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**THE CONSTRUCTION, DE- AND RECONSTRUCTION
OF HISTORY AND MEMORY: LOCAL MEMORY
PRACTICES OF THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX AT
MRAKOVICA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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This paper examines the memory practices of the memorial complex at Mrakovica at the Kozara National Park in the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The original concept of the memorial site, founded in 1972, was to keep the Kozara-epos alive. The erected monument, the memorial wall and the museum were built to remember one of the biggest battles during the Second World War on Yugoslav soil during which more than ten thousand Partisan fighters and civilians lost their lives. During the communist era the memorial site fit into the official memory frame: the high number of casualties, especially civilians, was put into the foreground and the Partisans in their struggle for liberation were glorified. The key component of the official narrative was the slogan brotherhood and unity. After the armed conflict in the 1990s, the site underwent several transformations. New memorial frames were set by nationalists; thus history and memory were thereby de- and reconstructed. The new narrative included not only victims of the Second World War but exclusively those victims belonging to the ethnic group of Serbs of the First World War and the conflict in 1992-95. In 2012, the exhibition at the museum was reopened after it had undergone another re-conceptualization, another reconstruction of history and memory. Analysing documents, interviews, and ethnographic observations which I gathered during several research trips to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010-2013, I will show in this study that a political transition towards a nationalist approach of history was clearly visible during the 1990s at the memorial site. But even though

the new exhibition, installed in 2012 at the museum, offers a less one-sided and provocative approach, a political transition concerning the memory conflicts which reflects the still existing gap between different ethnic groups is not evident.

Key words / Ključne riječi: Bosnia and Herzegovina, monuments, Second World War, Bosnian War 1992-1995, memory culture.

Introduction

Almost twenty years after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, the post-war society within the country is still struggling with the aftermath of the war. This struggle is especially visible on the memory level. The history of the Second World War and the country's own involvement in it, the imposed memory frame during the communist era, and the conflict in the 1990s created different narratives among the follow-up states of the Former Yugoslavia and also among different social groups within the countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina shows special characteristics in the ongoing memory conflict. Prijedor in the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the area of my interest, provides an interesting case study. In the aftermath of the war from 1992-1995 the different ethnic groups living there regularly clash on the memory level, with each group focussing on its own suffering, denying war crimes and causing provocation of the others at numerous events.¹ Just recently, a new mass grave was discovered in the Prijedor region in the Republika Srpska, the Serbian entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.² The area suffered from a severe ethnic cleansing campaign during the conflict in the 1990s and became known for notorious camps which were erected in 1992. Up until today, approximately 1,000 persons remain missing in the region. As my former research has shown, survivors and family members of victims struggle with the search for the missing and with their desire to commemorate the events which took place.³ But not only since the 1990s has memory culture served as a more or less visible platform for conflict in the area. The history of the Second World War had always been a focal point to

1 Aida Mia ALIĆ, "Bosnian Croat Village Lives With Traumatic Past", *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/bosnian-croat-village-lives-traumatic-past> <http://iwpr.net/report-news/bosnian-croat-village-lives-traumatic-past> (05.10.2013).

2 Semir HAMBO, „Na lokalitetu Tomašica kod Prijedora nastavljani radovi na ekshumaciji“, *Novo Vrijeme*, <<http://novovrijeme.ba/na-lokalitetu-tomasica-kod-prijedora-nastavljeni-radovi-na-ekshumaciji/>>, 11.09.2013 (05.10.2013).

3 Manuela BRENNER, „The Struggle of Memory. Practises of the (Non-)Construction of a Memorial at Omarska“, *Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft*, 3 (2011), 349-972.

serve political purposes but it has not been static.

This research focuses on the memorial practices of a memorial complex which is located at Mrakovica, the so-called tip of a mountain range in the Kozara National Park which lies in the Prijedor Region.⁴ Inaugurated by Tito himself in 1972, the monument, the memorial wall and the museum commemorate the *Kozara epos*, the suffering and fighting of Partisans and civilians during World War II at Mount Kozara.⁵ Over time and with changing men in power the memorial complex proves to be a site where history and memory has been constructed, de- and reconstructed, predominantly for political interests.

The Second World War represents a significant part of world and especially European history. Etienne François noted that “the memory of the Second World War has played a key role in the cultures of memory and still is, and that the identity of the contemporary European countries is built on the legacy of the Second World War.”⁶ Nowhere does the memory of the darkest time of the history of the 20th century seem to have lost its importance, continuing all the way to the present. Nevertheless, there are signs “that for the majority of Europeans the Second World War and genocide have not found their way into history, yet.”⁷ François speaks of *Gegenwart der Vergangenheit* – the presence of the past. The process of remembering the Second World War in the years after 1945 until today has not been static but has undergone several changes, which attracts the interest of scientific researchers. Master narratives, as François describes them, had a great influence after the war, were accepted by the majority of people and generally not questioned for a long time. Such master narratives included, above all, the defeat of nationalism and the German Empire, the worship of the soldiers, especially the Partisans, highlighting the heroes and victims and condemnation of the Nazi regime and its sympathizers. With the acquisition of such master narratives, the men in power in each country understood how to put recent history into perspective. Nevertheless, it began in the early 1960s, accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s, first in Germany and then in other Western countries that these master narratives underwent critical questioning. Finally, with the collapse of the Soviet Union the master narratives, or what was left of them, had to give way to new narratives, which dealt with painful memories which were previously concealed or suppressed. The collective memory of Europe developed a sense of duty of coming

4 Kozara is a low mountain range in the north-west of Bosnia Hercegovina in the municipality of Prijedor. It was declared a National park in 1957. Gojko JOKIĆ, *Nacionalni Park Kozara. Prijedor*, Belgrade: 1989, 22; *Nacionalni Park Kozara*, <http://www.npkozara.com/index.php?option=com_contact&view=contact&id=1&Itemid=49&lang=ba> (05.10.2013).

5 JOKIĆ, *Nacionalni Park Kozara. Prijedor*, 20.

6 Etienne FRANÇOIS „Meistererzählungen und Dammbürche. Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung“, in *Mythen der Nationen. 1945 - Arena der Erinnerung. Begleitband zur Ausstellung des Deutschen Historischen Museums*. Vol. I, ed. by Monika FLACKE, Berlin: Von Zabern, 2004, 13-28, 13.

