



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Picturing an industrial city: green and modern? Postcards from Chemnitz and Lodz (1880s–1980s)

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Abstract

A pictorial postcard condenses a cityscape into one iconic image, which claims to summarize the place, usually in a highly aestheticized version. If that is the case, how does one present an industrial city: with factories and worker housing or rather with churches and the palaces of industrial tycoons? Using four digitalized collections (over 700 postcards) this article analyses images of industrialized cities from the late nineteenth century until the end of the Cold War. The main argument is that this idealized depiction does not focus on industry, but rather taps into the imagination of the European city.

Introduction

We all know what to expect when looking for a postcard from Paris: a view of the Eiffel Tower, of the Sacré-Cœur Basilica or of the Arc de Triomphe. Similarly, one generally knows what to expect when looking for a card from a mountain resort or a seaside town. But how does one capture in one picture an industrial city, a ‘European Manchester’? Is it the old medieval core of the city that captures the *genius loci* or rather the imposing public buildings erected at the height of industrialization? Can one disregard factories and worker housing, which may not be the most aesthetically pleasing sites, but which show the ‘essence’ of an industrial city?

Because postcards present a standardized view of a given place, by comparing and contrasting images across a long period of time and from different locations,

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we can deduce how an ideal industrial (textile-centre) city was imagined.¹ Understanding this will contribute to ongoing debates on the meaning of the industrial past in Europe and the transformation of former industrial cities.

The scope of the article

This article examines postcards from two 'European Manchesters': Chemnitz (Karl-Marx-Stadt) in Germany and Łódź in Poland, in order to understand how these cities were presented from the late nineteenth century until the end of the Cold War. In particular, I am interested in understanding what elements of the cityscapes were highlighted and how important the industrial elements on those cards was.

The timeframe used in this article was dictated by the source material; postcards on which this article is based come from the 1880s–1980s. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War also meant very significant transformation of both cities, in the process of which they lost much of their industrial base.² The period covered by the postcards reflected the changing history of the two cities, with different political and economic regimes (i.e. monarchy, parliamentary democracy, right- and left-wing dictatorships), allowing us to focus on urban history throughout the period, not privileging national periodizations. This is important, as this article aims not only to understand how industrial cities were presented, but also to what extent this imagination changed over the course of a century.

Due to format constraints, this article only deals with the analysis of postcard images of Chemnitz and Łódź. Unfortunately, I am unable to deal with the important question of the public reception of the postcards here. I have previously published articles on the use of postcards from industrial cities³ and on current perceptions of such postcards today.⁴ The constraints mentioned above make it impossible to give enough attention to the 'visual entrepreneurs' in the words of Jeffrey Cohen, that is the companies that ordered and produced those postcards, and to the process of selecting those particular images for publication.

Literature

Postcards have been a subject of numerous publications, of both an academic and a popular nature. The non-academic works tend to focus on a specific city and

¹K. DeBres and J. Sowers, 'The emergence of standardized, idealized, and placeless landscapes in mid-western main street postcards', *The Professional Geographer*, 61 (2009), 218–19.

²R. Riley, J. Burdack and A.M. Niżnik, 'Łódź: Transformation einer Altindustriellen Stadt in der Postsozialistischen Periode', *Europa Regional*, 7 (1999), 25; G. Viertel and S. Weingart, *Geschichte der Stadt Chemnitz: Vom 'locus Kameniz' zur Industriestadt* (Gudensberg-Gleichen, 2002), 98–100; A. Erdmann, *Städtische Transformationsprozesse in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Stadtentwicklung Zwischen Wachstum und Schrumpfung Am Beispiel von Łódź Und Gdańsk* (Wiesbaden, 2014), 165.

³P. Kisiel, 'Invisible cities: postcard writing in industrial cities (1956–1988)', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2020.1849245>.

⁴P. Kisiel, 'Likeable pasts: historical urban views on Facebook', *EuropeNow*, 29 (2019), www.europenow-journal.org/2019/09/09/likeable-pasts-historical-urban-views-on-facebook/.

compare the old views with the contemporary ones; these are notably often underpinned by a sense of nostalgia for bygone times.⁵

When it comes to academic works, there are especially a large number of works in the field of tourism studies, which therefore necessarily centre on tourist hotspots. Their focus varies; whereas some of them explore the use of image to promote a certain vision of a tourist destination,⁶ others look at the interplay between the tourist industry and nationalism.⁷ For instance, Wayne Martin Mellinger showed in the example of the US South how postcards can feed nostalgia for the past, rather than depict actual locations. And in doing so, postcards may play a political role, even if they are apparently politically neutral. Geographers used the old postcards to examine the changes in the landscape.⁸ Karen DeBres and Jacob Sowers traced the standardization of images of places in the USA and showed how visual cues were used to create a universal image of the American town, regardless of its location and individual characteristics.⁹ For other scholars, postcards were useful in exploring how marginalized groups asserted their subjectivity¹⁰ or in examining how they were used to propagate an orientalist imagination of the Middle East.¹¹

These works have been crucial for the development of this article as they informed my understanding of the construction of the place's image (its 'brand'), as well as my reading of the visual language of a postcard's image. As this article argues, postcards from industrial cities employed the existing visual language common in Europe to present an urban landscape. The individual characteristics of Chemnitz and Łódź were presented in a very similar way to the framing of other, 'non-industrial' places. This confirms the thesis of such scholars as Paweł Banaś who argued that the idealization of postcard images is meant to confirm belonging to a civilization and cultural community, and thus allow everyone to recognize themselves in this standardized image.¹²

As far as I am aware, there have been no studies of postcards from industrial cities, analysing them with a particular focus on the cityscape. Works dealing with postcards rarely if ever focus specifically on the industrial topic. For instance, this issue does not come up at the introduction to the album of postcards published

⁵B. Weidlich, *Chemnitz in alten Ansichtskarten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1976); R. Bonisławski, *Łódź na starych pocztówkach = The Łódź of Old Postcards = Łódź auf den alten Ansichtskarten* (Łódź, 2013).

⁶W.M. Mellinger, 'Toward a critical analysis of tourism representations', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21 (1994), 756–79; M. Markwick, 'Postcards from Malta – image, consumption, context', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28 (2001), 417; A. Milman, 'The symbolic role of postcards in representing a destination image: the case of Alanya, Turkey', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 12 (2011), 144–73.

⁷S. Francesconi, 'Multimodally expressed humour shaping Scottishness in tourist postcards', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 9 (2011), 1–17.

⁸D.D. Arreola and N. Burkhart, 'Photographic postcards and visual urban landscape', *Urban Geography*, 31 (2010), 885–904; T. Kowal, 'Changes in a landscape: a case study of three postcards from Risan', *Novensia*, 24 (2013), 41–60.

⁹DeBres and Sowers, 'The emergence of standardized, idealized, and placeless landscapes in midwestern main street postcards'.

¹⁰L.Z. Sigel, 'Filth in the wrong people's hands: postcards and the expansion of pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880–1914', *Journal of Social History*, 33 (2000), 859–85.

¹¹A. Moors and S. Machlin, 'Postcards of Palestine: interpreting images', *Critique of Anthropology*, 7 (1987), 61–77.

