

Representing Transformations/Transforming Representations: Remaking Life and Work in Nowa Huta, Poland

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“naprawdę nie ma jednej Nowej Huty”
“truly there is not one Nowa Huta”
(*Rzeczpospolita*, 11.6.99)

Introduction

This paper emerged almost incidentally out of a wider project exploring the ways in which everyday life in the town of Nowa Huta in southern Poland¹ has been transformed in the shift to post-socialism. The first motivation to write this paper lay in the ‘discovery’ in the range of different literatures on Nowa Huta with which I have been working of an immense variety of different images and identities attached to the town, its communities, histories and futures. Nowa Huta (meaning ‘new steelworks’) was Poland’s first socialist city, constructed from 1949 around the new Lenin Steelworks (Poland’s first integrated steelworks and the flagship project of its first communist six year plan) as a deliberate proletarian counter to bourgeois Kraków adjacent. Yet Nowa Huta was also a town of protest and militancy, central to the worker-based Solidarity movement that arose in 1980 and led eventually to the collapse of communism in Poland and beyond. Between these two poles (pun intended) however, there are countless other Nowa Hutas which emerge forcefully from reading texts, images and other representations of the town produced within and beyond Poland over the fifty years of the town’s history. I want in this paper to draw out some of those ‘third’ stories.

In the discussion and conclusions of this paper I come to the second motivation - perhaps the more important. We all know image is important and can have real material impacts on the lives of people and places. Repeatedly during my fieldwork in Nowa Huta and Kraków I met with virulently negative stereotypes of the former that failed to acknowledge the violence of such stances. Like many other working class neighbourhoods in Europe and beyond, Nowa Huta is

¹ Nowa Huta is in fact today a cluster of six districts of Kraków to the east of the city centre. I refer to it as a town in its own right here because it was founded as a town administratively separate from Kraków and maintains a distinct identity and location.

attacked, ridiculed and done down by people who have never been there but believe the myths and legends of the people they meet in pubs. In more recent months the production and representation of Nowa Huta's identity and history have become still more contested. Like many old industrial communities, as industry declines Nowa Huta is witnessing the 'museumification' of its past. Two museum projects are being developed in Nowa Huta - one a museum to the town and its steelworks (perhaps that should be the steelworks and their town); the second, SocLand, a museum of communism. Though each has different aims, politics and origin, both seek to represent Nowa Huta and the regime that constructed it and to attract tourists to the town. Both therefore play a role in shaping Nowa Huta's future and understandings of its people. What Nowa Huta is then is an important question and the insistence that "truly there is not one Nowa Huta" (*Rzeczpospolita*, 11.6.99) an important conclusion.

I am presenting a range of quotations, supported by a small number of pictorial images, from historical and contemporary Polish sources that highlight some of the representations of Nowa Huta, constructed internally and externally over the fifty two years of its existence. Using these snapshots as my basis, I want to think through the links between the transformation of representations of Nowa Huta and the simultaneous transformation of everyday lives in the town. My emphasis, both in the project and here, is on understanding the experiences of contemporary post-socialist transformations, but I necessarily do this against the background of the repeated remaking of Nowa Huta over the years and for this reason the historical takes up a considerable part of this paper.

In writing and presenting this paper in this way, I am having to assume or ignore more than I usually would. More straightforward presentations of Nowa Huta's changing place in the world, its politics and economy can be found in other papers from this project (Stenning 2000a, 2000b, 2001). For now, as a starting point, it is enough to know that Nowa Huta, meaning 'new steelworks', was founded in 1949 as a new town centred on the new Lenin steelworks (Huta Lenina). The town and steelworks are located just east of Kraków, Poland's old capital and cultural centre, and their construction was funded by a loan from the Soviet Union and supported by an army of Soviet experts. Today all of Nowa Huta's districts together have a population of around 300,000.

