in the 1950s – an icon of Polish design whose prototypes are in the most important world collections (reactivated by the Warsaw company, VZÓR, 2012); 'mesh' garden chair, designed by Sztaba from 1968, (reactivated by Mamsam, 2011); Romet bikes (manufactured 1948–1998) today have their modern versions. At the end of 2008, sales of the Wigry 3 bike and its "youngest brother" Wigry 7 resumed. The latter received the Must-Have distinction at the "Łódź Design Festival 2013" (Culture.pl).

Table 5. Examples of design collections from the period of the Polish People's Republic

Category	Manufacturers	Designers
Furniture	Furniture Factory in Bydgoszcz, Factory of the Great Proletariat in Elbląg, Trzcianecki Furniture Factory, Paczków Furniture Factory, Zamojska Furniture Factory	R.T. Hałas (e.g. bookcases, chairs from the 1960s), M. Chomentowska (e.g. chairs from 1960)
Lamps and chandeliers	No 2 Municipal Metalworks in Warsaw, Lighting Equipment Factory "Polam-Wilkasy" (since 1969 "Zaos"), "Lumet" Cooperative in Poznań	A. Gałecki (e.g. floor lamps from the 1960s and 1970s)
Vases, candlesticks and others	"Zawiercie" Glassworks, "Sudety" Glassworks in Szczytna, "Ząbkowice" Glassworks in Dąbrowa Górnicza, "Steatyt" Ceramic Plant in Katowice, Crystal Glass production plant in Cieszyn, "Julia", Crystal Glass Works in Piechowice	E. Trzewik-Drost, (e.g. "Mexican woman" candlestick from the 1970s), J. Śluczana-Orkus, Cz. Zuber, Z. Horbowy. J.S Drost (e.g. "Okulus" vase from the 1960s).
Porcelain dishes and other porcelain products	"Ćmielów" Porcelain Factory in Ćmielów, "Wawel" Porcelain Factory in Wałbrzych, "Krzysztof" Porcelain Factory in Wałbrzych, "Chodzież" Porcelain and Porcelite Factory in Chodzież	W. Potacki (e.g. Krokus dishes, 1962), L. Tomaszewski (e.g. "Dorota" dishes from 1962), E. Ruszczynski (e.g. "Julita" dishes from 1957), H. Jędrasiak (e.g. figurines of a "Sudanese woman" from 1958).
Dishes from faience, stoneware, porcelain	"Włocławek" Faience Factory in Włocławek, "Kamionka" Cooperative in Łysa Góra, Mirostowice Ceramic Works in Mirostowice Dolne, "Ząbkowice" Glassworks in Dąbrowa Górnicza, "Pruszków" Porcelit Ware Factory in Pruszków	J. Sowiński (e.g. "Hat" platter from the 1960s, A. Sadulski, J.S. Drost (e.g. "Ammonite" plates from the 1960s/1970s, "Asteroid" plates and vases from 1970s, "Fish" platter from 1972).
Carpets and decorative fabrics	Institute of Industrial Design in Warsaw, Headquarters of the Folk and Artistic Industry (Cepelia)	D. Popowicz-Michno (e.g. "Liście" – decorative fabric from 1958).

Source: author based on Bochińska (2016) and Patyna.pl

Individual elements of collections or entire series are traditionally sold in antique stores or at flea markets. However, the most popular places for trading such items are auction portals. Most often they are not specialised in items from the socialist period, and souvenirs of the Polish People's Republic are one of many categories (e.g. Allegro, Gratka). Often they are portals offering vintage goods, where souvenirs are grouped in a separate section. There are also websites with more specialised auctions of artistic objects, including applied arts, where items from 1944–1989 are also exhibited in perfect condition, often after renovation, and described in terms of the place of production and the designer/designers (e.g. Patyna.pl, Yestersen). These portals are co-created by specialised sellers who have found a way to earn a living from trading in such products, as well as small collectors and the owners of valuable collections.

In virtual space, you can find a number of websites, blogs, and virtual "showrooms" dedicated to collections of vintage items, including those from the period of the Polish People's Republic (e.g. Design, We Create Authentic Interiors, Mirostowice Ceramic Plant, PRL Buffet). These sites are set up by specialists, collectors and design lovers. They

provide a valuable base of information, exchange of knowledge, and sometimes also of the items themselves. Certainly, they contribute to spreading knowledge and interest in those times, commemorating contemporary artists and their achievements, and thus an increase in the value of the collection.