7 *ibid.*

to terms with the past and commemorating the events of the Second World War.⁸

The memory of the Second World War in the former Yugoslavia and its successor states offers some special characteristics. In the 1950s and 1960s the anti-fascist perspective was presented almost exclusively. It included the Partisan myth, the victory over fascism and a clear differentiation between resisters and collaborators. The war was presented to the population solely as a national liberation war to push the civil war, which had taken place, into the background.⁹ The new state was built on the legacy of the Second World War and the glorification of the Partisans under the slogan of *brotherhood and unity*. The communist regime fully understood how to present the official memory frame to the population at all times and in all places. Memories which threatened the stability of the new state and the claim to power of the new government were neglected.¹⁰ Thus, those in power imposed a memory frame which did not allow the much needed processing of the events of the Second World War. After Tito's death, nationalists took advantage of this fact. Conflicts on the memorial level appeared and were exploited and radicalized for political purposes. The prescribed master narrative had to give way to new interpretations of nationalist groups. A decoding of the events of the Second World War could especially be noticed on the Serbian side from the mid-1980s on. The Serbian Četnik-movement for example was no longer accused of collaborating with the allies, but attributed their acts as self-defence of the Serbian people. Perpetrators were suddenly transformed into heroes, and the former heroes, fighters of the common cause, were transformed into perpetrators. With the disintegration of the country at the end of the 1980s, the Yugoslav narrative ceased to exist and had to give way to various national narratives.¹¹ Several studies attempt to establish the connection between the politics of memory and the escalation of violence in the early 1990s. Heike Karge refers to several studies

8 Ibid, 13-28; Further reading on the topic: FLACKE, *Mythen der Nationen* Vol. II, Berlin, Mainz: Von Zabern, 2004; Tony JUDT, *Geschichte Europas von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, Frankfurt a. M et al: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 2006; Helmut KÖNIG - Manfred SICKING - Julia SCHMIDT (ed.), *Europas Gedächtnis. Das neue Europa zwischen nationalen Erinnerungen und gemeinsamer Identität*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2008; Harald WELZER (ed.), *Der Krieg der Erinnerung. Holocaust, Kollaboration und Widerstand im europäischen Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2007.

9 Natalija BAŠIĆ, „Wen interessiert heute noch der Zweite Weltkrieg? Tradierung von Geschichtsbewusstsein in Familiengeschichten aus Serbien und Kroatien“, in WELZER, *Der Krieg der Erinnerung. Holocaust, Kollaboration und Widerstand im europäischen Gedächtnis*, 150-185, 151-153; Further reading: Wolfgang HÖPKEN, „Kriegserinnerung und Kriegsverarbeitung auf dem Balkan. Zum kulturellen Umgang mit Kriegserfahrungen in Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert“, *Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen* 41/4 (2001), 371-389; HÖPKEN, „Vergangenheitspolitik im sozialistischen Vielvölkerstaat: Jugoslawien 1944-1991“, in *Umkämpfte Vergangenheit. Geschichtsbilder, Erinnerung und Vergangenheitspolitik im internationalen Vergleich*, ed. by Petra BOCK - Edgar WOLFRUM, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, 210-243.

10 HÖPKEN, „Der Zweite Weltkrieg in den jugoslawischen und post-jugoslawischen Schulbüchern“, in *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa* ed. by Ibid, Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung 1996, 159-178.

11 Holm SUNDHAUSSEN, „Jugoslawien und seine Nachfolgestaaten. Konstruktion, Dekonstruktion und Neukonstruktion von „Erinnerungen“ und Mythen“, in *Mythen der Nationen* (Vol. I), FLACKE, 374-413, 385-388.

which dealt with this problem, such as the investigations of Jansen and Bax, who undertook the experiment to show the interdependence of the Second World War and the war in the 1990s in the local narrative or the field of comparative textbook research and the history of historiography. Still others dedicated their work to the topic of post-socialist cultures of remembrance in the former Yugoslavia.¹²

In the following, I analyze the memory practices at the memorial complex at Mrakovica in the Prijedor region. The study is based on documents, interviews, and ethnographic observations which I gathered during several research trips to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010-2013.¹³ This study provides background information on the rise of the Partisan movement and the events at Mount Kozara in 1942, followed by the memory practices of the Kozara battle during Communist times, a brief overview of the situation in Prijedor during the conflict in the 1990s and the process of de- and reconstructing history and memory at the site from the beginning of the war in 1992 up until today. The relevance of local studies is emphasized through the heterogeneous war experiences in different areas and their communities. When it comes to the history of a war and the efforts to remember the events which took place, I do therefore agree with Young who claims the necessity for “every site [...] to be grasped in its [own] local context”¹⁴ and not to analyse a memorial only according to its

“conception and execution among historical realities, but also their current and changing lives, even their eventual destruction. This is to draw back into view the very process, the many complicated historical, political, and aesthetics axes, on which memory is being constructed.”¹⁵

Studying the memorial complex at Mrakovica and monuments in general, as Pavlaković explains, is of high value:

12 Heike KARGE, *Steinerne Erinnerung – versteinerte Erinnerung? Kriegsgedenken in Jugoslawien (1947-1970)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2010, 23-40; Stef JANSEN, „The Violence of Memories. Local narratives of the past after ethnic cleansing in Croatia“, *Rethinking History*, 6(1) (2002), 77-94; Ibid, “Remembering with a difference: Clashing memories of Bosnian conflict in everyday life” in *The new Bosnian mosaic. Identities, memories and moral claims in a post-war society*, ed. by Xavier BOUGAREL et al., Aldershot et al: Ashgate 2007, 193-207; Mart BAX, “Barbarization in a Bosnian Pilgrimage Center”, in *Neighbours at War*, ed. by Joel M. HALPERN – David A. KIDDEKEL, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2000, 187-202; HÖPKEN: “War, memory, and education in a fragmented society: the case of Yugoslavia”, in *East European Politics and Societies* 13(1) (1999), 190-227; Ibid, “Kriegserinnerung und nationale Identitäten: Vergangenheitspolitik in Jugoslawien und in den Nachfolgestaaten”, *Tranist*, 15 (1998), 83-99.

