

## Cultural Heritage of the Post-totalitarian Cities: 20th and 21st Centuries. Foreword

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Session S 24: Cultural Heritage of the Post-totalitarian Cities: 20th and 21st Centuries

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Throughout the world cities after the fall of the totalitarian regimes deal with numerous issues that affect the everyday life of their inhabitants. The cities, which benefited from the economic direction of the totalitarian regime concerning selected sectors of the economy, may become sites on the periphery of events after several years. Conversely, the democratization of post-totalitarian societies associated with the opening of borders, free movement of persons, knowledge and technologies in a short time can affect the development of cities and towns stagnating in the previous era. European projects of recent years have been focused on the so-called post-socialist cities,<sup>1</sup> but in many areas of interdisciplinary approaches to the topic we lack comparison not only within Europe, but touching the world development. We are looking for contributions that could develop the discussion on the following topics:

- What is the professional public's attitude towards the cultural heritage<sup>2</sup> of the totalitarian eras of urban space? How comes to the discourse of cultural value of monuments and urban complexes?
- How are cities presented and interpreted by the unofficial (prohibited) underground and dissident culture in relation to the official culture of the totalitarian regimes.
- Problem of memorial places: new versus old places of memory, overlapping memory locations by ideology of power and their reinterpretation.<sup>3</sup>
- How city governments of post-totalitarian cities perceive urban public space? Do they support the transformation of the area controlled by ideologies of power to

1 For example see the book review article: WILSON, Helen F. Post-socialist Cities and Urban Studies: Transformation and Continuity in Eurasia. In: *Urban Studies*, 50 (16) 3463–3471, December 2013. TSENKOVA, Sasha – NEDOVIC-BUDIC, Zorica (Eds.). *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe Space, Institutions and Policy*. Heidelberg : Physica Verlag, 2006, 390 p. CZEPZYŃSKI, Mariusz. *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities: Representation of Powers and Needs*. Aldershot : Ashgate, 2008, 209 p. KIRIL, Stanilov (Ed.). *The Post-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism*. Dordrecht : Springer, 2007, 496 p. FERENČUHOVÁ, Slavomíra – GENTILE, Michael. Introduction: Post-socialist cities and urban theory. In: *Eurasian Geography and Economics* [online], 2017, pp. 1-14. [cit. 31. 10. 2016]. Available on the Internet: <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15387216.2016.1270615>>. BARTETZKY, Arnold – DIETZ, Christian – HASPEL, Jörg (Hrsg.). *Von der Ablehnung zur Aneignung? From Rejection to Appropriation? : Das architektonische Erbe des Sozialismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa*. Köln; Weimar; Wien : Böhlau Verlag, 2014, 297 p; etc.

2 Compare with: VECCO, Marilena. A definition of cultural heritage : From the tangible to the intangible. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 11 (2010), pp. 321-324.

3 See also: LINDE, Charlotte. *Working the Past : Narrative and Institutional Memory*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2009, 264 p.

space for the presentation of culture and meeting of people or do they abandon this initiative for civic activities.

- We know the regions where one totalitarian regime was followed by another; eg. Central Europe. Is their cultural heritage presented similarly, or differently, and if so, why?

To the call reacted overall 16 authors who have offered eleven papers for the session. Of these, the organizers chose four papers of authors from Russia, Poland, Serbia and Germany. Finally, in session were presented three papers, which were developed into studies and after approval process under the rules of magazine *Mesto a dejiny* (The City and History) are published in one common block.

O. Zinovieva and A. Lobodanov's study is focused on the current growing trend of the interest in Soviet cultural heritage among professionals and common people. Based on their research, the authors stated that the Soviet heritage (represented in their research through VDNKH) remains, even today, as an important element of state propaganda, that tries to use the achievements of the Soviet era, not only in culture, but as well in history, for example the victory in the World War II.

Study of Andreas Ludwig and Ana Kladnik examines the situation of the two so-called new towns<sup>4</sup> – Eisenhüttenstadt and Velenje. The both cities were established as the new industrial centres in the 50s of the 20th century – in the period of post-war reconstruction of Europe and the incipient Cold War. The authors provide a comparative analysis of the different treatment of cultural heritage in the area of state authorities, local authorities and residents of the city itself in contemporary Germany and Slovenia.

Mariusz Czepczyński in his paper deals with the phenomenon of cultural landscapes. In his concept it is a mixture of forms, meanings and functions, representing the ruling power, needs and values of a certain society. He points on the importance of historical memory as a key tool of the current policy. These theoretical assumptions confronts with the socio-political developments in contemporary Poland.

The theme of dealing with the complicated history and cultural heritage of totalitarian regimes is proper in the context of today's global political developments. Comparative approaches of urban history allow comparison of the current state across European society and bring many new ideas for national professional discussion and for activities of civil society. The above studies clearly show that it is necessary to interpret the cultural heritage of totalitarian regimes in the public city areas in educational programs and in public discourse. This work must be done with and objectively, without pathos and nostalgia, as well as regardless to political ideology.

<sup>4</sup> OSBORN, Frederic J. – WHITTICK, Arnold. *The new towns : the answer to megalopolis*. New York, NY [u.a.] : McGraw-Hill, 1963, 376 p.