The Nowa Huta

Debates over the meaning of Nowa Huta and its construction in the late 1940s and early '50s have raged since the idea of a new steelworks was first mooted in Poland. Some argue that the rationale

was entirely economic, others that, without doubt, the primary motivation was ideological - to 'proletarianise' bourgeois Kraków. Both of these perspectives are supported by the literature of the era. As the construction continued, Nowa Huta came to represent a number of ideas, and to be represented in a variety of ways. The town and steelworks were the largest project of Poland's first six year plan, consuming a very significant proportion of all Polish industrial investment in this period (Ptaszycki, 1959; Kołomysjki, 1970). As such Nowa Huta came to be seen, like other new town projects across east central Europe, as the standard bearer of the new order, "almost as important as the red flag" (Åman, 1992, p.163). It stood at the centre of the country's political and economic post-war efforts, in line with the hopes and goals of the new regime, as the embodiment, if not of socialism, then at least of the path to socialism. Nowa Huta was to be Poland's first socialist town, planned according the demands and desires of the government, in the name of the new socialist state. Through its homes, its streets and its steelworks, it was to make concrete the hopes of socialist planners. In this way, it was promoted as a rallying point, a source of pride, for a nation devastated by the Second World War. For the same reasons, Nowa Huta was seen as a centre of Party support. The steelworks Party unit grew to be the largest primary unit in the country, with over 9,000 members in 1979 (Choma *et al.*, 1999, p.109).

Box 1

"the largest investment of the Six Year Plan, the Pride of the Nation" (election propaganda, 1952)

"Nowa Huta was one of the leading great building sites of socialism" (historian, 1998)

"Nowa Huta - peace. Nowa Huta - socialism." (election propaganda, 1952)

"it was to be a socialist town, a calling card of the new system" (Solidarity activist, 1997)

"'Red' Nowa Huta - a town without God, modern and authentically communist" (reportage, 1994)

"this town which the government built as a model of socialist planning" (international reportage, 1980)

Since the sights of the post-war Polish regime were focused wholly on the future, Nowa Huta was an important symbol of the opportunities presented by the new. As the first glimpse of Poland's socialist future, the town was represented as new, beautiful, unprecedented and incomparable. In contrast to Poland's recent past (characterised by repeated removal from Europe's map, dominance by both its nearest neighbours, weak economic growth and wartime devastation), considerable hope was vested in Nowa Huta to offer something different, something new and something to be proud of (Wojewódzki, 1952). Nowa Huta was to have new apartments and purpose-built facilities, built

according to new schemes at the cutting edge of urbanism with innovative architecture and construction methods (including pre-fabrication). These coupled with the emphasis in the town's plan on space and greenery were set up in contrast to the density, neglect and chaos of old Kraków.

Box 2

“Nowa Huta is a new, more beautiful world” (election propaganda, 1952)

“The town arose built completely from new, with its own expression not only in its external appearance, but also with respect to its inhabitants.” (urbanist, 1959)

“Nowa Huta is today the most beautiful and most consistently designed of the new towns and neighbourhoods in Poland.” (urbanist, 1959)

“Nowa Huta was to be a socialist town, a beautiful and comfortable/convenient, new centre for Kraków, and real competition for its medieval centre. It was to change the life of the town and its surroundings, to transform them urbanistically and socially.” (academic, 1998)

“Huta has its own separate life, which doesn't give itself to comparison with any other town.” (urbanist, 1959)

“Nowa Huta is a town of greenery and flowers, of bright, sunny homes which are characterised by modern architecture, comfort and convenience” (tourist information, 1970)

Nowa Huta's difference and novelty was frequently constructed in opposition to its wider Polish others - the bourgeois and the rural. Signifying a break from Poland's historic political economy, Nowa Huta was designed and built as urban, of course, but also as explicitly proletarian and industrial. While the urban, the industrial and the proletarian were promoted in their own right, Nowa Huta's attraction was also established not only through favourable comparison with bourgeois and decaying Kraków, with its counterrevolutionary intelligentsia, but also its surrounding villages, on some of which Nowa Huta was built, and which were characterised by underemployment, the 'idiocy of rural life' which Marx railed against, and a lack of opportunities, both material and social (*ibid.*). The new Poland was to be urban and industrial, following the policies of socialist development, derived from Marxism-Leninism and the experiences of the Soviet Union, which centred the urban industrial worker as the vanguard of the revolution and the raw material of economic growth and catch-up. Nowa Huta, with other new industrial towns within and beyond Poland, epitomised the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation which characterised post-war east central Europe (Domański, 1997). But Nowa Huta was not built just as any old industrial town. It was built as a town of steel, centred around one workplace - the Lenin steelworks or Huta Lenina - which dominated the community through employment (employing at

its height 43,000 workers), housing, social and cultural provision and, simply, presence. The plant clothed you, sent you on holiday and gave you “light, clean sheets, a bathroom” (Duch, 1952, p.45). Nowa Huta was a company town, organised by and for the company - in this context, a ministry - which shared much in practice with the steel and coal towns of the capitalist world (see, for example, Beynon *et al.*, 1989; Robinson and Sadler, 1985).