¹²P. Banaś, *Orbis pictus: świat dawnej karty pocztowej* (Wrocław, 2005), 55.

by the Silesian Library in Katowice and only a few pages are devoted to industrial sites in the city (32 out of 376).¹³ To what extent this is merely an editor's selection, or rather a reflection of the collection, is impossible to say. Similarly, an album of Budweis' views on postcards does include views of the city's brewery among others, but they seem to be few and far between.¹⁴ The edition of postcards from Silesia also focuses on nature, castles and peaceful town centres.¹⁵

The category of an industrial city is by no means universally accepted.¹⁶ Many authors tend to use this label without specifying whether they mean it in terms of urban economy, social composition, architecture or urban planning. It is highly symptomatic that the concept has been used by Sonia Hirt to attack the notion of the 'post-socialist' city.¹⁷

The problem with the idea of an 'industrial city' is that is not merely a description of a reality, but a qualitative (and ideological) description. As noted by Alice Mah, '[w]hile London, New York, and Paris are post-industrial, having shed much of their manufacturing industry, they are rarely described as such because they are also global cities with diverse economies'.¹⁸ H.V. Savitch chose London, New York and Paris as case-studies of the transformation of industrial cities, highlighting that this category is much wider than often assumed.¹⁹ For this reason, some have doubted if it is justified to use 'post-industrial' to describe those former industrial cities.²⁰

This article contributes to the debate by showing that the cities described as being industrial did not always embrace this label, but in some situations, such as postcard images, highlighted other qualities, especially the notion of the city of modernity. Because of this, I argue that there is a need for more precision when employing such notions as the industrial city.

Methodology

This article is based on the digitalized postcards found in six internet collections: 'Federacja Bibliotek Cyfrowych' (Digital Libraries Federation), the 'Deutsche Fotothek', the 'DDR Postkarten-Museum' (GDR Postcard Museum), 'Łódź w czasach PRL – na kartach pocztówek' (Łódź in the time of the Polish People's Republic

¹³T. Roszkowska (ed.), *Miasto zachwycającego szczegółu: Katowice na dawnej pocztówce z kolekcji Biblioteki Śląskiej* (Katowice, 2007).

¹⁴K. Pletzer, *Album starých pohlednic Československa = Album alter Ansichtskarten von Böhmisches Budweis und Umgebung* (Liberec, 2001).

¹⁵H. Knebel, *Schlesien in alten Ansichtskarten* (Würzburg, 1992).

¹⁶A. Kossert, "'Promised land'? Urban myth and the shaping of modernity in industrial cities: Manchester and Lodz', in C. Emden, C. Keen and D.R. Midgley (eds.), *Imagining the City: The Politics of Urban Space*, vol. II (Oxford, 2006), 169–92.

¹⁷S. Hirt, S. Ferenčuhová and T. Tuvikene, 'Conceptual forum: the "post-socialist" city', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 57 (2016), 499.

¹⁸A. Mah, 'Ruination and post-industrial urban decline', in S. Hall and R. Burdett (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of the 21st Century City* (London, 2018), 207.

¹⁹H.V. Savitch, *Post-Industrial Cities: Politics and Planning in New York, Paris, and London* (Princeton, 1988).

²⁰D.V. Shaw, 'The post-industrial city', in R. Paddison (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies* (London, 2001), 284.

– on postcards), Wikimedia Commons and Zeno.org. The first two are run by public institutions; the ‘DDR Postkarten-Museum’ is a website devoted to postcards from East Germany run by Jürgen Hartwig, an amateur historian;²¹ the ‘Łódź w czasach PRL’ is a Facebook webpage, operated by Marcin Fastyn, a specialist in the field of scientific information who presents his private collection.²² Wikimedia Commons, according to the information it provides, is a repository of public domain and freely licensed media content and is managed by the Wikimedia Foundation.²³ The Zeno is a digital library which in addition to offering pictures also gives access to texts or facsimilia.²⁴

The query with the Federation search engine gave over 600 results, whereas the FB group offers over 1,000 postcards, divided in several albums. The query on the Deutsche Fotothek gave almost 500 results and the GDR Postcard Museum 150 postcards. I examined all the postcards showing Chemnitz, and all the postcards that could be found in the Polish digital libraries. From the FB site, I examined over 300 postcards from 15 albums. From Zeno, 32 postcards were examined and 26 from the Wikimedia Commons depicting Chemnitz. All in all, 713 postcards formed the corpus used for this article, 217 showing Chemnitz and 496 showing Łódź.

Not all cards displayed within each collection were considered. Some of the cards were available in two versions, for instance in colour or in black and white. This is especially true for the cards available at the Deutsche Fotothek. In such cases, I have used the colour version for convenience. This of course influenced my conclusions, as the presence of colours and their saturation significantly influenced the tone of postcards, for instance by making a city look greener than it would otherwise have looked. It is worth stressing that image manipulation was widespread, especially before World War I, and was done, for instance, by adding people or clouds perfectly fitting the view.²⁵

Compared to other studies based on postcards, my sample is relatively large. There is no standard used in similar research as for obvious reasons projects analysing textual messages are based on smaller samples. Some authors have used just a few,²⁶ others over a dozen,²⁷ or a hundred,²⁸ whereas some authors have taken even bigger samples of a few hundred cards into account.²⁹ A meta-analysis of the

²¹www.ddr-postkarten-museum.de/impressum.php, accessed 17 Dec. 2019.

²²Marcin Fastyn, email 11 Oct. 2019.

²³<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Welcome>, accessed 1 Sep. 2020.

²⁴J. Rink, ‘Volltextbibliothek Zeno.org startet mit kostenlosem Lesematerial’, Heise Online, www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/Volltextbibliothek-Zeno-org-startet-mit-kostenlosem-Lesematerial-180521.html, accessed 3 Sep. 2020.

²⁵K. Walter, ‘Widokówka i fotografia’, in R. Jaworski and W. Molik (eds.), *Miasto na pocztówce: Poznań na tle porównawczym* (Poznań, 1999), 27.

²⁶Kowal, ‘Changes in a landscape’.

²⁷G. Hasan-Rokem, ‘Jews as postcards, or postcards as Jews: mobility in a modern genre’, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 99 (2009), 505–46; Moors and Machlin, ‘Postcards of Palestine’.

²⁸Milman, ‘The symbolic role of postcards in representing a destination image’; A. Milman, ‘Postcards as representation of a destination image: the case of Berlin’, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 18 (2012), 157–70.

²⁹Markwick, ‘Postcards from Malta – image, consumption, context’; L. Larsen and L. Swanbrow, ‘Postcards of Phoenix: images of desert ambivalence and homogeneity’, *Landscape Journal*, 25 (2006), 205–17.

research in advertisement showed that 250 images is a median sample for a content analysis.³⁰

This article is based on convenience sampling, which has many benefits, but also weaknesses.³¹ The digital archives allowed me to examine a massive number of postcards and return to each one to look again at details, as the project was developing. However, there is a danger of selection bias, since I have not only relied on what is gathered in online repositories, but also on correct tagging, which allows searching the databases. Furthermore, the two collections used for this article are run by public institutions, which potentially amplifies the selection issue. For example, the GDR Postcard Museum shows not only cards produced by the main publishing house Bild und Heimat (43 images), but also from other smaller companies (74 images). This diversity contrasts strongly with the collection of the Deutsche Fotothek, which has cards from Chemnitz produced by only one firm, namely Brück&Sohn. The latter was based in Meissen (approximately 70 kilometres north-east of Chemnitz) and produced postcards showing a wide range of themes from central streets and squares, through churches and monuments to factory buildings or buildings in different places in Germany, but also other European countries and beyond.³² Even if not all cards by Brück&Sohn are the same, for instance one from 1913 shows railway tracks leading to the station in Chemnitz in a highly realistic fashion, most tended towards picturesque aesthetics.³³ Almost all night scenes from Łódź analysed for this article were produced by Biuro Wydawnicze ‘Ruch’ rather than Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza. The vast majority of the postcards from Łódź from the communist period analysed for this project came from those two publishing houses, and therefore it is their vision of the city that I considered for the period after 1945. This caveat should not be overlooked; the images used on postcards are reflections of the publishing strategies used by publishing houses interested in financial gain and/or with ideological aims, not ‘neutral’ depictions of the urban landscapes.

