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IMAGES OF WAR. WAR IN IMAGES

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MEMORY AND MONUMENTAL REPRESENTATION OF THE GREAT WAR – BALKAN PROJECTIONS

Nikolay Vukov

Abstract

The current article aims to present the main aspects of the memory of the First World War in the Balkan states in the light of its visualization in monuments and memorials, and with regards to the tendencies that these commemorative practices follow over the years. Based on examples from different Balkan countries the article traces the main types of war monuments (village memorials, mausoleums, monuments to the Unknown soldiers, etc.) and outlines their place in the general European tendencies of war’s memorial representation as well as with regard to the national peculiarities and the “Balkan specificity” of such monumental imagery. Finding grounds in the abundant Western literature on monuments and memory of the Great War and applying a cross-national overview of commemorative policies in the Balkans, the article outlines the major characteristics of the memory of the Great War in the peninsula. The first of these characteristics is related to monuments’ social function that is to say their role in coping with the trauma of death and war losses, as an element of the overall “democratization” of death in the beginning of the 20th century, and as a factor in the conditions of “cultural demobilization” after the war. As a second characteristic the text outlines the close connection of monuments and memorials with the policies of national identity – a connection that determines their function of materializing the memory of the dead and at the same time modelling the identity (political, historical, and cultural) of the living. The third characteristic emphasized throughout the text presents the place which monuments have in the visual history of the Great War – as sites where death is “tamed” and “eternalized,” but also where – through rituals, commemorations, and visual testimonies – a post-war and post-traumatic realms of the visual memory of this First world conflict are formed.

Dobrinka Parusheva

Abstract

The current article aims at analyzing the way in which the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were visually represented in the most popular Bulgarian illustrated magazine of the time, Ilyustratsiya Svetlina (Illustration Light). The author uses as a point of departure the practices of representation of war and violence in the magazine which already existed before the 1910s and seeks to answer questions such as what type of representation of the war the magazine offered to its reading public; what were the dominant themes; what was the role of the visual material in the narrative about war; how were “We” and the “Others” presented, etc.

From the point of view of the visual the Balkan Wars were presented on the pages of Svetlina (Light) by a mixture of “traditional” and “modern” means: the reproductions of paintings, caricatures, drawings were used along with photographs. The new forms of visual representation pretended to reproduce reality and truth but the war time and the censorship limited them by means of various rules. On the other hand, the meaning of all images and of the visual ones in particular depends very much on what the audience constructs through them. Bearing in mind the fact that at the time photography was widely used to support the mass national and military mobilization and propaganda, the author claims that what the editor of Svetlina did was calling the attention of its readers to precisely what the Bulgarian government wanted the Bulgarian people to pay attention to.
The purpose of this paper is to present the Bulgarian-Soviet production of the first for both cinematographies feature film about the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 called “Heroes of Shipka” in the light of the discovered archival traces of it in the Central State Archives. “Heroes of Shipka” is designed and realized as a model and template for the Bulgarian national cinema but with a Soviet script, production and performance, with Bulgarian funding, and on Bulgarian property. Written archival traces of the film allow the detection of a more visible part of the relations and dependencies in an otherwise co-production. However, official written documents of Bulgarian institutions solely do not unilaterally outline the three stages of influence and dependence. The first one is the effective selection of the theme of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. The second one is the using of the topic of the second “liberation” of Bulgaria in 1944 and for maintaining the myth of the double liberators. The third one is in the form of a mutual team and a Soviet school for qualification of Bulgarian filmmakers. The written documents also allow us to discover details which show the ambiguity of this dependence and give examples for the Bulgarian active role in the process and for the Soviet help and protection, not only imposed but often wanted.
“ABREAST OF TIMES”. BEYOND THE ALTERNATIVE IMAGES AND HISTORIES OF SOFIA

Miglena Ivanova

Abstract

On 17th of June 2011, in the cover of the night anonymous young men painted one of the bronze reliefs of the Monument to the Soviet army in Sofia. The Soviet soldiers from this composition which represents the victorious march of the Red Army during the Second World War were turned into popular comics characters – the Joker, Wolverine, Santa Claus, Superman, Captain America, Wonder Woman, etc. – while the Soviet flag was painted with the stars and stripes of the American flag. A caption saying “Abreast of Times” was added beneath as well. The article examines several aspects of this particular case of street artwork and its sometimes divergent understandings, representations and interpretations, by referring to two substantial local debates – the debate over the future of the Soviet war memorials built in socialist times, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the debate over the nature of modern graffiti or street art and their increasing presence on some of the most important topoi in the urban cityscape.
The Balkan Wars (1912-13) and WWI constituted the first media spectacles of the twentieth century. They mark a transition from traditional forms of visual coverage of events, which predominantly consisted in paintings, cartoons, lithographs, and picture postcards to documentary media that should dominate the twentieth century: press photography and the documentary film, which pretended to reproduce exact reality and truth. Photographic technology had matured for market purposes since 1839, but the photo as newspaper coverage had to wait until the method of screened half-tone photos was introduced in Germany in 1882 and the first Kodak camera was brought to the market in 1888. This paved the way for the photo reportage as a profession. The introduction of the film in the middle of the 1890s and especially the introduction of the newsreel at the beginning of the twentieth century opened the way for information for an auditory that was illiterate. The Balkan Wars were not only the first ‘modern’ European wars at the end of the ‘long nineteenth’ century; they were also covered by new forms of visual mass media that could be used for massive national and war mobilization and propaganda.

My paper intends to place the Balkan Wars in the context of the visual history of the Balkans. It is divided in three sections. The first section deals with the pre-secular understanding of images, the second one places the meaning of war photography and of the newly-emerged film
production in the context of the visual history of the Balkans, and the third and final one.
С Италия в сърцето

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