13 Most of the relevant information for the analysis of the memorial complex at Kozara was gathered on a two months research trip to Prijedor between July and August 2013. I sincerely thank the *Bayerisches Hochschulzentrum für Mittel-, Ost- und Südosteuropa (BAYHOST)* for financing this research trip.

14 James E. YOUNG, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, New Haven et al.: Yale University Press, 1998, 13.

15 YOUNG, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 10.

“Public monuments are perhaps the most readily visible examples of a country’s culture of memory, and are therefore also often at the center of controversies during periods of political transitions. [...] Along with other kinds of memory which are not necessarily physical (public holidays, national symbols, institutions, etc.), monuments play an important role in celebrating a nation’s victories and commemorating its dead. But precisely because they are physical objects [...] monuments both represent a regime’s official interpretation of the past as well as challenge a new administration’s ability to overcome a problematic historical legacy. Thus the construction, destruction, restoration, or censorship of a country’s monuments allows scholars to analyze how political elites seek to transmit their ideological worldview and the mechanisms they use in molding the past for contemporary political legitimacy.”¹⁶

Using the stated approaches, I’m analyzing how history and its remembrance at Mrakovica has been constructed, de- and reconstructed since its instalment up to the present day and therefore “reveal the many layers of meaning in [...] memorials and to examine the process by which such monuments are understood.”¹⁷

We will come to see that during socialist times the memorial complex was founded to keep the Kozara-epos alive and was made to fit into the official memorial frame. The narrative included a high number of casualties, especially civilians, and the glorification of the Partisan fighters under the slogan of *brotherhood and unity*. The imposed official master narrative was hardly questioned for decades. During the armed conflict in the 1990s, the site underwent a transformation. New memorial frames were set up by nationalists. The new narrative referred not only to the victims of the Second World War but exclusively those victims belonging to the ethnic group of Serbs of the First World War and the conflict in 1992-1995. The exhibition had undergone another reconceptualization, before being reopened in July 2012. At first sight, it seems that measures have been taken to come to terms with the past and offer a less nationalist perspective for visitors. But while Pavlaković argues that memorial sites often tend to be the center of political transitions, this only partly accounts for the memorial complex at Mrakovica and the Prijedor region. A political transition towards a nationalist approach of history can definitely be witnessed during the conflict in the 1990s. But while

some important steps have certainly been made into a less provocative and ethno-nationalist driven direction, a political transition is not evident, yet. The conflict between different ethnic groups, which is often carried out on the memorial level is far from being less explosive. Opposing groups are still clashing on a regular basis. The involvement of the international community, as my former research has shown, remains crucial, and high-level politicians using sharp nationalist rhetoric maintain the existing gap between different ethnic groups. This case study and its discussion of the construction, de- and reconstruction of history and memory offers an insight into the complex post-war society of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its struggles to come to terms with history on the level of memory.

The Beginning of the Partisan Movement and the Battle of Kozara in 1942

The First Yugoslavia ceased to exist with the surrender on 17 April 1941. As a result of the division of the land by Hitler and Mussolini, areas were annexed, occupied or declared ‘independent’. Bosnia and Herzegovina and large parts of Croatia became part of the Independent State of Croatia, (NDH - *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, 1941-1945), with Ante Pavelić as its leader. Approximately 6.3 million people lived in the newly formed state, of which 3.3 million were Croats, 2 million Serbs, 700,000 Muslims, 150,000 Germans and other minorities. The extermination of Jews and Roma and the fight against the resistance movement were inextricably connected. The Ustaša government proceeded against the orthodox population while the Muslims were declared to be Croats belonging to the Muslim faith.¹⁸ Within four months after the establishment of the NDH, more than 100,000 Serbs were expelled from the territory, many of them being deported to the concentration camp Jasenovac.¹⁹ Despite the new government, communists remained organized. In July and August 1941 the command structure was reorganized and Tito was appointed as its leader. Under his command the 6,000 to 8,000 members of the Communist Party (KPJ - *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*) and at least 30,000 members of the Communist Youth (SKOJ – *Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije*) were ready for battle. On 4 July 1941, after the German attack on the Soviet Union and almost two weeks after the first anti-German Partisan action in Croatia, the KPJ leadership called for an armed uprising from their hiding place in Belgrade. The number of Partisan fighters rose continuously and increased to more than 300,000 in 1943-1944. On 16 September 1941 Hitler

16 Vjeran PAVLAKOVIĆ, “Contested Histories and Monumental Pasts: Croatia’s Culture of Remembrance”, in *MOuMENTI. Promenljivo lice sećanja – The Changing Face of Remembrance*, ed. by Daniel BRUMUND – Christopher PFEIFER, Belgrade: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst 2012, 24-25, 25.

17 YOUNG, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 10.

18 Marie-Janine CALIC, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens im 20. Jahrhundert*, München: Beck, 2010, 137-139.

19 Holm Sundhaussen, *Experiment Jugoslawien. Von der Staatsgründung bis zum Staatszerfall*, Mannheim et al.: BI-Taschenbuchverlag, 1993, 74-75.

ordered the destruction of the resistance movement in the South East region.²⁰

Kozara suffered a first attack in November 1941. The attempt to completely expel the Partisans from the area failed. Due to the lack of troops the offense lasted only two days.²¹ Despite “the powerful Ustasha-Home Guard garrison”²² the 2nd *Krajina Partisan Unit* managed to gain control over Prijedor on 16 May 1942.²³ During the takeover the Partisans succeeded in taking 1,300 enemy soldiers captive, seizing a large amount of ammunition and shutting down a significant part of the communications system in Bosnia.²⁴ According to Dulić it remains unclear what happened after the takeover. Analyzing NDH documents Dulić concluded interrogations accompanied by torture, which eventually ended in the killing of more than 300 Croats and Muslims, were likely to have happened. The Partisans justified their actions by accusing the captives, mostly soldiers, of committing crimes, but also civilians for collaborating and belonging to the enemy as such. Shortly thereafter, the Germans and the NDH struck back. They launched a second offensive to regain control over the region on 10 June which lasted until 30 July. The German General Friedrich Stahl had sent over 38,000 soldiers, the majority being Ustaše, to surround and kill the 3,500 Partisans.²⁵ A plaque at the museum at Kozara states the following:

“On the 10th of June 1942, one of the greatest battles of the National

20 Slavko GOLDSTEIN, „Der Zweite Weltkrieg“, in *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg. Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte, Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, ed. by Dunja MELČIĆ, Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, 170-191, 177-178; Further reading: Michael W. WEITHMANN, *Balkan Chronik. 2000 Jahre zwischen Orient und Okzident*, Regensburg: Pustet et al., 2000, 406-423; Srdjan TRIFKOVIĆ, “Rivalry between Germany and Italy in Croatia 1942-1943”, *Historical Journal*, 36/4 (1993), 879-904; Tvrtko P. SOJČIĆ: *Die „Lösung“ der kroatischen Frage zwischen 1939 und 1945. Kalküle und Illusionen*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008; John R. LAMPE: *Yugoslavia as History. Twice There was a Country*. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Laudislaus HORY - Martin BROZSAT, *Der Kroatische Ustascha-Staat. 1941-1945*. Stuttgart: Dr. Verl.-Anst., 1965; Sabrina P. RAMET, *Die drei Jugoslawien. Eine Geschichte der Staatsbildungen und ihre Probleme*. München: Oldebourg, 2011.

21 Klaus SCHMIDER: *Partisanenkrieg in Jugoslawien 1941-1944*, Hamburg: Mittler, 2002, 147.

22 Enver REDŽIĆ: *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Second World War*. London et al.: Routledge, 2012, 214.

23 REDŽIĆ: *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Second World War*, 214; Mladen Stojanović became the leader of the uprising at Kozara and was killed between 31 March and 1 April 1942. In his efforts of the liberation war in the Prijedor region he became a local hero. The house in which he was born was turned into a museum and is still open today. A statue of Stojanović is placed in front of the municipality building in Prijedor. Manuela BRENNER, research trip to Prijedor between July and August, 2013; a very detailed description of the events at Mount Kozara can be found in: Ljubo MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, Novi Sad: Dnevnik, 1987; Further reading: Milorad GONČIN: *Kozara. izbor sjećanja, književnih zapisa i pjesama*, Gornji Milanovac: Dečje Novine, 1982; Branko BABIĆ: *Ljudi i Bitke na Kozari*. Banja Luka et al.: Glas et. al., 1982;

24 Tomislav DULIĆ, *Utopias of Nation. Local Mass Killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1941-42*, Uppsala: University, 2005, 243; A plaque at the museum states the following: “During this Prijedor operation, 1300 enemy soldiers were captured and large number of arms and war gear was seized. [...] [On 23rd of May] pilots Franjo Kluz and Rudi Čajevec landed on temporary Urije airport near Prijedor. Those were the first airplanes in Partisan forces.” Museum at Mrakovica, 13.08.2013.

25 The numbers of attacking soldiers or victims differ slightly but not significantly when analyzing different sources. E. g. Veljko Rodić mentioned a number of 45,000 soldiers attacking the Partisans at Mount Kozara. Rodić is the president of Union of Veterans of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia (SUBNOR - Savez udruženja boraca narodnooslobodilačkog rata Jugoslavije) for Prijedor. Interview with Veljo RODIĆ, 20.08.2013.

Liberation War had begun. The battle for Kozara. Ten times stronger enemy, backed up with strong artillery fire, airplanes and aviation, began their attack on free territory with the aim of destruction of Partisan forces. In 24 hour combats which lasted from the 10th til the 30th of June 1942, the Partisan forces caused great losses to enemy forces and seized a great deal of arms. With their heroic fight suffering great losses, Kozara Partisans were defending their positions protecting that way 500 wounded soldiers and 80000 women, children and old people who run away before enemy atrocities.”²⁶

The aggressor regained control eventually. The offensive at Kozara differed from all the others that had previously taken place on Yugoslav soil. The difference showed in the attempt to deport the population of the region and, therefore, prohibit it from being a refugee for Partisans any longer. This meant the relocation of the entire civic population.²⁷ “According to the estimate of the District Committee, the Partisans lost (including local population) between 10,000 and 15,000 people and approximately 70,000 and 80,000 people were sent to concentration camps”,²⁸ about 50,000 women and children among them.²⁹ According to Veljko Rodić the number of child victims was as high as 20,000.³⁰ A plaque at the museum states the “[t]otal number of people killed is over 45,000. 38,188 were victims of fascist terror, 13,186 of them were children, 68,600 Kozara people were allocated in concentration camps and 23,858 of them were children.”³¹ Even though the offensive was counted as a success by the Germans and the NDH leaders, they did not destroy the Partisan movement of Mount Kozara.³² From the time the Germans regained control over the region until the final liberation of Prijedor on 8 September 1944, the population suffered terror, especially targeted against Serbs and communists.³³

26 Museum at Mrakovica, 13.08.2013.

27 SCHMIDER, *Partisanenkrieg in Jugoslawien 1941-1944*, 148.

28 REDŽIĆ, *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Second World War*, 215; Further reading on the history and remembrance of the Jasenovac concentration camp: SUNDHAUSSEN: “Jasenovac 1941-1945 – Diskurse über ein Konzentrationslager als Erinnerungsort”, in *Orte des Grauens. Verbrechen im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. by Gerd R. UEBERSCHÄR, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003, Marija VULESICA, „Kroatien“, in *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, ed. by Wolfgang BENZ - Barbara DISTEL, München: Beck, 2009, 313-336; KARGE, *Steinerne Erinnerung – versteinerte Erinnerung? Kriegsgedenken in Jugoslawien (1947-1970)*; DULIĆ, *Utopias of Nation*; Milan BULAJIĆ, *Tudjman's „Jasenovac Myth“*, Belgrade: Ministry of Information of the Republic of Serbia, 1992. Ivo GOLDSTEIN - Slavko GOLDSTEIN, *Jasenovac i Bleiburg nisu isto*, Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2011.

29 Ahmet ĐONLAGIĆ - Žarko ATANACKOVIĆ - Dušan PLENČA, *Jugoslawien im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Belgrade: Interpress, 1967, 96; See also DULIĆ, *Utopias of Nation*, 247-254.