Box 3

“... with application of the principle socialist law of development, this means industrialisation, and in particular the construction of heavy industry” (urbanist, 1951)

“Nowa Huta, as both a great plant of heavy industry and a town-district of Kraków, is the inheritance and the symbolic expression, plainly, of the new socio-economic order which prevailed in Poland after the second world war” (sociologist, 1997)

“a town which organised the life of society for the needs of a great industrial plant” (historian, 1997)

“Nowa Huta is the deciding episode of the industrialisation of Poland” (election propaganda, 1952)

“Nowa Huta is an authentic workers’ town. The intelligentsia makes up 9% of the residents.” (urbanist, 1960)

“Nowa Huta was intentionally a great workers’ district” (historian, 1997)

“The idea of Nowa Huta was to build ... a true ‘socialist workers’ town’” (international reportage, 1983)

Nowa Huta was not just to be a town of new ideas and new economies but through these a town of new people. The Nowa Huta of the 1950s was not just a new town, a young town, but also a town of youth and children, in every sense. It was Poland’s youth, through the Union of Polish Youth (*ZMP, Związek Młodzieży Polskiej*) and the *Śłużba Polsce* (Service to Poland) brigades, who were building Nowa Huta. By 1954, 27,000 young people had arrived from across Poland, and it was these young builders who, with their new families, a new generation of Poles, were to bring the town to life. By the late 1950s, Nowa Huta was especially well-endowed with nurseries, crèches, pre-schools and playgrounds, and had growth rates of population and marriages amongst the highest in the country (Czubała, 1959). In 1958, 37.5% of all residents were under 15, while just 4.5% were over 60 (Ptasyczki, 1959).

Box 4

“we are building new towns on the fundament of youth” (urbanist, 1959)

“we already then called our Nowa Huta the ‘Town of our children’” (reportage, 1953)

“The youth are building Nowa Huta...” (urbanist, 1952)

“Nowa Huta was above all a town of children and young people.” (guidebook, 1959)

This relationship was moreover reciprocal. The town was to bring life to a new generation of Poles. In Nowa Huta, Poland’s youth was to be offered countless opportunities for personal transformation, for education, betterment, social advance, in short, for a new life. Through work, training, enviable material conditions and the meeting of enthusiastic, committed people from across Poland (and occasionally beyond), Nowa Huta was to be a melting pot, a forge in which ‘new socialist man’ was to be created. This new citizen would not be held back by capitalists extorting their surplus value, by those who insisted that women couldn’t work like men, by those who denied past generations an education and social mobility or by those who insisted on repressive Catholic moralities. In Nowa Huta, workers would be able to learn new trades, speak new languages (mostly Russian!), dance, sing, participate in dozens of different sports, read the international press, watch and act in innovative theatre, go to the cinema and appreciate art.

Nowa Huta was constructed not only as a new town but also a town of hope and of security in which the workers could find personal fulfilment with the help of the state, the Party and their comrades. Though new and full of possibilities, Nowa Huta was also to be controlled, planned. Everything was indeed going to be possible, but it was to be made possible by the planning and direction of the state and the Party which were focused on travelling further down the path to socialism. The workers of Nowa Huta might find personal fulfilment, but they would find it through the collective whilst they built a better Poland for all.

