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### Bosnia and Herzegovina



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO



pro kultura magazin pro culture magazine

### “Culture of Remembrance: Twilight or New Awakening”



International University of Sarajevo  
12—13 April, 2014 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE**

*Book of proceedings*

**I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
Twilight or new Awakening“*

*Editors*

Sabahudin Hadžialić

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*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
Twilight or new Awakening“*

**I MEĐUNARODNI SIMPOZIJ  
KULTURA SJEĆANJA**

*„Bosna i Hercegovina – Kultura sjećanja:  
Sumrak ili Novo buđenje“*

**И МЕЂУНАРОДНИ СИМПОЗИЈ  
КУЛТУРА СЈЕЋАЊА**

*„Босна и Херцеговина – Култура сјећања:  
Сумрак или Ново буђење“*

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**Sarajevo assassination in our memory  
(interpretation of the Sarajevo assassination in an example of elating /  
removal of Monument to Franz Ferdinand and Gavrilo Princip)**

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**Abstract:** In the last 100 years, monuments and commemorative plaques have been erected on and removed off the Latin Bridge in Sarajevo, the place of *the Sarajevo assassination*, to those murdered and to the assassin, to Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie and to Gavrilo Princip. By tracing the *life* of these monuments, their being placed and removed off the assassination site, in different time periods and in different countries, can best illustrate the attempts at the interpretation of a historical event. In the example of placing and removing of these monuments it is possible to see how our *memory culture* is in a way marked by our present, as well as how ruling elites had interpreted *the Sarajevo assassination* and how that interpretation changed and adapted to the needs of the political elites in the last 100 years. Special attention has been paid to the *transitional periods*, i.e. the succession of political elites and state-legislative frames in the Balkans. The method used in the article is the comparative-historical method. Based on primary archive documents and other historical sources (the press), we have traced the placing and removing of monuments to Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, as well as to Gavrilo Princip, and how those who placed/removed the monuments wanted to interpret the *Sarajevo assassination*. We have compared different interpretations, showing that the interpretation of *the Sarajevo assassination* has changed depending on the historical context and the needs of those who had the privilege to interpret the past and those who have been the political elites which have been creating and controlling the countries emerging in the Balkans. *Power balance* between the political elites in Bosnia and Herzegovina has led us to the point where we have no official interpretation of *Sarajevo assassination* which is reflected in the fact that today there is no monument to either Franz Ferdinand or Gavrilo Princip on the Latin Bridge.

**Key words:** Sarajevo assassination, cultural memory, Franz Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip, monuments

The novel *Sara i Serafina* by Dževad Karahasan starts with the writer's memory of a conversation he had with Albert Goldštajn, who, among other things, said the following: "Human existence in this world happens in the shadows of bronze characters... By bronze characters I mean of course the monuments as symbols of a system of values, as an inescapable part of a political order, as a sign of the country." (Karahasan 2007)

According to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, the entire memory is a social construct, be it institutionalized (as are the interpretations of the past offered by the political elites) or individual. The memory is, as Halbwachs claims in his work on cultural memory, susceptible to the present and it is used to explain and justify the new political order. According to Halbwachs, it is not possible for individuals to remember in a consistent way outside the context of the group they belong to. Belonging to a group is what 'equips' individuals with the material that makes memory, and groups can even 'manufacture' in individuals memory of an event which those individuals have not lived though in actuality. (Halbwachs 1992)

Commemorating events from the past, monuments and memorials as well as renaming streets and other public spaces are one of the elements of 'institutional', i.e. 'official' memory, with which the political elites use their view of the past in order to explain and justify the present in a certain

community. Official memory is the one promoted and supported by the power structures in a certain society. Such official memory claims to be collective as well, although it is always and inevitably selective because it includes the memory of only those past events and persons that are suitable in the given historical moment, while excluding those that are not. (Banjevlav 2012)

Serb sociologist Todor Kuljić emphasizes that every generation builds their own image of the past according to the needs of the present. For that reason, the official politics of remembering are always followed with official politics of 'forgetting'. Officially, collective memory is 'a political process with no end', and in order for it to function successfully, the skill of forgetting is as important as the skill of remembering. (Kuljić 2006)

Apart from the memory culture and forgetting, societies are prone to something Eric Hobsbawm called *the invention of tradition*. (Hobsbawm 2000) Although tradition inventing is a process that can be found in almost any time, it becomes especially prominent in time of a society transforming, i.e. weakening or destruction of society patterns for which the *old traditions* had been designed. Inventing new traditions does not necessarily mean complete repression of the old ones. The newly-invented tradition can be based on the already existing one which is adapted to the new needs of a society, or it may be a tradition which once existed and is now *forgotten*.