Summary

Commercial offers based on the legacy of the socialist period in Poland have been reviewed. The growing interest in vintage or retro products is a natural process, appearing in the younger generation as a fashion for experiencing something unknown from the past, but also manifesting itself among the older generation as a result of sentimentality over their years of youth.

On the basis of Polish and foreign literature, as well as a review of the websites of cultural institutions and companies, auction sites and blogs, the most important types of products were identified. Therefore, the following referring to the socialist past of Poland were distinguished: tourist offer, entertainment offer, collectables and souvenirs stylised for that era.

A special place among the products discussed has the communist heritage tourist offer, which is characterised by the cognitive aspect of tangible and intangible heritage, the experience of the specific living conditions of the socialist period, good fun and adventure. The creators of this kind of tourist product should have, apart from the obvious economic factor, a sense of responsibility for the substantive message. As stated, the offer of museums and exhibitions regarding the times of the Polish People's Republic is usually reliable, although often simplifying and stereotyping that reality. However, other tourist offers, such as trips in the footsteps of communism, or accompanying themed events in the style of the Polish People's Republic, or a visit to a restaurant from the 'period', are usually intended to provide a good time, and the cognitive aspect is treated as an add-on or indeed overlooked.

On the wave of interest in that era, or even the fashion for relics of the socialist period, the sale of original products or stylised souvenirs is growing. Furniture and everyday objects are particularly popular, especially those by famous designers produced in recognised factories which are elements of larger collections, or entire collections. The film, theatre and circus posters designed in the so-called Polish school have become popular and are sold in the form of original or high-quality prints. Production at once popular facilities e.g. furniture, bicycles or shoes, has been resumed. Stylised souvenirs are also produced in the form of mugs, magnets, t-shirts, etc and the number of places in real and virtual space where these products can be bought or sold is increasing. These are not only flea markets and antique stores, or art auctions (although there are works of intrinsic value at auction, but not necessarily because of the origin of the Polish People's Republic), but above all general and specialised online sales portals and auction showrooms, as well as blogs and accounts on social networks.

Care should be taken about the appropriate substantive message of the offers created, above all museum and tourist, but also entertainment, in order to consolidate the image of the past, warped and free of excessive stereotypes, especially among young and foreign recipients. The right message and the high quality of products referring to the socialist period may constitute an important element of the "Polish marketing product" while maintaining historical truth and avoiding simplifications and trivialisation of the past.

References

- AB Poland Travel. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://pl.abpoland.com/>
- Adventure Warsaw. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://adventurewarsaw.pl/>
- Allegro. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://allegro.pl/>
- Banaszkiewicz, M. (2017). Muzeum PRL-u w kontekście potencjału turystycznego Nowej Huty, Światowid. *Rocznik Muzeum PRL-u w Krakowie*, 4, 151–159.
- Bochińska, B. (2016). Zaczynj kochać design. Jak kolekcjonować polską sztukę użytkową. Warszawa: Marginesy.
- Bryl-Roman, W. (2010). Polski vintage – odkrywanie peerelowskiego designu. W: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka (red.), *Popkomunizm. Doświadczenie komunizmu a kultura popularna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, 51–59.
- Bufet PRL. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://bufetprl.com/>
- City Event Poznań. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://cityevent-poznan.pl/>
- Crazy Guides. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://www.crazyguides.com/pl/>
- Dom PRL-u. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://domprlu.pl/>
- Culture.pl. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://culture.pl/pl/artikul/drugie-zycie-dizajnu-z-prl>
- Galeria Sztuki Socrealizmu w Muzeum Zamoyskich w Kozłówce. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://www.muzeumzamoyskich.pl/socrealizm>
- Golonka-Czajkowska, M. (2010). Podróż do krainy zwanej Nową Hutą, czyli o komunizmie jako atrakcji turystycznej. W: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka (red.), *Popkomunizm. Doświadczenie komunizmu a kultura popularna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, 287–302.
- Golonka-Czajkowska, M. (2013). Nowe miasto nowych ludzi. Mitologie nowohuckie. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Górska, K. (2010). Nostalgia za PRL-em i ostalgia. W: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka (red.), *Popkomunizm. Doświadczenie komunizmu a kultura popularna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, 217–227.
- Gratka. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://gratka.pl/>
- Grębecka, Z. (2010). Między śmiechem a nostalgią – powroty do komunistycznej przeszłości. W: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka (red.), *Popkomunizm. Doświadczenie komunizmu a kultura popularna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, 321–343.
- Hełpa-Liszowska, K. (2013). Dziedzictwo kulturowe jako czynnik rozwoju lokalnego. *Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia*, 6(1), 5–18.
- Integracyjne. pl. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://integracyjne.pl/integracja-zwiedzanie-prl/krakow>
- Ivanov, S.H. (2009). Opportunities for developing communist heritage tourism in Bulgaria. *Tourism Review*, 57(2), 177–192.
- Knudsen, B.T. (2010). The past as staged-real environment: communism revisited in The Crazy Guides Communism Tours, Krakow, Poland. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 8(3), 139–153. doi: 10.1080/14766825.2010.510195
- Light, D. (2000a). An Unwanted Past: contemporary tourism and the heritage of communism in Romania. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 6(2), 145–160.
- Light, D. (2000b). Gazing on communism: heritage tourism and post-communist identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania. *Tourism Geographies*, 2(2), 157–176.
- Love Poland Design. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://lovepolanddesign.pl/pl/>
- Matoga, Ł. (2015). Exploring the history and heritage of communism in Nowa Huta District in Kraków, Poland: Potential or a problem in managing tourism in a city?. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 6(7), 90–103.
- Ministerstwo Śledzia i Wódki. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://msiw.eu/>
- Mirostowickie Zakłady Ceramiczne. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://mirostowice.pl/>
- Muzeum Motoryzacji i Techniki w Otrębusach. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://www.muzeum-motoryzacji.com.pl/>