Although one cannot guarantee the representative character of the images used for this article, nonetheless, the large number of cards used, as well as the comparative character of the study, contribute to a better understanding of the urban imaginary of industrial cities, even if the conclusions do not exhaust the topic. Since scholars tend to use official archives more often, the use of private collections for this article might add less-known photographic depictions of the two industrial cities.

Last but not least, there is asymmetry in the number of postcards that could be found from each city, and more were found showing Łódź. I consulted other digital collections such as heimatland-sachsen.de or FB group Unser Chemnitz und Karl-Marx-Stadt, but did not include their resources as they did not provide any

³⁰A.M. Abernethy and G.R. Franke, ‘The information content of advertising: a meta-analysis’, *Journal of Advertising*, 25 (1996), 7.

³¹M.N. Marshall, ‘Sampling for qualitative research’, *Family Practice*, 13 (1996), 523.

³²J. Ludwig, “Gruß aus Meißen” – Das Ansichtskartenarchiv der Firma Brück & Sohn’, *Sächsisches Archivblatt*, 2 (2009), 20–1.

³³Brück&Sohn, *Blick über die Bahnhofsanlagen*, 1913, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:16966-Chemnitz-1913-Blick_über_die_Bahnhofsanlagen-Brück_%26_Sohn_Kunstverlag.jpg#metadata.

information regarding the postcards, and because to a large degree they were either the same or very similar to the ones that I had already examined.

Seven cards from Chemnitz and six from Łódź could not be precisely dated, only estimated to be printed sometime during the first half of the last century. Of the cards showing Chemnitz, 84 date to before to the end of World War I; the same period is represented by 46 cards from Łódź. The inter-war period is hardly present in the corpus used: only 8 cards from Chemnitz and 39 from Łódź; additionally 73 cards show Łódź (Litzmannstadt) during the Nazi period. The communist period is shown on 116 cards from the German city and 312 from the Polish one. This means that the article is heavily influenced by pictorial representations made before and after the two world wars, with only marginal consideration for the inter-war period. Nonetheless, I am convinced that the subject of this article (i.e. images of an industrial city) can be successfully studied, even with these limitations in mind.

European Manchesters

Łódź is a relatively young city. Although it gained the status of municipality at the turn of the fifteenth century, it remained a sleepy agricultural settlement until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The creation of industry in Łódź in the nineteenth century changed the course of its history. Between 1820 and 1913, the city's population grew by 63,000 per cent, from 800 people to over 500,000.³⁴ This population explosion was driven mainly by the rapid expansion of the textile industry and to a lesser degree by machine building. It remained an important industrial city throughout the twentieth century, but the introduction of the capitalist economy in the 1990s ended this period in the city's history.³⁵

After 1815, the government of the Kingdom of Poland not only decided to locate the textile industry in Łódź, but also invited entrepreneurs from German countries to move their production there (especially Saxony).³⁶ Until World War II, it was a city inhabited by German and Polish speakers, with sizable Jewish and small Russian minorities.³⁷ Today's Łódź has an almost exclusively Polish population.³⁸

³⁴I. Popławska and S. Muthesius, 'Poland's Manchester: 19th-century industrial and domestic architecture in Łódź', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 45 (1986), 151; S. Liszewski, 'The origins and stages of development of industrial Łódź and the Łódź urban region', in S. Liszewski and C. Young (eds.), *A Comparative Study of Łódź and Manchester: Geographies of European Cities in Transition* (Łódź, 1997), 11.

³⁵Riley, Burdack and Niżnik, 'Łódź', 25; Erdmann, *Städtische Transformationsprozesse in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, 165.

³⁶A. Grzegorzczak, 'Pierwsza połowa XIX wieku: narodziny przemysłu', *Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Historii Łodzi*, 5 (n.d.), 96–101.

³⁷E. Rosset, *Mały rocznik statystyczny miasta Łodzi 1936* (Łódź, 1938), 14–15; B. Ratecka, 'Zur Lage der deutschen Minderheit in Łódź vor dem ersten Weltkrieg unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Situation der Frauen', *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Germanica*, 3 (2002), 179; J. Dzieciuchowicz et al., 'Religion at the times of changes in Łódź organizational, spatial and social structures', *Space – Society – Economy*, 28 (2005), 4–5; G. Lagzi, 'Łódź – négy nemzet városa (Łódź – city of four nations)', *Comitatus Önkormányzati Szemle*, 2–3 (2014), 44.

³⁸Erdmann, *Städtische Transformationsprozesse in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, 163; J. Gałuszka, 'Multikulturowa przeszłość – nadzieja na przyszłość? Przestrzenne reprezentacje historii Łodzi jako

The origins of Chemnitz are linked to a monastery founded by the Holy Roman Emperor Lothar III in the twelfth century, but the fully fledged city was established a century later.³⁹ The weaving tradition dates back to the late Middle Ages, but it was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that modern industry started to develop. The population growth followed. Between 1800 and 1900, the number of inhabitants increased from 10,000 to 200,000 people.⁴⁰ As in Łódź, the end of the communist regime meant not only democratic freedom for the city, but also the demise of its industrial base.

Similarly to Łódź, a significant proportion of the Chemnitz workforce was formed by women.⁴¹ In contrast to the 'Polish Manchester', the growth of its Saxon cousin was not driven by immigration from afar, but rather from the city's surrounding areas, mainly from the Ore Mountains.⁴² Among the industrialists, there were some migrants, for instance the Alsace-born Richard Hartmann (1809–78). The city was also home to a small Jewish community.⁴³

The city landscape of both cities was marked by industrial architecture, which could be found both in the centre (e.g. Theodor Haase's works in Chemnitz and the Pozański factory in Łódź) and in the peripheries (Wanderer's and Scheibler's factories respectively). Arguably, urban development resulted in a more pronounced presence of industrial sites in the centre of Łódź than in the centre of Chemnitz. This does not apply to the entire cityscape. On the contrary, Theaterplatz in Chemnitz and Plac Wolności in Łódź are prominent examples of civic urban spaces, similar to those which could be found in other non-industrial cities in this part of Europe.

To sum up, the two cities flourished during the nineteenth century as centres of textile and machine-building industries, which led to both being called Manchesters. Łódź developed practically from scratch, whereas the urban traditions in Chemnitz dated back to the Middle Ages. The Polish Manchester was created by migrants from Saxony, the Rhineland and Moravia, whereas the Saxon city drew migrants primarily from its own hinterland. The development of both cities was based on the import of technology from England. The end of the communist regimes marked the end of the industrial era.

Cityscapes of the two Manchesters

Paweł Banaś argued that the choice of a postcard image was a balancing act between reverence for history and admiration for modernity: while historic buildings of

próba przeobrażenia wizerunku i tożsamości miasta', *Seria Publikacji Elektronicznych Centrum Historii Miejskiej Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 11 (2013), 10–11.