Box 5

“Nowa Huta ... the best example and proof of the changes which have occurred in the life of our region, in the life of thousands of workers and peasants” (election propaganda, 1952)

“the construction of the socialist town socialises its inhabitants, people of a new type and character” (urbanist, 1951)

“it is a town of significant transformations of people and citizens in new conditions of urban planning and architecture, of new economic and social processes” (main designer, NH, 1959)

“The new town was then some melting pot, in which different qualities were melted down: the stubbornness of the peasant, who came from the miserable countryside to work out a new existence, the zeal of the young engineer, the laziness of the Gypsies...” (urbanist, 1959)

“Nowa Huta! - the most convincing symbol of the creative power of transforming people in the name of the happiness of the nation” (election propaganda, 1952)

“Nowa Huta is the guarantee of new happiness for the peasant” (election propaganda, 1952)

Other Nowa Hutas

All of these identities were at least partially true of 1950s Nowa Huta. There are enough different sources - from reportage, to Party documentation, to personal testimony - to confirm that Nowa Huta was experienced as a town of industry, labour, of the Party, of youth and opportunity. Yet, even in its earliest days, it was also experienced as a very different place.

As might be expected, in line with most theorising about transformations, there was no radical break with the past in Nowa Huta. Whilst the town itself - its brick and mortar - was surely new, its land and population weren't. Despite the discourse which suggested that Nowa Huta was built on “on empty terrain outside Krakow” (Wejchert, 1954, p.26), the town and steelworks were in fact built on agricultural land east of Kraków, where around 10,000 peasants lived and farmed in a dozen villages (Matejko, 1956a, p.156). Whilst some of these peasants joined the campaign for new industry, others continued farming on the edges of this great new industrial town. The new town was populated, largely, by young people from other villages near Kraków and beyond, who brought with them their “rural attitudes and mores [which] were incorporated into the newly constructed urban environment” (Fisher, 1962, p.262), raising pigs in bathrooms and other livestock on balconies. They were, moreover, quick to return home for the harvest, rarely losing their links with the rural home (Jarosz, 1997). As late as 1970, 74% of the district's population was defined as ‘of peasant origin’ (Soja, 1990). In the practices of its inhabitants and in its sea of mud, to many Nowa Huta was nothing more than a large village.

Box 6

“Nowa Huta, in the first decade of its existence, was in principle - from the point of view the patterns of life appearing there - a large village” (academic, 1997)

“It was said about Huta that it is an industrial heaven, but there is ‘Meksyk’ and I can't resist the impression that I am simply in the countryside...” (resident, 1956)

Nowa Huta's new residents brought with them not just their rural mores, but also their prejudices and differences. Networks and commonalities from ‘home’ were maintained in Nowa Huta, such that, for the early years at least, despite the common goal, the town appeared to have been divided

along a number of lines. Labour collectives and brigades seemed in practice to be segregated by skill, experience, Party membership, race, gender and region, amongst others, and these divides were reflected in the allocation of housing and other 'privileges'. Nowa Huta was after all a town of migrants and 'assimilation' took longer than many planners had hoped (Matejko, 1956b). In part, these divisions were maintained by the virtual absence of any, let alone superior, cultural and social facilities, despite the hopes and promises of the propagandists (Kapuściński, [1955] 1971; Niward, 1997). The Party-supporting poet Adam Ważyk caused nationwide consternation when he published his 'Poem for Adults' in 1955, lamenting the unfulfilled promises of Nowa Huta and appealing to the Party to meet the workers' needs (Ważyk, 1955), yet the authorities too, in their own communications, acknowledged the town's shortcomings and responded with a new phase of investment in Nowa Huta (Jarosz, 1997). Through these inadequacies and divisions, Nowa Huta emerged in the 1950s not so much as a town of new socialist moralities as a town of immoralities, alcoholism, fear and misery. Living conditions were shocking - workers' hotels were crowded and unhygienic; diets were poor (Jarosz, 1996; 1997) - facilities in fact offered little respite from after-work boredom and statistics for crime, violence and sexually-transmitted diseases stood at some of the highest levels in the country (*ibid.*). That many had come to Nowa Huta to escape past crimes, indiscretions or failures (*ibid.*; Choma *et al.*, 1999) belied the regime's claim to be building a town on heroic youth. These 'immoralities' weren't all bad news though - early residents talk of unsanctioned parties in workers' hotels (*Gazeta Krakowska*, 1996) and the celebration of promiscuity as an escape from the oppressive moralities of their Catholic, conservative homes (Jarosz, 1997).