Creating monuments is in close connection with political occurrences and ruling ideologies in the society. Monuments are erected in public and representative places and they are an indicator of the values which the ruling elite want to establish in the society. Every disappearance of one state and the forming of another or the establishing of a new ideology, often means suppression of the former and the forming of a new official memory, where the visual messages have an extremely symbolic meaning because they speak to us about whose public space it is, what we must not forget and what we need to remember.

One of the more important theoretical bases of researching relations between history and general memory culture has been set by a French thinker Pierre Nora in his work *Sites of Memory*. Researching *sites of memory* in France, Nora came to the conclusion that those are the places institutionally constructed by every state. According to him, they are constructed intentionally; hence they are supposed to help in reviving the past and to hinder the forgetting. (Nora 2007) Nora speaks of several types of sites of memory: topographical (archives, museums, libraries), monumental (architectural monuments and cemeteries) and symbolic memories (commemorations, pilgrimages, anniversaries).

In most cases, those who create *sites of memory* try to combine many types of memory of which Nora speaks. In that manner, there are certain rituals associated with most of the monuments in time of the anniversaries, some of those monuments become places of pilgrimage and similar. Some museums can at the same time be places of pilgrimage as a *topographical type of memory*, their buildings treated as monuments as well. Only such connections give the monuments the possibility of their true role being fulfilled: to create memory culture within those who *pass them by*. It is Nenad Veličković actually who in his novel *Vremenska petlja* emphasizes all the insignificance of monuments after the rituals associated with them have ceased. When students *Suni* and *Bubi* discuss whether or not a monument should be built in Potočari, as pro cause we get the fact that the monument will help us not forget over 8000 of those who were murdered because they were Bosniaks. *Bubi* then make the following point: Sixty years ago, 4000 wounded were murdered here because they were Partisans and now everyone has forgotten. And the monument's high as a skyscraper. (Veličković 2011)



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From 1918 until today, 25000 bibliographical items have been made about the First World War, one fifth of which is about the sole act of assassination and the beginning of the war. The very assassination act has been interpreted differently by the science, however, it is beyond doubt that it has served as an excuse for the beginning of the WWI. Very soon after the assassination, its symbolic potential had started to be used with the aim of creating memory of this event. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, considering the frequent social, state and ideological changes, the interpretation of the Sarajevo assassination had changed couple of times. All the interpretation changes had been embodied by the placing of monuments at the very site of the assassination.

The first monument erected at the assassination site had the official title of *Monument to a murder* and it was installed in 1917 in front of the Latin Bridge. In the year 1917, three years after the murder of Franz Ferdinand and the duchess Sophie, an enormous monument has been erected in the memory of the *innocently murdered*. (Kučuk-Sorguč 2005) Before this monument was erected, there had been a commemoration plaque in front of the building where the assassination took place: *At this crossroad, the Archduke and heir presumptive Franz Ferdinand and his wife the duchess Sophie Hohenberg died the death of martyrs by a murderous hand*. Although the information about the time of the monument differs, we can confirm with certainty today that the monument was set up at the anniversary of the Assassination. A great confusion about the date has been caused by the fact that photographs have been found in the Historical archive in Sarajevo depicting the unveiling of the monument and the year entered in the catalogue was 1915. However, the monument was made in 1916 and that year is engraved on the monument which was based on the idea of Eugen Bori, *first lieutenant in reserve* and Hungarian academic sculptor. The monument was built in Budapest, wherefrom it was transported to Sarajevo. It was unveiled ceremonially on the night of June 28, 1917, which was reported on also by the Sarajevo newspapers of the time, *Sarajevski list* and *Bosnishe post*.

The monument was approximately 12 meters high, and we can say that it was a three-piece composite. The first part is the pedestal made of Silesia stone, and the second one is a bronze medallion with the engraved faces of Franz and Sophia, while the final part of the monument is made by two large pillars with bronze crowns on top. The constituent part of the monument was a small niche where flowers could be placed, together with a bench made on the right side that has survived till this day. At the assassination site, a new plaque was placed, inscribed in Latin were the following words: *The Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife the duchess Sophie of Hohenberg have given their lives and spilled their blood for God and the country at this place on June 28, 1914*.

The sketches of professor Bori “with the highest patronage of His tsarist and kingly apostolic Majesty and Her Majesty the Tsaritsa and Queen”, show that a *Monument of Repentance* was planned across the Latin Bridge which was meant to consist of a commemoration church of Franz Ferdinand next to which a *Sophie’s home* was planned. Bori had already made the sketches that were printed in the “Tsarist court and state print” in Vienna, but the monuments were never built. Namely, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had barely made it to the anniversary of the Assassination, and by the end of 1918, it no longer existed.