- Muzeum PRL-u w Rudzie Śląskiej. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://www.muzeumprl-u.pl/>
- Muzeum PRL-u. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://www.mprl.pl/>
- Muzeum życia w PRL. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://mzprl.pl/>
- Odwzorowanie. Kreujemy autentyczne wnętrza. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://www.odwzorowanie.pl/>
- Panienskie.pl. (2019, 11 September Retrieved from: <https://panienske.pl/PRL-paniensi-wycieczka/warszawa>
- Patyna.pl. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from:<https://patyna.pl/>
- Płaziak, M. (2014). Przemiany funkcji handlowo-usługowych w mieście postsocjalistycznym na przykładzie Nowej Huty. W: E. Kaczmarek, P. Raźniak (red.), *Spoleczno-ekonomiczne i przestrzenne przemiany struktur regionalnych*, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, 85–100.
- Płaziak, M., Szymańska, A.I. (2016). Uwarunkowania rozwoju handlu i usług na przykładzie Krakowa – Nowej Huty. W: M. Kosała, M. Urbaniec, A. Żur (red.). *Współczesne dylematy badań nad przedsiębiorczością*, Kraków: Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie, 231–246.
- Pomorskie Okręgowe Muzeum PRL. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/POMPRL/>
- Red Star Adventure. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://www.red-star.pl/>
- Restauracja Propaganda. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://restauracja-propaganda.pl/>
- Setka BAR. (2019, 11 September). Pozyskano z: <http://setkapolska.pl/>
- Synowiec, A. (2016). Inny wymiar turystyki kulturowej – dziedzictwo relikty komunizmu jako atrakcja turystyczna. *Zeszyty Naukowe. Organizacja i Zarządzanie*. Politechnika Śląska, 95, 503–513.
- Wasiak, P. (2010). Realne i wirtualne zwiedzanie elektrowni w Czarnobylu. W: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka (red.), *Popkomunizm. Doświadczenie komunizmu a kultura popularna*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Libron, 203–320.
- WPT 1313 Warszawskie Przedsiębiorstwo Turystyczne. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <http://wpt1313.com/pol>
- Yestersen. (2019, 11 September). Retrieved from: <https://yestersen.com/pl-pl>

Monika Płaziak, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Entrepreneurship and Spatial Management, Institute of Geography, Pedagogical University of Krakow. The member of the Polish Geographical Society. PhD in a field of socio-economic geography was held at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Management, Jagiellonian University, Kraków. Author's research refers to the level and quality of life, with particular reference to small and medium-sized towns in Poland, and issues of functional changes in housing estates and city centres in Poland. Her research interests include entrepreneurship and innovation of young people and entrepreneurial activities on the open-air markets.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7455-504X>

Adres/Address:

Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie
Instytut Geografii
Katedra Przedsiębiorczości i Gospodarki Przestrzennej
ul. Podchorążych 2
30-084 Kraków, Poland
e-mail: monika.plaziak@up.krakow.pl