Box 7

"There are people tired of work
There are people from Nowa Huta
who have never been in a theatre..." (poem, 1955)

"in the shops there was nothing and everywhere mud" (resident reminiscing, reportage, 1996)

"Not one of the residents of Nowa Huta is a legendary hero, everyone is normal, often inconspicuous" (reportage, 1955)

"In Nowa Huta, it always felt like the 'wild west' ..." (resident reminiscing, reportage, 1999)

One of Nowa Huta's priests roots these immoralities indeed in the absence of the guiding hand of the church and the family (Niward, 1997; 2000). As a result, the youth of Nowa Huta lacked, Niward argues, the moral codes on which to base their new lives. The absence of religion is

however overstated. Although Nowa Huta was indeed built without churches, even the earliest residents attended the pre-war churches and monasteries in neighbouring villages and from 1957 actively fought for a church of their own, in the heart of this socialist town. The church became, both metaphorically and physically, the site of Nowa Huta's earliest resistance and protest and the regime's earliest acts of oppression, setting a model for the 1980s. These struggles embodied a combination of labour and religion (symbolised by, for example, the erection of a cross made of steel and the singing of the Internationale together with Catholic hymns in defence of the town's religious sites [Gut, 1991]) which came to be seen as integral to working-class identities much more widely in Poland, identified by, amongst others, Pope John Paul II, former Cardinal of Kraków (Press Office, 1979; 1983).

Box 8

“a community traditionally very attached to religion” (Press Office of the Polish Episcopate, 1983)

“the history of Nowa Huta is also written by means of the cross” (Press Office of the Polish Episcopate, 1979)

“What is Nowa Huta today? It's a normal town, with churches too.” (Solidarity activist, 1997)

Yet, whilst these early protests may have set a pattern for later protest, in their time they were an exception. Whilst dissent was growing in other major working-class cities and neighbourhoods in Poland throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, Nowa Huta was enjoying its heyday. The steelworks recorded the peak of employment and production and Party membership reached its height. Every fourth steelworker was a Party member, or candidate for membership, and the Party exerted a decisive influence over activity throughout the community (Sadecki, 2000), leaving little room, it seems, “to speak or think in another way” (Mieczysław Gil, cited in *ibid.*). In March 1968, Nowa Huta's steelworkers were transported to the centre of Kraków to violently repress student protests there. And Nowa Huta's steelworkers were rewarded for their loyalty, they were the labour aristocracy. After the traumas of the 1950s they now enjoyed good living standards and high wages. Even as the Polish economy began to falter in the late 1970s and shortages and scarcity became a growing problem across the country, Nowa Huta's shops still had more and better products for sale (Sadecki, 1994). For these reasons, Nowa Huta was initially slow to react the strikes on the Baltic ports, causing the workers of Gdańsk to send trains to the city daubed with anti-Kraków slogans in disapproval (Sadecki, 2000).

Box 9

“In 1968 the Party active went to the students with [lengths of] cable ... to go and create order with the students” (Solidarity activist, 2000)

“We were the labour aristocracy. We had high positions and good pay.” (resident reminiscing, reportage, 1994)

“because there they always sold better meat” (resident reminiscing, reportage, 1994)

“Krakowians aren't Poles” “Be with us” “We're waiting for you” (Gdańsk workers slogans, 1981)

Though Nowa Huta's workers and families were slow to join the protests in the first instance, the town soon became known as a site of resistance second only, perhaps, to the Baltic ports. The steelworks were identified as a maverick factory, solid in its protest action, and as the centre of activity in the Kraków and Małopolska region. Within two months of the 1980 strikes and the signing of the Gdańsk Agreement, which legalised Solidarity as an independent trade union, ninety seven percent of Huta Lenina's workers were registered as members. The Solidarity organisation in Nowa Huta became the largest in the country and played a leading role in the nationwide protests. After the declaration of Martial Law in December 1981, the streets of Nowa Huta became the sites of street battles, demonstrations and public mass. The steelworks were formally militarised, with dissident workers subject to army discipline and dozens of Solidarity activists, as elsewhere in Poland, were imprisoned, interned and harassed (Stenning, 2000a;b). Perhaps for the first (and only) time in Nowa Huta's history, these years were characterised by closer relations and greater solidarity between Nowa Huta and old Kraków. Nowa Huta was no longer seen by the people of old Kraków as an unwanted and embarrassing neighbour (Sowa, 1997).