By building a monument under the highest state patronage and under the harshest war conditions, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy intended to impose their own interpretations of the Sarajevo assassination. Ferdinand and Sophie innocently ceased to be, they are the victims of the war, while the assassin is a terrorist. The *Monument to a murder* was at the same time the biggest monument which commemorated the Sarajevo assassination. That shows clearly that the Sarajevo assassination had the greatest symbolic meaning for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, hence, it

would have possibly played one of the more crucial roles in the memory of the historical period, if the Empire had survived.

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In Sarajevo on November 6, 1918, the first units of the Serb army entered and they were, at least according to the historical sources, greeted with considerable delight. It was the very *reisul-ulema* Džemaludin ef. Čaušević who gave the greeting speech to the Serb army, headed by the duke Stepo Stepanović. (Đaković 1981)

After the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed, the *Monument to a murder* stayed on the Latin Bridge. The new state had reacted very swiftly; the new state which had taken much of its legitimacy from the very fight against the *abhorring Austro-Hungarian occupant*, against whom they fought a bloody war for four full years – that had become a full-fledged world war from its outset. It was unnatural for the new government to have a monument to Franz Ferdinand in the middle of Sarajevo, which became the symbolic center of the beginning of the war which resulted in the new state being created.

Already at the beginning of 1919, the monument was removed and the Latin Bridge changed its name into the Princip's Bridge, and the Franz Joseph Street was renamed into the King Petar I Karađorđević Street. In 1918, the Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Street was renamed into the Aleksandar Karađorđević Street, another new heir whose life ended with an assassination. We can claim with great certainty that the monument to Ferdinand and Sophie was not instantly brought down and destroyed but carefully deconstructed and removed to the garden of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Up until the 1990s, little was known about this monument. This reflected the post-1918 endeavor of the Yugoslavia governments to have people forget that there was ever a monument on the Latin Bridge.

The first commemoration plaque to Gavrilo Princip was placed in 1931 on the Princip's Bridge, while the initiative, at least officially, had not come from the government but from the citizens of Sarajevo. The plaque contained the following inscription: *On this historical place, Gavrilo Princip proclaimed freedom on St. Vitus Day [Vidovdan] on June 28, 1914.* The SCS Kingdom did not use the symbolic potential of the Sarajevo assassination all too much. The newly-created state community brought an array of serious contradictions with it. Those recent opponents on the battlefield found themselves in one common state which faced permanent foreign dangers and domestic political clashes which occasionally turned into violence. Therefore, the state politics, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, insisted on the crown dynasty as the unifying factor. The central square of Sarajevo at the time and the main city street both carried the name of King Petar, and a monument to this king was planned to be built. An ossuary-monument to the *Vidovdan heroes* was made in Koševo which is even today, and especially back then, outside the most immediate city core which is always used to *install* most important messages that are supposed to affect the memory culture.

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Only three days after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated in 1941, Hitler celebrated his 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday. The celebration was held in a specialized train which contained the *Führer's* main headquarters for Southeast at the Austrian and Slovenian border. One of the most significant gifts Hitler received on that day was the plaque brought down by German troops off the Latin Bridge right after they marched into Sarajevo. A ceremonial of a kind had taken place during the removal which was recorded and photographed. The moment this plaque was given to Hitler was eternalized by his personal photographer. It seems that for Hitler, who had lost the WWI as a soldier, this was an important gift indeed. (Bazdulj, 2013)

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Neither did the new Yugoslavia change the perception of the Sarajevo assassination as established in 1918 more significantly, which meant that Princip was given a role of an all-Yugoslav fighter against the *abhorring occupant* and Princip had, to make the correlation greater, shot the chest of a *Boche [Švabo]*. Immediately after Sarajevo was liberated, at the time of the Unified League of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia [Ujedinjeni savez antifašističke omladine Jugoslavije] gathering in May 1945, the new Communist government placed a new plaque as a commemoration sign to Princip. The new plaque text (*As a sign of eternal gratitude to Gavrilo Princip and his comrades, fighters against the German occupants, the Youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina dedicates this plaque to you*) (*From this place on June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip expressed a people's protest against tyranny and the eternal striving of our people for freedom*) signified a new interpretation of the Sarajevo assassination which was now presented as an all-Yugoslav revolutionary act, the aim of which was fight for freedom which finally arrived not in 1918 but in 1945. In the socialist Yugoslavia, the Austro-Hungarian government had been presented as *occupational, foreign, colonial* and *Mlada Bosna* as having a revolutionary character. The assassins were presented as idealist believing that national freedom came after making the first step towards social freedom, and the assassination was presented as a legitimate right in the struggle. The most important representatives of the new government headed by Đuro Pucar Stari were present at the unveiling of the commemoration plaque and marking of the 1945 *Vidovdan*.