³⁹H. Bräuer, *Karl-Marx-Stadt: Geschichte d. Stadt in Wort u. Bild* (Berlin, 1988), 8–16; Viertel and Weingart, *Geschichte der Stadt Chemnitz*, 8–11.

⁴⁰Bräuer, *Karl-Marx-Stadt*, 114; J. Eichhorn (ed.), *Leben auf dem Sonnenberg. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Chemnitzer Stadtteiles* (Chemnitz, 1997), 52; Viertel and Weingart, *Geschichte der Stadt Chemnitz*, 64; J. Kassner, *Chemnitz-Architektur: Stadt der Moderne* (Leipzig, 2009), 17.

⁴¹Bräuer, *Karl-Marx-Stadt*, 110.

⁴²Kassner, *Chemnitz-Architektur*, 17.

⁴³A. Diamant, *Chronik der Juden in Chemnitz: Heute Karl-Marx-Stadt. Aufstieg und Untergang einer jüdischen Gemeinde in Sachsen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 20.

town halls, churches and palaces were beloved motifs so were (contemporary) theatres, court buildings, banks and railway stations.⁴⁴ The postcards from Chemnitz and Łódź confirm this observation.

Numerous depictions of the main square with the city hall in Chemnitz were made throughout the analysed period. The same is true for Łódź, although even more popular was the main street (Piotrkowska Street), which is the true heart of the city. There are also many postcards showing theatres as well as other significant buildings (public as well as private) in both cities. From the communist period, one finds many depicting housing estates with their typical blocks of flats. I would argue, however, that there is nothing fundamentally new about those pictures, as they simply show the contemporary urban landscape and therefore are a direct equivalent of the tenements seen on the nineteenth-century postcards.

This does not mean that there are no changes at all when it comes to the depiction of cityscapes. One of the noticeable changes is the decreasing popularity of the depiction of the 'corridor street'. This type of photography made from a vantage point depicts the street below in long perspective. A good example of this genre is a 1913 postcard depicting the Königstraße in Chemnitz (Figure 1). Façades on both sides of the street limit our view and there is only a small patch of sky remaining visible above the roofs and turrets. Our eyes are drawn towards the street below, with yellow trams in the middle as well as shops' signs and awnings. Such urban scenes became much less common after World War II, not least because the new districts designed according to modernist principles did not have corridor streets in the first place.

The second noticeable trend is the demise of genre scenes, in which the real subject is the people, and the urban environment merely forms their background. For instance, in the 1913 postcard of the Königsplatz in Chemnitz, one sees very little of the said square, while the focus is clearly on the people ice skating in the foreground (Figure 2). In some cases, people clearly pose in front of the buildings,⁴⁵ or look straight into the camera.⁴⁶ The opposite trend of showing either a single building or a whole street without a single person was as common from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Cold War. In some cases, the result was an eerie image of an empty city.

The development of technology allowed the making of night photography, which found its way to the postcards, starting from the early 1960s in both cities. Such images remained, however, rare and constitute only around 4 per cent of the images of Chemnitz and of Łódź from the period after 1945. Almost always, such a postcard showed a car and/or neon lights, which arguably is aimed at capturing the urban, metropolitan atmosphere.

In general, postcards from Chemnitz and Łódź follow a typical pattern of depicting urban landscapes by showing the iconic sites of each city as well as contemporary architecture, be it in form of tenements or blocks of flats. This is constant

⁴⁴Banaś, *Orbis pictus: świat dawnej karty pocztowej*, 54.

⁴⁵Brück&Sohn, *Chemnitz: Garnisonslazarett – Krankenblock I*, 1909, DF, Aufn.-Nr.: df_bs_0010949, www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/71832710.

⁴⁶Polskie Tow. Księgarni Kolejowych 'Ruch' Sp. akc., Łódź: Plac Wolności, 1918–39, Biblioteka Narodowa (BN), syg. DZS XII 8b/p.10/14, polona.pl/item/70891394.



Figure 1. M. Lindner, *Chemnitz: Königsstraße*, 1913, www.zeno.org/nid/20000587656



Figure 2. Brück&Sohn, *Chemnitz: Neustädter Markt und Bahnhofstraße*, 1910, Deutsche Fotothek, Aufn.-Nr.: df_bs_0012146_postkarte, www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/71833904

throughout the period and no noticeable differences were observed regardless of the political regime. The picturesque aesthetics common in the years preceding World War I disappeared completely after 1945, replaced by the highly realistic style.

Equally, postcards of corridor streets made from a vantage point and genre scenes became increasingly rare. Last but not least, night scenes appeared on the postcards starting in the 1960s but never became a major trend. The fact that these postcards are so typical is what is so interesting in the case of the 'European Manchesters'.

Industrial cities without industry

The most striking finding about the postcards that I have analysed is the fact that industry is rarely portrayed on them. The postcards of this kind represented only 12 per cent out of the total 712 postcards in my pool, i.e. 67 from Łódź, and 15 from Chemnitz. This is astonishing, if one considers how fundamental industry was to the development of these cities.

Of course, one could ask why postcards from either city should show industry rather than a church or a theatre. Grażyna Machel argued that a postcard's image assumes that since it is impossible to show the city in all its diversity, a fragment represents the whole.⁴⁷ It means that there is an unspoken claim to present the 'essence' of a given place. Karen DeBres and Jacob Sowers proposed that a postcard claims to show what is special and unique about a place, while using standardized depictions.⁴⁸ However, it has to be remembered that a postcard not only represents the city's image, but it also creates it, by selecting elements of the cityscape that are meaningful.⁴⁹ Taking that into account, one could expect to see quite a bit of industrial landscape, as this was precisely what put both Chemnitz and Łódź on the European map. But that is not the case. From this fact alone, we can see that the image that was projected was not of actually existing industrial cities, but an alternative one. Before I examine what was emphasized in the postcards I will look at the context of industrial representation.

Generally speaking, there are four ways in which industry appears on the postcards. The most common one is the presence of factory chimneys in the background; secondly, there are panorama shots of the city; the third mode was to show a factory itself and such presentations were very often simply a business's promotion materials; and finally, there were pictograms accompanied by a text on the reverse side which explained the role of industry.

On the postcards which push industrial buildings into the background, these elements do not necessary contribute to the industrial feeling, so to speak. A postcard printed in the years preceding World War I shows a quiet street lined with trees, flanked by handsome apartment buildings built in an eclectic style (Figure 3). In the background, one can see the dome of a synagogue and a tall chimney, in a corner there is a telephone pole. One could say: here is a typical European city in the period of the Belle Époque, and yet it shows Lodz in the Russian empire, a centre of textile and machine industry. On this postcard, one could argue that, rather than

⁴⁷G. Machel, 'Idealny obraz miasta na karcie pocztowej', in P. Banaś (ed.), *Aksjosemiotyka karty pocztowej* (Wrocław, 1992), 200.

⁴⁸DeBres and Sowers, 'The emergence of standardized, idealized, and placeless landscapes in midwestern main street postcards', 218.

⁴⁹W. Molik, 'Poznańskie pocztówki z końca XIX i początku XX wieku na tle porównawczym', in Jaworski and Molik (eds.), *Miasto na pocztówce*, 126.



Figure 3. Bronisław Wilkoszewski, *Łódź: Ulica Spacerowa* [post-1905], WBP im. Marszałka J. Piłsudskiego w Łodzi, sygn. oryg.: TK 9-3949 ZS, <https://bc.wbp.lodz.pl/publication/19316>

making it look like an industrial city *per se*, the tall chimney contributes to the feeling of a modern city.