30 Interview with Veljko Rodić: 20.08.2013.

31 Museum at Mrakovica, 13.08.2013.

32 REDŽIĆ, *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Second World War*, 215.

33 Interview with Veljko RODIĆ: 20.08.2013.

The Memorial Complex at Mrakovica during Communist Yugoslavia

Numerous monuments, various songs, poems and movies create a diverse memory culture of the events at Mount Kozara during the Second World War.³⁴ About 120 monuments dedicated to the Partisans can be found in the Prijedor region.³⁵ The best known monument devoted to the Kozara-epos is the memorial complex at Mrakovica. It was erected at an altitude of 806 metres in the center of the National Park Kozara.³⁶ Mrakovica was created by Dušan Džamonja, a sculptor from Zagreb. Funds were provided by labor and social organizations and voluntary donations by people from all over Yugoslavia. It was officially opened on 10 September 1972 by Tito himself:

“Kozara has survived one of the most difficult and one of the most famous epics in the history of our people at the same time. Kozara epic had a great significance for the Yugoslavia National Liberation Front (NOB) in whole because it was the first great battle where unarmed people participated as well. [...] In the battle at Kozara many victims have fallen for what we have today. It was the beginning of the greatest struggle for brotherhood and unity in our country.”³⁷

The memorial complex was designed with two parts, a preparatory and a central part. The first part includes a plateau in the shape of a circle in which the names of the founders of the complex were inscribed.³⁸ Right behind the plateau a broad stairway bordered by trees leads to the central part. On the right side of the stairways there are three circles. Every circle had its own inscription:³⁹

“As many breaches as there are at Mount Kozara
the more young Partisans are there.”⁴⁰

“At Kozara we are brothers,

34 The most famous song about the suffering of the people is *Stojanka Majka Knežopoljka* by Skender Kulenović. A collection of poems and songs can be found in GONČIN: *Kozara. izbor sjećanja, književnih zapisa i pjesama*; The among the Yugoslav population well known movie *Kozara* by Veljko Bulajić can be found online on various websites: “Watch Kozara (1962) Free Online”, *VGuide*, <http://www.ovguide.com/kozara-9202a8c04000641f8000000015eebfec#> (05.10.2013).

35 Rodić explained this monument boom with the number of child victims, 20,000. He underlined that never in a war before had the number of child victims been this high. Interview with Veljo RODIĆ, 20.08.2013.

36 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 808.

37 Prijedor, 1972; see also MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*; JOKIĆ, *Nacionalni Park Kozara. Prijedor*, 3.

38 The inscriptions are no longer visible.

39 The inscriptions are no longer visible.

40 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 808.

where mothers don't give birth to traitors.”⁴¹

“The battle of Kozara is over,
Kozara was solemnly crowned.”⁴²

The central part consists of a monument, a memorial wall and a museum. The vertical sculpture is at the center of the complex. It rises to a height of 33 metres. The sculpture was built of reinforced concrete with integrated vertical slats made of steel. The light reflection was said to be seen from a great distance and intended to symbolize freedom. It is surrounded by cement blocks with a length of up to 30 metres pointing in the direction of the sculpture to symbolize the physical pressure of the enemies on Kozara. Mihić describes the architect's aim to create the impression of a kind of aggression which kills all living organs.⁴³ The horizontal sides of the monument symbolize hostile aggression, whereas the central vertical part symbolizes death, victory and the heroism of the people. “The artist wanted it to represent the greatness of the victory against one dark ideology – against Fascism and Nazism.”⁴⁴

Behind the monument is a memorial wall with the following inscription at the entrance “Oh Kozara, you don't need any rain, you are watered by the blood of our heroes.”⁴⁵ An eternal flame could be found in the middle, surrounded by the memorial wall.⁴⁶ It has 9,931 of the names of killed anti-fascists inscribed. According to the curator of the memorial complex, Čika Mića, it is “one of the longest lists of this kind in this part of the world. 96 % of the names are Serbs, 2 % Bosniaks, 1 % Croats and others.”⁴⁷ As historian Simone Malavolti points out, the importance lies in the arrangement of the names. They were arranged by village to point out the participation of all villages in the fight against fascism. Back then,

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 809.

43 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 809.

44 Čika MIĆA, *What kind of memorials do we want to build?*, by Čazim DERVIŠEVIĆ, 2012, 08:35-11:30; A project entitled *Dealing with Difficult Past in the Western Balkans and Western Europe. Developing a Platform for Trans-European Exchange and Cooperation* was launched in June 2010: “In October 2011, 40 representatives of Memorial Centers and NGOs working in the field of memory cultures in Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany Hungary, Italy, Serbia and Slovenia gathered for a study trip and a workshop. The two-day study trips included visits to the Memorial Jasenovac (Croatia), the Memorial Donja Gradina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and to memory sites in Vukovar (Croatia). The three-day workshop took place in Prijedor (BiH) and included presentations on the situation in Prijedor and memorialisation-challenges in Europe, field visits to memory sites in Prijedor and working group-sessions on concrete challenges the participants are facing in their work around memory sites.” The workshops were organized and coordinated by French-German Youth Office (Berlin/Paris), the Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH (Sarajevo), Documenta – Centar for dealing with the past (Zagreb) and the Centre André Malraux Sarajevo (Sarajevo/Paris). What followed was a DVD entitled *What kind of memorials do we want to build?*.

45 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 810.

