URBAN HERITAGE, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MEMORY

The memory of Glavril Princip's Monuments in prewar Sarajevo against its postwar counter-monument in East Sarajevo

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Abstract

You begin to liquidate a people by taking away its memory. You destroy its books, its culture, its History. And then others write new books for it, give another Culture to it, invent another History for it. Then the people slowly begin to forget what it is and what it was...1

Bosnia’s turbulent history and frequent changes of dominant political ideologies had dictated the way that its monuments were made up. It is due to those alterations that we can distinguish a variety of different influences portrayed through different monuments, depending to which phase of Bosnian History they belong. For the same reason, we can detect multiple changes in the appearance, the representation, memorialisation and the production of the meaning in the context of the same monuments. When the new political Ideologies had repressed the old ideology, new monuments had to be erected in order to give a symbolical meaning of belonging to the new public space. Hand in hand with that, the old meanings had to be reframed.

Therefore my research paper is going to examine the Bosnian case study of WWI monument of Assassination and all its following reinterpretations. Following the tendency of building monuments after the WWI, during the 1917 Sarajevo got its most famous monument named “A monument of assassination”, which was firstly dedicated to Franc Ferdinand and his wife Sophie. It was already replaced in 1918, due to political changes, and the new plaque was marking “a historical place from which Gavrilo Princip had revoked (“navjestio”) a liberty on the day of St. Vitus, the 28th of Jun 1914”.2 The original

monument of Gavrilo Princip was built at the exact site of assassination of Franc Ferdinand, on the corner of the Latin bridge, which was renamed in Princip’s bridge during the 1920. Princip that way become “something of the national hero in a Yugoslav state for having risen up against foreign occupiers and for triggering a war that would lead to the formation of state uniting south Slavs”.3

The first plaque commemorating him was removed from the place of Ferdinand’s association during the 15th of August 1941, when Germans marched into Sarajevo and it was sent to Hitler as his birthday gift.4 This monument was rebuilt two more times during the Second Yugoslavia, both times paying tribute to Princip. But it was again removed during the Bosnian war and again set in esteem of the Franc Ferdinand and his wife Sophie’s assassination and the “Vanished footprints” of Gavrilo Princip.

After the Bosnian conflict of 90s, a context of this monument was changed irreconcilably as its locus is incorporated into FBiH and Gavrilo who is perceived as an “Serb terrorist” (despite the fact he was declaring as Yugoslav) become “unwelcome” in the city and the new Bosniak narratives, together with the Serbs who are held responsible for 3 years of Sarajevo’s siege and whose memory is exiled from the city by DPA. It become very intriguing, especially after the centenary celebration of the beginning of the WWI to whose protagonists this monument was originally dedicated. Hence I am about to research the relation of this monument to the identity building in post-conflict Bosnian context. The role that both, monuments and counter monuments (because their role switches depending weather we are looking at this phenomenon from FBiH or RS side) play in everyday lives of citizens and in building of their personal identities vs collective identities.

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