How important the Sarajevo assassination was in the memory culture for the new government after 1945 is shown in the fact that in 1953 a Mlada Bosna Museum was founded across the Latin Bridge and *Princip's footprints* were placed on the very bridge made by the famous sculptor Vojo Dimitrijević. In that year, a new commemoration plaque was placed in which the interpretation of the Sarajevo assassination was even clearer (*From this place, on June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip's shot expressed the people's protest against tyranny and centuries-old desire of our peoples for freedom*). Nevertheless, the socialist Yugoslavia had based its legitimacy on the heroism from the WWII, hence, the memory culture and the memorialization was trying to *revive* this very period.

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On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination, the journalist Indira Kučuk-Sorguč published a text in the magazine *Prilozi*, a science and history magazine, which illuminated to an extent the fate of the *Monument to a murder*. Namely, having been removed from the Latin Bridge, the remnants of the monument were placed in the National Museum garden in Sarajevo, whose new building at Marijin Dvor was barely four years older than the Ferdinand and Sophia monument. It is quite certain that all parts had remained in the National Museum garden not only during the existence of the SCS Kingdom and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but they have survived the WWII at the same spot and at least three decades of the socialist Yugoslavia. However, in the mid-1970s, they have disappeared without a trace from this location and today the parts are to be found on at least three different locations. (Novalić 2013)

Only after Yugoslavia fell apart, after the Siege of Sarajevo and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Assassination that found Sarajevo completely surrounded, the interest for the fate of the Ferdinand and Sophie monument had risen. That interest was a consequence of a significant change in the perception of the entire Austro-Hungarian government, the assassination and the WWI in that part of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society which we might name as the Bosnian-Bosniak part. The entire history of Yugoslavia was then interpreted from the perspective of the 1990s and the breaking of SFRY, by which the key starting-point was that Bosnia and Herzegovina had lost a lot by the very act of entering the Yugoslavia state frame, i.e. the Greater Serbia, which become more and more the way Yugoslavia, especially the first one, was looked at. *The Sarajevo assassination*

was seen as the initial powder charge that brought about the making of Yugoslavia, the positive values of the Austro-Hungarian period, witnessed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and its population, being (over)stated. There is an insistence on the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a 'corpus separatum' within the dualist monarchy, the exclusiveness of which is at times exalted to the level of state. Such reinterpretation of the Sarajevo assassination from the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is embodied in the very *site of memory*. Today, we have the *Latin Bridge* again, not the *Princip's Bridge*, the *Mlada Bosna Museum* was renamed into the *Museum of the Austro-Hungarian period 1878-1918*, while the very place of the assassination now has a plaque with a *neutral* text which informs you that you are at the place of the Assassination, the very act of assassination not being deemed as either a terrorist or heroic act.

Speaking of the post-war Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, it is necessary to speak of at least three memory cultures which in most cases oppose each other. How the assassination is perceived in today's Bosnian-Herzegovinian society can perhaps best be traced on the basis of announcements about building/bringing back the monuments to Ferdinand and Princip.

Although there has been an initiative by individuals, some citizen societies and partly by local government, the idea of a return of the *Monument to a murder* most certainly is not to be realized any time soon. First and foremost, due to the fact that it is not possible to achieve a consensus on the issue in the so-called Bosnian-Bosniak part of the society. There is a tendency for looking at Ferdinand and the Sarajevo assassination in Sarajevo in a *neutral manner*. It is also quite certain that Princip's footprints will not be returned back onto the Latin Bridge. That *neutrality* in interpretation will still be illustrated best through the very *site of memory* which will continue to be without a monument suggesting an interpretation. There are intentions for the Sarajevo assassination to be erased from the memory, because it does not play any important role in this part of the society and in these relations, the very memory of which necessarily brings a certain kind of conflict with it and within the group, as well as with others.

On the other side, in East Sarajevo, a monument has been erected to Gavrilo Princip for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, while many Bosnian Serbs see the idea of placing a monument to Ferdinand in Sarajevo as the *last act of ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Sarajevo*. Princip is seen today by Serbs mainly as a Serb national hero who, first and foremost, fought for a Yugoslavia which made the unification of Serb people possible.

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