Box 10

“Nowa Huta became the leader of the [Solidarity] movement in the whole of Małopolska, and later the country” (Solidarity activist, 1997)

“Nowa Huta became a symbol of the struggle and resistance against the system of violence and repression” (Solidarity activist, 1997)

“... became a bastion of Solidarity” (reportage, 1994)

“Police break up fresh protest in Nowa Huta” (international reportage, 1982)

Today's Nowa Huta

It is clear then that there is no single Nowa Huta - perhaps more than anything, Nowa Huta can be seen as a town of paradoxes (Sowa, 1997; Gil, 1997) and as a town of transformations (Ptasyczki, 1959). Nowa Huta has not simply taken on or formed a *series* of identities over time. There is no

clear temporality to these identities. Nowa Huta has instead been many things simultaneously. And it is as town of paradoxes, of multiple histories, that Nowa Huta faces, or engages with, the ongoing processes of post-socialist and post-industrial restructuring.

These most recent transformations in turn call into question earlier depictions of the town. Can Nowa Huta still be seen as a town of labour, when employment in the steelworks has fallen to just 8000? Indeed the absence of labour is a clear feature of Nowa Huta's landscape today - the streets are no longer empty, of men particularly, during the working day. Instead the town's benches and street corners are home to both men and women chatting, drinking and watching the world go by. Yet, still life in Nowa Huta is "linked to the rhythm of work at the plant" (Niward, 1997, p.78). On pay day, the shops become busier and there is more socialising amongst workmates and neighbours.

In contrast to fifty years ago, today's Nowa Huta may sit on the margins of the dominant economy - its associations with industrialisation and the construction of socialism may have consigned it to the old economy, a historical distortion to the true path of Poland's and Kraków's economy - yet it too has signs of growth, of the new economy. Today, Nowa Huta's second largest workplace, supporting around 7,000 people, from former steelworkers to doctors of philosophy, is a bazaar, Tomex, selling cheap imports, second hand goods, fruit and vegetable (*Rzeczpospolita*, 11.6.99). Anecdotal evidence tells of dozens of former steelworkers, and their sons and daughters, starting successful new businesses with redundancy payments and creating new employment in Nowa Huta. A range of state, private and partnership organisations have been established to build new workplaces in Nowa Huta, enticing employers with a skilled workforce, serviced land and financial incentives (offered by both the Polish government and the European Commission), in the hope of constructing Nowa Huta's future more securely. Interestingly, many of these initiatives focus attention back on Nowa Huta's rural terrain, dominated and polluted by the steelworks for so many years (Juchnowicz, 2000).

Yet, much attention and effort in Nowa Huta is still placed on dealing with the legacies of the past. In many ways, Nowa Huta seems now to be a town of the past, of the old, rather than the new, the young and the future. Retired steelworkers, over 24,000 of them, outnumber their working colleagues by three to one. In the town's oldest districts (those built with the steelworks), around a third of all inhabitants are single people on old-age or disability pensions. Nowa Huta's youth flee the town for the same reasons their grandparents came - to escape boredom and unemployment, to

seek opportunities and excitement (Niward, 1997). In the networks and structures employed to ease the town's transitions, however, there are echoes of the past. The most important institutions of social assistance and support in the town remain the steelworks, its unions and the church. These are still the glue that holds Nowa Huta together. It is still, of course, a town rooted in its working-class institutions.

It is however, unfortunately, also a town demonised for its working-class history. Like many comparable estates in the UK or projects in the US, the town's remaining youth are depicted in the minds of many Krakowians as a criminalized mass, whose only entertainment is persecuting innocent bus passengers. Advertisements for housing regularly include the phrase "*Nowa Huta wykluczona*" - "Nowa Huta excluded", yet in not one indicator of crime does Nowa Huta top the list of Kraków's neighbourhoods. In Nowa Huta, as elsewhere, perception rules and the town has once again become one of fear and immorality. Such an image is fuelled by Nowa Huta's development as a centre of the Polish skinhead movement. Supporters of the town's Hutnik football club are notorious for their violence; nationalist and Nazi graffiti is widely visible on the town's buildings and, most serious of all, in 1992 seven Nowa Hutans were arrested and later convicted for beating a Turkish German lorry driver to death (see, for example, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6.10.92; 13.1.93).²

title

Ian Roberts has critiqued many accounts of working class people and communities for focusing almost entirely on the public presence of working men (Roberts, 2001). Such a focus, he argues, coincides with discussions of the 'end of work' which "suggest[...] the working class no longer has a function" (ibid., p.8) to debase the very identity of working class communities. Their 'whole significance' disappears as work disappears; the absence of work is translated into absence *per se*. In the context discussed here, promoting an image of Nowa Huta as a town of labour alone, a town of socialist labour indeed, permits a discourse of finality and futility once socialism and labour are dead. Though founded as a town of steelworkers, Nowa Huta was lived by families with lives beyond the workplace. Nowa Huta has been (and remains) a town of leisure, of learning, of