46 Ibid.

47 MIĆA, *What kind of memorials do we want to build?*, 08:35-11:30.

fighters for the common cause were not divided among national groups.⁴⁸

Also included is a museum next to the monument and the memory wall. The initial exhibition at the museum, entitled *Kozara NOR-u*, provided visitors with general information about the Kozara region during the Second World War.⁴⁹ It was divided into three different chronological sections beginning with the rise of the NOR, followed by the attack of the enemies in June and July 1942 at Kozara and further developments of the NOR in the struggle for liberation and freedom. Apart from documents and photos a documentary about the events on Kozara was shown.⁵⁰ History classes used to be held there also.⁵¹ The history classes, the museum, the memorial wall and the monument formed the concept of the memorial complex which intended to give visitors an impression of the struggle of the Partisans and the civilians in the fight for liberation in the area.⁵² During communist Yugoslavia hardly anyone had not visited Mrakovica at least once in his lifetime.⁵³ A photograph in a brochure for visitors of the national park shows the stairway leading to the central part of the complex filled with people, who attended a history class to hear about the famous battle and its victims.⁵⁴ The history which was constructed around the Kozara battle at the memorial complex Mrakovica reflected and supported the official master narrative and, therefore, fit into the inflicted memory frame created by the communist regime.⁵⁵

The War in the Prijedor Region – From a Master Narrative to a Different Narrative

During the Bosnian War of 1992-95 the Prijedor region became particularly known because of the camps which were erected as a result of an ethnic cleansing campaign in 1992. The nationalist ideology, which was mainly used by politicians and spread in the media, steadily gained influence. According to a census in 1991

48 Simone MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“, *Osservatorio balcani e caucaso*, <http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/aree/Balcani/Un-viaggio-tra-le-memorie-divise-103668>, 20.02.2009 (the link for the article never worked. I contacted the editorial of *Osservatorio balcani e caucaso* which then send me version of the article.)

49 “National Liberation War (NOR - *Narodnooslobodilački rat*).

50 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 810.

51 Interview with Veljko RODIĆ: 20.08.2013. Rodić, born in 1941, also explained to me that he had worked ‘up there’ for more than thirty years and also gave history lessons. Driven by the history and suffering of his own family, his father was killed in one of the battles, he became involved in commemorating and communicating the events. During the history lessons he would provide general information about the area and the symbolism of the memorial complex. But his focus would be on the height of the monument and the suffering of the children. The height for him stands for those who fought and won. They stand above all evil, above the small enemy. During the interview he pointed out that most of the 20,000 child victims were Serbs.

52 MIHIĆ, *Kozara. Priroda, Čovjek, Istorija*, 808-811.

53 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

54 Gojko JOKIĆ, *Nacionalni Park Kozara. Prijedor*, 24.

55 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

the demographic structure showed a slight majority of Bosniaks (44 %), followed by Serbs (42.5 %), Croats (5.6 %), Yugoslavs (5.7 %), and Others (2.2 %).⁵⁶ This changed dramatically with the outbreak of war. On 30 April 1992 Serb forces seized control over Prijedor. The non-Serb population was immediately affected after the takeover. In the course of the ethnic cleansing campaign, many boys and men were taken to the camps Omarska, Trnopolje and Keraterm. The camp Omarska became known world-wide because of the brutality with which camp detainees were interrogated, tortured and often killed. The Omarska camp was closed in early August under pressure from the international community but living conditions for the non-Serb population in the area hardly improved. Since the Dayton peace agreement in 1995 the Prijedor municipality is part of the Serbian entity, Republika Srpska, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, Prijedor is mainly inhabited by Bosnian Serbs, while Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats are minorities. Only a few who suffered and survived the ethnic cleansing returned permanently.⁵⁷

Whereas the events of the Second World War at Mrakovica were presented under the banner of *brotherhood and unity* by the communist regime, this master narrative had to give way to a more nationalist interpretation of the events at Kozara. As early as during the war, changes became visible.⁵⁸ A cross was erected at the plateau at the preparatory part of the memorial complex. This added religious symbolism which was not to be found there before and was clearly directed against the Bosnian-Muslim population.⁵⁹ Additionally, the exhibition was changed and remained like this at least until 2008. Already the title of the exhibition, *Serbian genocide in the 20th century: 1914-1918; 1941-1945; 1991 - ?*, introduced this clear nationalist tendency. As Malavolti points out, the question mark is of importance. In his view, it clearly “stands for a simple, yet evocative, rhetorical question: ‘Isn’t the umpteenth genocide against Serbs about to happen again?’”⁶⁰ The new exhibition was shown at several different places in Serbia and the Republika Srpska before it finally arrived at the Kozara museum.⁶¹ It

56 Dennis GRATZ, *Elitozid in Bosnien und Herzegowina 1992-1995*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, 178.

57 BRENNER, *The Struggle of Memory. Practises of the (Non-) Construction of a Memorial at Omarska*, 354-355. For a detailed description of the seizure cf. the Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992), Annex V: The Prijedor Report, S/1994/674/Add.2 (vol. I), 28 December, 1994, available at <<http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/anx/V.htm>> (05.10.2013).

58 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

59 At this time, it is not clear to me when exactly the cross was erected. It has never been removed from the site. During email correspondence with an employee of the National Park it was stated that nothing had been changed at the memorial complex since its official opening; The curator within the project *Dealing with Difficult Past in the Western Balkans and Western Europe. Developing a Platform for Trans-European Exchange and Cooperation* was also questioned about the cross. He stated that nothing but the cross had been added. Mića, *What kind of memorials do we want to build?*, by Čazim DERVIŠEVIĆ, 2012, 08:35-11:30.

60 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

61 Ibid.

was introduced to visitors as a temporary exhibition, which it was clearly not.⁶² It presented a one-sided story of “[...] the general persecution of the Serb population throughout the 20th century in a partial and exploitative way”.⁶³ The exhibition for example displayed a poster showing piled up dead bodies. These were framed by the inscription “*Serbs are the Victims. Vukovar, 1991.*”⁶⁴ Another poster entitled “*The Continuity of a Crime – The Final Settlement of the Serbian Question in Croatia*”. It included two pictures on the left which presented the years 1941-1945 and three pictures to the right describing the years 1991-1995, among other things, showing dead bodies. The number of pictures and the extent to which abused, tortured and disfigured bodies and actual body parts were displayed was striking throughout the entire exhibition. The pictures showed disrupted heads, open flesh wounds, gouged eyes. A different poster showed a male civilian on his knees, a soldier behind with a gun pointing at him and a catholic priest who is holding a cross up in front of him. The heading says “*Convert... or die! Catholic Persecution in Yugoslavia During World War II.*”⁶⁵ The message of the exhibition was clear. It was to emphasize the suffering of the Serb population. When a group of representatives of Memorial Centers and NGOs visited the memorial complex in 2011, the curator stated the following about the condition and the exhibition of the museum:

“This building was in a bad condition so we are reconstructing it. We will make a better exhibition and lights, a modern one, like in Jasenovac. My colleague and I went there twice and technically it was very well done. It’s another thing what we think of the exhibition. I will tell you nothing about the exhibition here because, actually, we don’t have the exhibition. We have parts of the old exhibition that is the vertical part, which is damaged and old and dating back to 1982. [...] So whatever you see here is only until 4 July. Whatever you see here is better not to see, because there is nothing to be seen. It is not pretty... Some of the photos are gruesome and my duty is to warn you, especially the ladies, not to go.”⁶⁶

62 Museum at Mrakovica, 23. May, 2010.

63 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

64 Vukovar is a town located in eastern Croatia, bordering Serbia. “In late August 1991 the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) laid siege to the city and overran it three months later. Vukovar was largely destroyed by JNA shelling and hundreds of persons were killed. In the last days of the siege, several hundred people sought refuge at the Vukovar Hospital. On 20 November 1991, Serb military forces removed at least 200 non-Serb individuals from the hospital and transported them to a remote execution site near the Ovčara farm, where they were shot and buried in a mass grave.” “Vukovar”, ICTY, <http://www.icty.org/sections/TheCases/InteractiveMap> (05.10.2013).

65 Museum at Mrakovica, 13.08.2013.

66 MIĆA, *What kind of memorials do we want to build?*, by Čazim DERVIŠEVIĆ, 2012, 08:35-11:30.

When one of the participants expressed her views about the exhibition and its building hatred amongst people, the curator’s response was “that the Germans had Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau and other concentration camps and [they] are not exhibiting what [they] did there.”⁶⁷ During the conflict in the 1990s and in its aftermath the history and remembrance of the Second World War was de- and reconstructed offering a nationalist narrative only. A political transition could definitely be witnessed at the memorial site. The history of the Serbian population throughout the 20th century was displayed as one of a nation’s suffering. The memorial site, once more, was used to suit political purposes.

Reconstructing the Past: Creating a ‘New’ Narrative?

First attempts to change the exhibition were made by the Local Democracy Agency (LDA).⁶⁸ The NGO had tried for many years to start an initiative which would make changes at the Kozara museum. A first round table “*Museum arrangement in the museum of Kozara National Park*” was organised in 2008. Park representatives, LDA members, representatives of museums in Banja Luka, the historical museum of Sarajevo, the Military Museum of Belgrade, the Genocide Museum of Belgrade, representatives of the Ministry for Education and Culture of Republika Srpska and others came together to discuss the memory and history of the Second World War. The goal was to try to reinstall the former exhibition which focused on the fight of the partisans against fascism. After the participants had visited the Kozara museum, each group gave their own presentation with suggestions on how to improve the current exhibition at the museum. According to Malavolti the round table was a success.⁶⁹ Right after the participants had met an article informed that about 250,000 KM would be necessary for the restoration of the permanent exhibition and for the reparation of the roof. The director of the national park mentioned a promised financial support of 30,000 KM by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, hoping for more support from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the local community, especially by the mayor of Prijedor, Marko Pavić.⁷⁰ Only a few weeks later it was announced that the necessary financial means were available and the amount of 250,000 KM would be provided by the Ministry for Education and Culture.⁷¹

67 Ibid.

68 The NGO is located in Prijedor since 2000. LDA Prijedor, http://www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/lda_dett.php?id=9 (05.10.2013).

69 MALAVOLTI, „Too much Memory, Too much Oblivion“.

70 „Okrugli sto o Nacionalnom parku „Kozara““, *GradPrijedor.com*, <<http://www.gradprijedor.com/drustvo/okrugli-sto-o-nacionalnom-parku-kozara>>, 02.11.2008 (05.10.2013).

71 Snežana TASIĆ, “Odobreno 250.000 KM za obnovu postavke Spomen-muzej na Mrakovici”, Глас Српске, <<http://www.glassrpske.com/drustvo/panorama/Odobreno-250000-KM-za-obnovu-postavke-Spomen-muzej-na>>

4 July 2012 marked the seventieth anniversary of the events on Mount Kozara.⁷² On the day of the commemoration the new exhibition was opened at the museum.⁷³ In the efforts to compare the new permanent exhibition compared to the former one, it clearly stands out with its use of new technology.⁷⁴ The new approach is quite similar to other modern exhibitions and is very reminiscent of the part of the exhibition dedicated to World War II in the *Museum of Republika Srpska* in Banja Luka.⁷⁵ The new exhibition displays weapons, documents and images. Most inscriptions, Cyrillic or English, which describe pictures showing refugees, prisoners or dead bodies generally refer to those in the pictures as ‘people’ and therefore avoid underlining the ethnic group they belong to: “*Germans taking captured people from Kozara*” or “*Kozara liberation soldiers helping refugees to flee from enemy invasion*”. Additionally, “Kozara National Heroes” are listed by name and a part of the exhibition, entitled “*They were just children*”, addresses the child victims. Even though images of dead children are shown, it can be concluded that the new exhibition avoids making many gruesome pictures available to visitors. The previously described posters which were displayed at the former ‘temporary’ exhibition are no longer displayed, and a link to the First World War or the war in the 1990s is not evident anymore. Some inscriptions which were carved in stone or engraved in wood were made illegible. Nevertheless, there are also some exhibition boards which explicitly point out the number of Serbian victims like for example one board listing the crimes committed to civilians at Potkozarje stating “*100,000 Serbian men and women*”.

Unmistakably, the newly installed permanent exhibition differs from the ‘temporary’ one which focused exclusively on the suffering of one ethnic group. The involvement of the LDA in the process of re-conceptualizing the exhibition cannot be underestimated. The round table was organized as a result of the initiative

Mrakovici/lat/16542.html>, 15.01.2009 (05.10.2013).

72 „Sedam decenija “Bitke na Kozari”, *Slobodna Bosna*. <http://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/1494/sedam_decenija_bitke_na_kozari.html>, 03.07.2012 (05.10.2013).