In a way, a similar image is created on a very different postcard, one from 1957 from Chemnitz.⁵⁰ The empty stadium takes up to a third of the space, and it is clearly the sole focus point of the photography. The chimneys on the horizon seem to be of little importance, one cannot be even quite sure if they are actually located in Chemnitz at all.

This does not mean that industrial elements never had any significance. The 1930s postcard from Łódź is a good example of that alternative (Figure 4). Also, in this case, only two chimneys are present, yet they are placed almost in the middle of the picture and one of them has a stark red colour, so they stand out and impose themselves on the surrounding space. Furthermore, together with the electricity pole to the right, they form strong vertical lines dividing the image, and in this way they strengthen their presence in the urban space. Elegant houses with the well-kept greenery surround the square. There cannot be any doubt, therefore, that such an image stressed the urban character of Łódź but also acknowledged its industrial character.

An example from Chemnitz of this genre is a 1910 postcard by Brück&Sohn depicting Hartmannstraße.⁵¹ Half of the image is taken up by a typical nineteenth-century house, with a visible advertisement of a restaurant on its façade. On the

⁵⁰Lindner, *Ernst-Thälmann-Stadion*, 1957, DDR Postkarten Museum (DDR PM), www.ddr-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/780/category/574.

⁵¹Brück&Sohn, *Chemnitz: Hartmannstraße mit Straßenbahn* (1910), DF, Aufn.-Nr.: df_bs_0012143_postkarte, www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/71833901.



Figure 4. Anon., *Łódź: Sąd Okręgowy i Plac Dąbrowskiego* [post-1930], WBP im. Marszałka J. Piłsudskiego w Łodzi, No. 316, <http://bc.wbp.lodz.pl/publication/19312>

right, there is a tram, whose yellow colour stands out; the two children standing at the tram stop are looking directly towards the camera. In the very centre of the photograph, flanked on the left by the wall of the building with the restaurant stands a chimney, and to its right another one is visible, a long roof between them indicated an industrial site. The overall impression is quite similar to the 1930s image of Łódź described above.

The 1917 postcard showing the Reinecker factory in Chemnitz is an excellent example of a postcard which focuses solely on an industrial building (Figure 5). The whole length of the photo is taken up by the side of the works, the three tall chimneys piercing the sky. There is nothing that would distract the viewer's attention from the industrial site and notably there is not a single person to be seen in the picture. It seems that the creator wanted to impress the viewer with the plant's size and its sturdiness as demonstrated by the solid, brick buildings.

A variation of this theme is a postcard showing the gas works in Łódź.⁵² The industrial plant takes up all of the space on the postcard, with the city only being visible in the background. A grey and blue colour scheme add to this industrial feeling. The vertical lines of the chimneys mark the whole length of the postcard and this arrangement emphasizes the character of the urban space presented.

The factories depicted on the post-war cards are often not easy to recognize, at least at first glance. Sometimes they seem to be simply office buildings. One can draw such an impression from a 1978 postcard from Łódź: in the top left corner

⁵²G.A. Restel, *Łódź: Gazowe Zakłady = Łódź: Gazownia = Lodz: Gas - Anstalten.*, 1912–16, BN, syg. DŻS XII 8b/p.10/14, <http://polona.pl/item/70467088>.

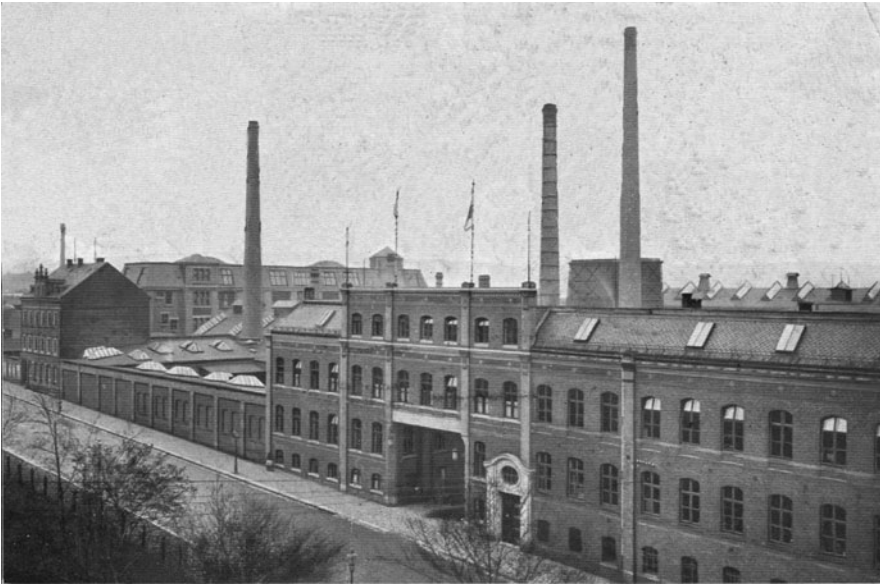


Figure 5. Verlag J.C.F. Pickenhahn & Sohn, Chemnitz: *Die Reinecker Werke* (c. 1917), <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reinecker-Werke.jpg>

there is a rubber boot factory but it is not obvious at first glance.⁵³ Furthermore, placing it beside images of historical monuments and greenery softens the industrial image even further. I will come back to this card later on, but at this point I want to stress that highlighting both historical and modern architecture is a very typical feature of the postcards from both cities, and greenery is also an extremely common theme. Another postcard from 1975 Łódź is in many respects a very similar one, even if the background highlights the textile traditions of the place.⁵⁴ This postcard is the only one I have come across that shows actual industrial workers. Other images of course show people, sometimes *en masse*, but they are not obviously factory workers, rather simply urban inhabitants.

Among the post-war postcards from Chemnitz, no similar cases were found. It is impossible to give a precise explanation for this. One possible reason is the relatively low number of cards from *Bild und Heimat*, and the interests of the smaller publisher in other themes. Another possible reason was the location of the factories further away from the city centre, which meant that they were less likely to be

⁵³J. Mucha et al., *Łódzkie Zakłady Obuwia Gumowego 'Stomil'; Kąpielisko 'Fala'; Klasycystyczny Ratusz z 1827 r. – Obecnie Siedziba Wojewódzkiego Archiwum Państwowego; Fragment Starego Rynku; Plac Wolności z Pomnikiem Tadeusza Kościuszki*, 1978, Łódź w czasach PRL – na kartach pocztówek (ŁWCPRL), www.facebook.com/LodzkiePocztowkiPRL/photos/a.1769406590004520/2059156524362857.

⁵⁴J. Mucha, A. Stelmach, and H. Grzęda, *Zakłady Konfekcyjno-Tekstylne 'Teofilów'; Zabytkowa Brama Fabryczna /Obecnie ZFB Im. 1 Maja/; Muzeum Historii Włókiennictwa /Klasycystyczny Budynek z 1. Poł. XIX w. – Dawne 'Biała Fabryka' Geyera/; Basen Kąpielowy Przy Zakładach Przemysłu Dziewiarskiego 'Olimpia'; Technikum Włókiennicze Im. W. Tierieszkowej*, 1975, ŁWCPRL, www.facebook.com/LodzkiePocztowkiPRL/photos/a.1769406590004520/1854224078189437.



Figure 6. Anon., *Łódź: Widok na południową stronę miasta* [1935–44], Biblioteka Narodowa, sygn.: DŹS XII 8b/p.10/14, <https://polona.pl/item/70467131>

photographed. Having said that there are depictions of housing estates on the outskirts of Chemnitz, thus the location itself could not have been the decisive factor.