² It is worth noting that the victim came from East Germany's Nowa Huta - Eisenhüttenstadt - which, unlike Nowa Huta itself which is an almost exclusively white town, is home to both large migrant communities and asylum camps. In this light, a study of the comparative fate of these two steel towns built for socialism would be a fascinating exercise. Some mention of Nowa Huta's Romany population, who arrived with others to build the town in the 1950s, is made in contemporary texts, but race is a topic largely absent from discussions of Polish transformation (with the obvious exception of Polish-Jewish relations and the issue of property restitution).

consumption as much as it has been a town of production. Its people have always been much more than the hero workers of official propaganda.

These debates over Nowa Huta's identity and history are made real in the context of debates over the town's future. As elsewhere, place promotion has *** but perhaps more important than the external projection of the town's identities is the perception and experience of such identities internally. The stereotyping and negative representation of Nowa Huta by outsiders undoubtedly has an impact on the construction of identities by those living in the town. Whilst the town's particular histories have undoubtedly engendered a very clear 'local patriotism', the use this could be put to in supporting initiatives for community development is undermined by the defensiveness often invoked by derision from outside. The wider acceptance of Nowa Huta's multiple histories and the validation of stories beyond work and socialism might support the empowerment of the community and provide a resource for its future.

These notions of empowerment and community development are at the centre of debates over plans to create museums in Nowa Huta. The two museums - SocLand and the Museum of Nowa Huta and Huta Sendzimira - have attracted considerable criticism for their partial representation of the town. Whilst the former is accused of satirising communism and presenting a Disney version of the regime that built Nowa Huta, the latter is charged with promoting the official history of the town and steelworks at the expense of showing the domestic lives of the steelworkers and their families.³ Both museums, it is argued, underplay Nowa Huta's history before and after socialism. In fact the Nowa Huta museum will represent life beyond the steelworks and places as much focus on the home lives of workers as on their working day. It also promotes the notion that Nowa Huta, far from being just a new town, is older than Kraków, with a rich prehistoric, medieval and pre-communist history of settlement. SocLand rejects the criticisms. It has no responsibility to fairly represent the history of Nowa Huta - it is not a museum to Nowa Huta but a museum of communism. Though not coincidental, its location in Nowa Huta is all but irrelevant.

This location is not however irrelevant for the promotion of tourism in Nowa Huta. Whilst the local museum struggles for cash and publicity, notwithstanding its comprehensive plans for development in Nowa Huta, SocLand is the brainchild of Poland's cultural elite⁴ and already has

³ Interview with Tomasz Urynowicz, chair of district XVI (Nowa Huta). See also *****.

⁴ The core of the SocLand team is husband and wife Andrzej Wajda and Krystyna Zachwatowicz, a film producer and actress respectively, beloved in Poland. Zachwatowicz and Wajda are working with a group of their friends.

funding for a launch exhibition. In this sense it has overtaken the Nowa Huta museum and attracted considerably more publicity.⁵ The SocLand project acknowledges a perhaps unpleasant truth - tourists, both domestic and overseas, will not visit Nowa Huta to see prehistoric relics and medieval buildings. Poland and Europe are full of these. What Nowa Huta offers is an unrivalled example of socialist urban planning, a unique collection of Stalinist architecture and a colossal steel plant that continues to dominate the physical and social environment. In short, Nowa Huta's attraction for tourism lies in precisely those representations for which it is also derided. The community then faces a difficult task - to balance the representations of Nowa Huta as nothing more than a town of Stalinism, socialism and of hero workers with a richer story of diversity and the complexity of everyday life.

⁵ The two organisations do have good relations and intend to coordinate the functioning of their nascent museums.

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