73 The main commemoration of the Battle of Kozara takes place annually on July 4th and is organized by the local veterans’ organisation. Furthermore, additional commemorations take place throughout the whole year to communicate the events of the region during the Second World War. E.g. April 1st marks the day of the shooting of Stojanović who is thought to be killed in the night of 31 March to 1 April and is therefore commemorated. More commemorations take place as listed: 24 April: the outbreak of prisoners at the former concentration camp at Jasenovac; 9 May: Day of Victory over Fascism (various local commemorations at different places); 21 May: establishment of the brigade Krajiska; 4 July: main commemoration on Mrakovica; Every last Sunday in June: memorial service at Patrija for the breakthrough of the partisans who were surrounded by the enemy at this time; 27 July: commemorations at different places to remember the beginning of the liberation war. Other commemorations take place on 2 August, every 1st Sunday in September and on 22 December. Interview with Veljo RODIĆ, 20.08.2013. This first interview with Rodić was conducted as part of my dissertation project. Further detailed research regarding the numerous partisans’ monuments and commemorations in the region is needed.

74 Museum at Mrakovica, 13.08.2013.

75 Museum of the Republika Srpska at Banja Luka, 15.08.2013.

which took years to happen and eventually led to the new permanent exhibition.⁷⁶ But unlike during the 1990s, this time a political transition is not evident. Reports stated that Milorad Dodik, president of Republika Srpska, commented on the commemoration on 4 July 2012 as follows:

“The battle of Kozara is a fine example in the struggle for liberation. As on of the first battles of the Partisan movement during the Second World War, we commemorate with humbleness and in memory the dead of this time. In bold and divisive battle, the Serbian Partisans of this region defended the lives of more than 60,000 people in the encirclement of the Ustasha and German soldiers. The Battle of Kozara [...] showed the indestructibility of the people and the Republika Srpska was created as a late response of national affiliation of the Second World War.”⁷⁷

Furthermore, he stressed the historical fact that

“[...] the partisans in the liberation war were Serbs. Only when members of different nations saw how the war would end and when it was clear who would emerge victorious, did they join the partisans. It is important to stress this because of those who nowadays try to twist history and falsely earn praise.”⁷⁸

Dodik uses clear nationalist rhetoric. This is significant since the past has demonstrated before what impact sharp nationalist rhetoric can have on a local level, especially in the follow-up states of the former Yugoslavia. Even though the new exhibition shows a less one-sided and provocative approach, a political transition towards a less nationalist attitude towards history cannot be witnessed at Mrakovica and the Prijedor region.

Conclusion

Since its instalment in 1972 the memorial complex at Mrakovica has been used to serve political interests. For Tito the site marked one of many places to secure the stability of the new state which was based on the legacy of the Second World War. The imposed official memory frame with its key components was

76 Interview with Sladana MIJEVIĆ (LDA), 17.07.2013.

77 “Sećanje na čuvenu bitku na Kozari”, HOBOCTИ online, <<http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/aktuelno.293.html:386846-Secanje-na-cuvenu-bitku-na-Kozari>>, 03.07.2012 (05.10.2013).

78 Ibid.

presented to the public at Mrakovica. It included the glorification of the Partisans and the suffering and torture of civilians but the civil war that had taken place earlier was pushed into the background. When nationalist voices became heard and gained influence the master narrative had to give way to a more nationalist interpretation of the Second World War. A new exhibition was installed. The new narrative included the history and the victims of the First World War, the Second World War and the War in the 1990s of Serbs only. A political transition towards a nationalist approach to history was clearly visible. First attempts to change the 'temporary' exhibition were made by the LDA as early as 2000. The NGO's efforts in the process of re-conceptualizing which eventually led to the opening of the new permanent exhibition on 4 July 2012 cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the involvement of the international community remains crucial. Dodik's clear nationalist rhetoric at the seventieth anniversary of the commemoration of the events at Mount Kozara is significant since the past has shown many times what impact it can have on a local level. Even though the new exhibition shows a less one-sided and provocative approach, a political transition at the memory level is not evident at this time. The constructed, de- and reconstructed history and memory of the Second World War and the conflict in the 1990s remain inseparably intertwined to serve political interests leaving intact the division between the different remaining ethnic groups.

SAŽETAK

KONSTRUKCIJA, DE- I REKONSTRUKCIJA POVIJESTI I SJEĆANJA: LOKALNI OBIČAJI SJEĆANJA U MEMORIJALNOM KOMPLEKSU MRAKOVICA, BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA

Manuela BRENNER

Ova analiza istražuje prakse sjećanja u memorijalnom kompleksu Mrakovica u Nacionalnom parku Kozara u Republici Srpskoj, BiH. Originalna ideja memorijalnog mjesta, prilikom njegovog osnivanja 1972., jest bilo očuvanje eposa o Kozari. Podignuti spomenik, memorijalni zid i muzej služili su kao sjećanje na jednu od najvećih bitaka tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata na jugoslavenskom području, tijekom koje je živote izgubilo više od deset tisuća partizana i civila. Tijekom komunističke vlasti memorijalno mjesto je uklopljeno u službeni okvir sjećanja: veliki broj žrtava, posebice civila, stavljeno je u prvi plan, a naponi partizana da postignu oslobođenje su glorificirani. Ključna komponenta te službene narative jest bio slogan bratstvo i jedinstvo.

Nakon vojnog sukoba 90-tih, lokalitet je prošao nekoliko transformacija. Novi okviri sjećanja su uspostavljeni od strane nacionalista čime je povijest dakle de i re-konstruirana. Nova narativa uključivala je ne samo žrtve Drugog svjetskog rata već također i ekskluzivno one žrtve koje su pripadale srpskim etničkim grupama u Prvom svjetskom ratu te u konfliktima 1992. - 95. Godine 2012. postava u muzeju je ponovo otvorena nakon što je provedena još jedna re-konceptualizacija, još jedna rekonstrukcija povijesti.

Analizirajući dokumente, intervjuje i etnografska istraživanja, sakupljene tijekom istraživačkih putovanja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu 2010. – 2013., ovaj članak pokazati će da je politička tranzicija prema nacionalističkom pristupu povijesti jasno vidljiva tijekom 90-tih na memorijalnom mjestu. Ali čak i s novom postavom u muzeju u Mrakovici, otvorenom 2012., koja nudi odmak od jednostranog i provokativnog pristupa, politički tranzit koji bi se doticao sjećanja na konflikte i koji odražava još uvijek postojeći jaz među raznim etničkim grupama nije vidljiv.