The panoramic shots of Łódź leave no doubt that it was an industrial centre: chimneys are seen everywhere; smoke comes out of them in dark clouds (Figure 6). Two chimneys on the right and left frame the picture, visually strengthening the overall impression. A street that diagonally cuts the picture leads from the factory site on the right to the background, where a group of chimneys can be seen. Such a composition is by no means a neutral shot of the city, but rather intentionally highlights the highly industrial character of the city. There is no church tower to be seen, only apartment buildings, factories and a few trees on the left in the foreground. A true poem to industrialization. It is not, however, a real socialist heroization of the Polish Manchester, as the postcards date back to the period of pro-fascist military dictatorship in the 1930s (or period of Nazi occupation). Another example of such a presentation can be found on the postcard dated between 1900 and 1945, which placed more emphasis on the contrast between small houses and the tall factory chimneys in the background.⁵⁵

There are some indications to suggest that such an overly industrial depiction of the city was not entirely welcomed in Łódź. I came across a few postcards with maps of the city or the region, with the icons marking important places in the area, such as the one from 1976.⁵⁶ What makes these postcards very interesting

⁵⁵Anon., *Łódź: Ogólny Widok = Vue Générale.*, 1900–45, BN, syg. DŹS XII 8b/p.10/14, <https://polona.pl/item/lodz-ogolny-widok-vue-generale,NzA0NjcxMzA/#info:metadata>.

⁵⁶P. Gemes, *Jedno z Największych Miast Polskich, Stolica Przemysłu Włókienniczego Jest Także Ważnym Ośrodkiem Kulturalnym i Naukowym: Jeden z Najlepszych Teatrów Operowych, Muzeum Sztuki z*

is their emphasis on cultural institutions and historical monuments. Furthermore, each card includes a text on the reverse which strongly emphasizes the same message: 'One of the largest Polish cities, the capital of the textile industry is also an important cultural and scientific centre: one of the best opera theatres, the Museum of Art with huge collections of modern canvases, especially native (*rodzimego*) paintings, numerous theatres and museums.'⁵⁷ Such postcards go to great lengths to prove that Łódź was much more than an industrial centre, in fact this was only part of its identity.

Looking at all the postcards showing the industrial side of Chemnitz and Łódź, what general conclusions can be made? First of all, I want to stress again that such postcards were not the norm, since the vast majority did not thematize industry at all. In many cases, industry was pushed to the background, as being just one other element of the modern cityscape. On the other hand, some rare depictions, mainly from the first half of the twentieth century, highlighted the industrial character of Łódź, putting the industrial aesthetic in the foreground. However, I have not found similar panoramic views of Chemnitz. It is worth highlighting that neither in the case of Chemnitz nor of Łódź did the introduction of the communist regime lead to a more overtly industrial depiction of either city. On the contrary, this was more common on the cards from the period of the monarchical and right-wing authoritarian regimes. As I show in the following section, it is modernization, not industrialization, that seems to have been the dominant theme in the communist period. How can we explain this at first glance paradoxical lack of enthusiasm for industry?

One could argue that everybody already knew that both cities were European Manchesters, so there was a desire to show another, possibly more surprising, face of the cities to those not familiar with them. This seems plausible, but one cannot forget that 'established' European cities such as Berlin and Paris or indeed provincial cities like Cracow or Posen highlighted what was generally known about them: their historical monuments and the best-known views. Chemnitz and Łódź also showed historical monuments, or at least historical looking buildings, but that was of course done in the context of highlighting what was not obvious about them, namely their European character. This interpretation suggests that postcards were used much more to demonstrate local concerns and aspirations, rather than state ideology, not only when we compare a Polish and a German city, but also communist and parliamentary systems.

What makes a European city?

Since neither of the two cities seems to have been particularly keen on its industrial image, it is not unreasonable to propose that these cities wanted to be perceived as 'European cities'. The term 'European city' is not merely a geographical description, but also a qualitative and ideological one, because not all urban settlements on the continent deserved the status of 'European city' and arguably some cities outside

Ogromnymi Zbiorami Nowoczesnych Płócien, Zwłaszcza Rodzimego Malarstwa, Liczne Teatry, Muzea. W Śródmieściu Liczne Zabytki Architektury Secesyjnej, Do Najciekawszych Należą: Ratusz i Zabudowa Ulicy Piotrkowskiej., 1976, ŁWCPRL, www.facebook.com/LodzkiePocztowkiPRL/photos/a.1798465970431915/2343469772598196/.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

the (contested) borders of Europe could also be described as ‘European’ ones. In the nineteenth century, Paris was undeniably *the* European city against which all others were measured in the degree of their Europeanness.⁵⁸ There cannot be a sharp definition of the term, but nonetheless the literature provides us with some indications of what was meant under the label of ‘European city’. It was built around a focal area (i.e. the historical core of the city) with development that radiated out from this centre; furthermore, the type of city tended to be horizontal rather than vertical; it had a relatively compact structure and was characterized by a socially and economically mixed population. However, people of different social classes tended to live in different quarters of the city and, furthermore, production sites were removed from the centre.

An important feature of a ‘true European city’ was its hygiene and transport infrastructure, as well as possession of important public institutions such as theatres and libraries. It is worth stressing that what made Paris so iconic for its European character was its perceived modernity, even if Hausmannian reconstruction did not live up to its fame when it came to technical modernization.⁵⁹

Crucially, it was the visual side of the city that made the difference between ‘true European cities’, on the one hand, and the ‘backward’ cities in Europe, which did not deserve this title, on the other. Namely, its civic institutions had to be housed in impressive architecture, but also private houses, especially those built along the main boulevards of the city, often had imposing and elaborate façades. Those wide avenues were laid according to new development plans, which were often linked with the destruction of historical parts of the city. Such old sections were considered undesirable for social or structural reasons.⁶⁰

This nineteenth-century model was updated throughout the twentieth century, as debates on the role of modern architecture and especially the place of high-rise

⁵⁸H. Böhme, ‘Thesen zur “europäischen Stadt” aus historischer Sicht’, in D. Hassenpflug (ed.), *Die europäische Stadt – Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Münster, 2002), 49; B. Brzostek, *Paryże Innej Europy: Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX i XX wiek* (Warszawa, 2015), 18–21; J. Clos, ‘The European city model’, in R. Burdett and D. Sudjic (eds.), *The Endless City: The Urban Age Project by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank’s Alfred Herrhausen Society* (London, 2007), 160; P. White, *The West European City: A Social Geography* (London, 1984), XIII.

⁵⁹D.P. Jordan, ‘Haussmann and Haussmannisation: the legacy for Paris’, *French Historical Studies*, 27 (2004), 90–1.

