

The role of the new urban planning ideas in the post-war formation of Białystok downtown in the years 1944-1974

Summary

The subject of the dissertation is the post-war restoration and redevelopment of Białystok. The war damage, suffered by many European cities during this conflict, led to transformation of these cities in later period.

The purpose of the work was to determine the influence of contemporary urban ideas on a formation of Białystok downtown in the years 1944-1974. Special attention was paid to the functional idea and its direct impact on the case studied, especially during the period 1949-1956, when it was rejected by stalinist ideology present in Polish policy and culture. The research of planning and urbanistic materials from 1946-1974 provided to make the periodic stages of Białystok's development and to identify the factors that influenced each of them. As a result they allowed to identify the most important elements shaping the structure of the city center, both in the examined time interval and as compared to the present state.

The work has five chapters. The first one concerns urban planning ideas from the end of the 18th century to 1974, and their evolution. The second chapter is devoted to research and identification of factors that influenced the spatial structure of the city from its beginnings to 1944. The third chapter introduces planning and urbanistic studies from 1944-1974. The fourth one compares the general plan from 1974 to the current state of 2017. Each of the mentioned chapters ends with a summary. The last one is their final synthesis.

The following bases of the transformations in the spatial structure of Białystok, have been recognized and described in the work: rationalism, the belief that man will be able to change society, the evolutionary character of urban ideas, the increasing importance of propaganda tools and the discrepancy between ideas and their cultural images, philosophical and cultural factors, common approval on the architect-demiurge model in designing, sense of mission and uncompromising urban solutions, distinction between the idea of functional thinking, the ideology of functionalism and the cultural image of a "functional city".

Research has shown that the formation of Białystok downtown (both restoration and redevelopment) took place under the influence of the Polish urban school of Tadeusz Tołwiński, whose student Ignacy Felicjan Tłoczek together with Stefan Zieliński were the authors of the plan of Białystok in 1948. The fundamental assumptions of the plan, despite the interruption of works after announcing the break with the idea of functionalism, were also developed in the subsequent plans, based on 'socialist realism' approach. The basic elements of the spatial structure in the functional layer appeared in the preparation of the general plans from 1959, 1964 and 1974. Finally the adoption of the general plan in 1974 determined the boundaries and size of the city's development, at the same time increasing the intensity of buildings in the city center. Despite the changing architectural and urban styles, the genius loci of the 1948' plan was still continued with respect to the functional ideas.