⁶⁰A. Bagnasco and P. Le Galès, ‘European cities: local societies and collective actors?’, in A. Bagnasco and P. Le Galès (eds.), *Cities in Contemporary Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), 1–32; White, *The West European City*; P.M. Hohenberg, ‘The historical geography of European cities: an interpretive essay’, in J.V. Henderson and J.-F. Thisse (eds.), *Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics* (Amsterdam 2004), 3021–52; E. Bendikat, ‘Die Idee der “europäischen Stadt” Reflexionen zur Stadtgestaltung in Deutschland und Frankreich im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg’, in H. Kaelble and J. Schriewer (eds.), *Gesellschaften im Vergleich: Forschungen aus Sozial- und Geschichtswissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 431–62; V. Molnar, ‘The cultural production of locality: reclaiming the “European city” in post-Wall Berlin’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34 (2010), 281–309; A. Papageorgiou-Venetas, ‘Großstädtische Stadtviertel des 19. Jh. in Europa’, in A. Papageorgiou-Benetas (ed.), *Die europäische Stadt. Beiträge zur Stadtbaugeschichte u. Stadtgestaltung* (Stuttgart, 1984), 85–113; W. Siebel, ‘Einleitung: Die europäische Stadt’, in W. Siebel (ed.), *Die europäische Stadt* (Frankfurt am Main., 2004), 11–50.

buildings animated the discussion.⁶¹ In the post-war period, the accommodation of cars and pedestrians was a very important issue. Many of the cities opted for large avenues for cars and a limited number of pedestrian-only pathways, often integrated into the new modernist architecture.⁶²

How did Chemnitz and Łódź feature against such benchmarks? They both seem to have done fairly well, if one is to believe the analysed postcards. Both cities offered a wide range of postcards depicting historical monuments or imposing historical-looking nineteenth-century architecture. Interestingly, the introduction of the communist regime changed nothing in this regard. The GDR Postcard Museum has 53 postcards showing modern architecture, and 35 with historical architecture, which is especially remarkable if one bears in mind how heavily the city was damaged during World War II. The collage cards always depict both modern and historical buildings. In the case of Łódź, we have exactly the same situation, and one could choose between historical buildings and new blocks of flats. This is equally true for both the Stalinist period and later forms of state socialism.

Civic buildings such as theatres and museums were often portrayed on the postcards, it seems not least because they were housed in imposing buildings from the nineteenth century. But one could also send a postcard with images of the new, modern theatres. Parks and other green spaces were also often depicted. Especially when it comes to new housing estates, green spaces were highlighted, proving the quality of life provided by the socialist state. One of the postcards, for instance, has this as its actual subject, namely the new high-rise housing-block pushed to the background to emphasize the green open space for the inhabitants to enjoy, just as the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) rules prescribed.⁶³ However, when it comes to parks, perhaps surprisingly, in the case of Łódź it was the Nazi occupation period that provided a large number of postcards with such a theme, 25 in total. The green idyll was used to push away the horrors of the war, the natural beauty was hiding the terror on the ground. Having said that, one should stress that highlighting urban greenery was extremely popular in the years leading to World War I. Opulent flower compositions were often shown in the foreground with the actual subject of the images seen behind them. An example is a postcard produced in 1910 by Brück&Sohn depicting Albertstraße in Chemnitz.⁶⁴ A lawn, flower composition and trees take about a third of the space shown in the picture, and only behind do we see the buildings and people walking down the street that the postcard supposedly shows.

We have numerous street views taken in every period in both cities. Such cards showed an undoubtedly urban environment on the one hand, and on the other

⁶¹D. Burtenshaw, M. Bateman and G.J. Ashworth, *The European City: A Western Perspective* (London, 1991), 28–31; W.J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* (Oxford, 1982), 160–71; E. Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline, 1937–69* (New Haven, 2009), 9–11.

⁶²M. Kip, 'Sites of controversy: postwar public squares and the reassessment of modernist architectures', in K. Frieling and M. Kip (eds.), *Preserving the Modern: New Perspectives on Postwar Modernist Architecture* (Darmstadt, 2018), 9–23.

⁶³Frenzel, *Wohngebiet 'Fritz Heckert', Max-Türpel-Straße, 1987, DDR PM, www.ddr-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/720/category/574.*

⁶⁴Brück&Sohn, *Chemnitz. Albertstraße – Anlagen am Bahnhof* (1910), DF, Aufn.-Nr.: df_bs_0012379_postkarte, www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/71834137.

hand they provided the viewer with the actual architectonic landscape of the given city. Of course, over the course of time, we move from apartment buildings to modernist blocks of flats, but in principle they are constructed in the same manner. As mentioned before, a corridor street view taken from a vantage point highlighting the scale of the city and its undeniably urban character was a popular depiction of the cityscape of Chemnitz and of Łódź until World War II.

Postcards from both cities depicted them as European cities, according to the popular understanding of this term. This means they highlighted the urban character of the space, often depicted public institutions housed in imposing buildings and underlined both historical structures and modern architecture. This seems to be constant throughout the period, regardless of the political regime, with the only difference being an especially large number of cards showing parks dating to the Nazi period in Łódź (25 out of 74 cards). With the passing of time, modern architecture gained more prominence on the postcards, but the cards' focus did not change much in either city.

Cities of modernity

As I have indicated already, being a 'true' European city did not mean just having the right kind of city planning or appearance but also being quintessentially modern. The question is how this could be translated into postcards, and did either of the two European Manchesters do it? It turns out that street views were the perfect tool to do so.

Of the postcards from Łódź, 15 per cent display a tram. That might not seem like a lot, but before 1939 only 5 per cent showed a horse cart, compared to 12 per cent showing a tram. But it is not just the quantity of postcards with this element, but the quality of the depiction. Namely, the way this method of public transport was shown leaves no doubt at all that they were not captured simply by chance. One postcard showing Nowy Rynek (New Market Square) printed between 1898 and 1914 makes this point especially clear: it essentially shows a tram, the architecture is only used as its background (Figure 7). Another example from the inter-war period shows a different square in Łódź, again with a heavy emphasis on the tram: not only is it in the foreground, but also almost everybody visible in the picture is standing at the tram stop.⁶⁵ Thus, I would argue, there cannot be any doubt that the numerous trams shown on Łódź's streets were meant as markers of its urban character, modernity and progress. In other words, they signify European city status. After 1945, the trams did not disappear by any means, in fact the frequency with which they appeared was more or less the same as in the period before 1939 (10 vs. 12 per cent respectively). However, arguably they lost their prominence and there is no comparable card with a tram in Nowy Rynek described above.

The same could be found in Chemnitz. The postcards made before World War I showed them even more often compared to those made in Łódź (15 per cent). Furthermore, they were prominently displayed, as I have described with the 1913 postcard depicting the Königstraße (Figure 1) or the above-mentioned photos of

⁶⁵ Anon., *Łódź. Bałucki Rynek*, post-1926, Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna im. Marszałka J. Piłsudskiego w Łodzi, <http://bc.wbp.lodz.pl/publication/19299>.

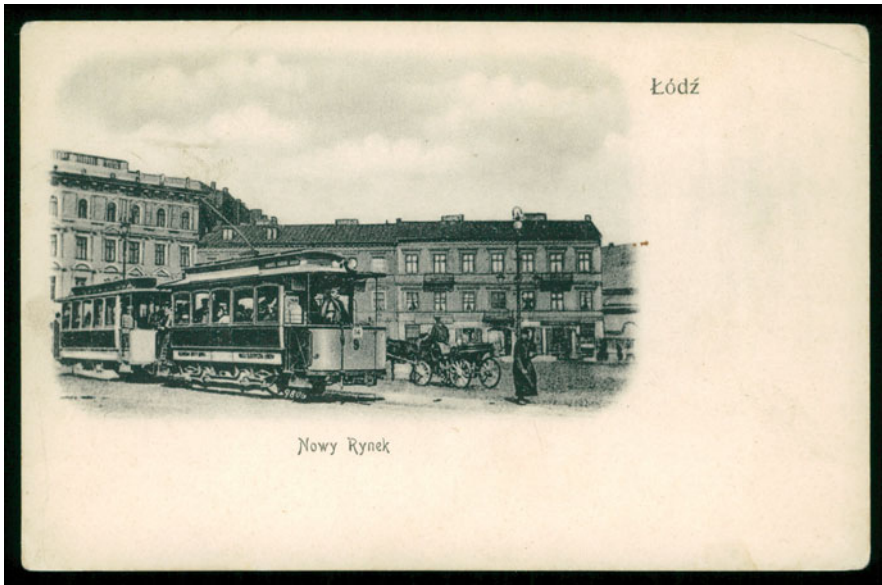


Figure 7. Anon., *Łódź: Nowy Rynek* [1898–1914], Biblioteka Narodowa, sygn.: DŻS XII 8b/p.10/14, <https://polona.pl/item/lodz-nowy-rynek,NzA0NjcxMjQ>

Hartmannstraße.⁶⁶ The significance of trams is highlighted when we compare them with those pre-1945 showing a horse carriage (9 per cent). The trams were not shown on the streets of Chemnitz by chance.

In the post-war period, however, trams became a less significant element of the Chemnitz cityscape. Only 9 cards (that is 8 per cent) show them at all. Even though in 1970 the Erhard Neubert publishing company issued a card which is solely focused on this method of public transport, by depicting the central stop of the line 5, it was clearly an outlier.⁶⁷ The trams lost their significance. The buses did not really take their place. Not only were they shown only sporadically (5 per cent of the cards), but they were never given the prominence that trams were in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What could, however, be observed in Chemnitz is the fascination with cars, but that is true most of all in the communist period.

Although only about one third of the postcards made after 1945 shows cars, the way they are presented makes it clear that they were there to make a point. For instance, on the 1968 postcard we have a car placed in the very middle of the whole composition, its windows reflecting the sun.⁶⁸ The fact that it almost lines up with the high-rise apartment block adds to the feeling of a modern, prosperous

⁶⁶Brück&Sohn, *Chemnitz: Hartmannstraße mit Straßenbahn*.

⁶⁷Kampmann, *Zentralhaltestelle der Straßenbahn mit Linie 5*, 1970, DDR PM, www.ddr-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/710/category/574.

⁶⁸Polster, *Hochhaus an Der Dresdner Straße*, 1968, DDR PM, www.ddr-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/762/category/574.

city. Another example is the postcard with the Hotel Moscow in Chemnitz.⁶⁹ Here, we have a full car park in the right-hand corner, with elegant, clean cars shining in the sun. It would be very easy to take this photograph in such a way that would avoid the car park altogether or at least make it less prominent, but a decision was made to include it in the urban scene from Chemnitz. It seems, therefore, that the GDR city promoted itself as a modern, European city not only through modernist architecture, but also through the emphasis on cars. This was a peculiar choice for a communist country where car ownership was not that common.

The situation when it comes to buses and cars was not identical in Łódź. Buses were a substantially more common postcard motif in the communist period (16 per cent), but they never played the role that trams did before World War II. Cars, however, became the element without which one could not image Łódź. Almost half of the postcards (49.2 per cent) from Łódź did include cars, which in many of them played as significant a role as they did in Saxony on the examples presented above.

This leads me to the last theme, namely night photographs. Such postcards played with light and shadow, and emphasized cars, advertisements and lights coming from the buildings. Such scenes are *par excellence* both urban and modern. The same hotel in Chemnitz seen from the other side at night gives rather a different impression.⁷⁰ In the foreground we can see a row of parked cars, in the background the brightly lit hotel and the neon light. This is how a big, modern city looks. The main street in Łódź on a postcard made three years later seems even more impressive.⁷¹ This is not only an excellent artistic picture, but also a concise vision of a modern city. An urban landscape at night: empty of people; no tram to be seen on the tracks; the line of street lights disappearing in the distance; a hotel sign and numerous neon shop lights give the viewer a clear impression of a great metropolis.

Last but not least, it is worth pointing out that the modern look of the two cities was fully in line with the ideology of the two communist states, which perceived itself as quintessentially modern. The access to the sun, fresh air and green spaces fulfilled the demands of the modernist movement, but it was also consistent with the principles of the 'socialist city'.⁷² It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss whether there was something essentially different about 'socialist modernity' when it comes to architecture and city planning, but one can say for sure that these cityscapes were equally as modernist as they were socialist.

⁶⁹Neubert, *Interhotel 'Moskau', Straße Der Nationen*, 1967, DDR PM, www.ddd-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/713/category/574.

⁷⁰Hoffmann and Oelsnitz, *Hotel 'Moskau' in Der Straße Der Nationen*, 1966, DDR PM, www.ddd-postkarten-museum.de/picture.php?/750/category/574.

⁷¹P. Krassowski, *Ulica Piotrkowska*, 1969, ŁWCPRL, www.facebook.com/LodzkiePocztowkiPRL/photos/a.1784693351809177/1968409063437604.

⁷²E. Mumford, 'CIAM and the Communist Bloc, 1928–59', *Journal of Architecture*, 14 (2009), 237–54; A. Diener and J. Hagen, 'From socialist to post-socialist cities: narrating the nation through urban space', *Nationalities Papers*, 41 (2013), 487–514; A. Sumorok, 'The idea of the socialist city. The case of Nowa Huta', *Architektura*, 27 (2015), 303–40; M. Wiśniewski, 'Socmodernizm: historii późnej nowoczesności w architekturze Polski Ludowej', in K. Kluczajd and M. Pszczółkowski (eds.), *Toruński modernizm: architektura miasta 1920–1989* (Toruń, 2016), 107–38.

Beyond the textile mills: picturing an industrial city

Wayne Martin Mellinger observed that '[t]he magic of the photographic image lies in this ability to appear to objectively represent reality. The active signifying practices through which lay and professional photographers select, construct, and remake what is registered on film remain hidden from view.'⁷³ This strategy can be clearly observed on the postcards from Chemnitz and Łódź, not only in projecting both cities as true European cities, but also as modern cities *par excellence*.

The postcards examined in this project did not show many industrial sites in either of the European Manchesters and it is precisely this absence that is so important. Those pictorial narratives tell a story of how publishing houses chose to present both cities, in anticipation of what people were willing to buy. Not as urban settlements with numerous spinning mills, but rather as true European cities, on an equal footing with other urban centres of their size. This meant stressing their urban character, imposing public buildings and historical-looking buildings. At the same time, those postcards also highlighted the modernity of Chemnitz and of Łódź, both by proudly displaying modern architecture and by using props like trams and cars.

Of course, such images tell us relatively little about the actual cities on the ground: the selection of sites is repetitive and these are often shown in a highly idealized manner. Instead, the postcards can be instrumental in understanding how urban modernity and Europeanness was understood, both by looking at what was shown, and also what was not depicted. For instance, I could not find a single card showing workers' housing. There were many postcards depicting residential areas, especially modernist housing estates, but they were not for factory workers in particular.

Another relevant point is to see how constant the elements used to present the city were, regardless of the political regime at the given time. The descriptions on the back sometimes indicated the political regime in power at the time, but the iconography of the two cities was pretty much constant. Namely, their image was dominated by the representative civil (city hall, theatres, schools) as well as religious sites, their parks and most popular streets and squares. When new elements were introduced, like night scenes, they tended to adhere to existing patterns. Because the postcards were meant for mass audiences, they had to use widely accepted and understood symbols and shortcuts in order to present a whole city through one single shot. And that could at least partly explain the consistency of their presentation.

⁷³Mellinger, 'Toward a critical analysis of tourism representations', 758.