

COMMEMORATING THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE
FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Commemorating the First World War
in the Former Yugoslavia

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Vsebina

BOŽIDAR JEZERNIK	Memorial Heritage of the First World War and the Construction of Yugoslav Identity	9
DANILO ŠARENAC	Cleaning Up the Battlefield. The Serbian Army and its War Dead (1914–1918)	33
NENAD LAJBENŠPERGER	Financing Yugoslav First World War Memorials	51
STEVAN MAČKOVIĆ	The First World War Cemeteries and Monuments in Subotica (1914–2021)	65
INES CRVENKOVSKA RISTESKA AND LJUPČO RISTESKI	The First World War Monuments and Memorial Heritage in Macedonia	91
FRANTIŠEK ŠÍSTEK	Monuments and Commemorations of Fallen Soldiers from the First World War in Montenegro, 1918-1941	117
AMRA ČUSTO	The Politics of Remembrance of the First World War and Monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina	147

LJILJANA DOBROVŠAK	The Forgotten Heritage of the First World War in Croatia	177
MARKO VUKIČEVIĆ	Public Memorials and Monuments from the First World War Period in Zagreb: Lost Signs of the Great War	205
VIJOLETA HERMAN KAURIĆ	The Battle for Commemorating the First World War Centenary in Croatia	229
PETRA SVOLJŠAK	Slovenian Remembrance Landscape in a Centennial Perspective	259
VITO HAZLER	Graves Were Tended and Monuments Were Erected to Soldiers after the First World War	287
BOŽIDAR JEZERNIK	Commemorating Fallen Slovenian Soldiers in Austro-Hungarian Uniforms and the Yugoslav Idea	307
	Imensko kazalo	327

Memorial Heritage of the First World War and the Construction of Yugoslav Identity

BOŽIDAR JEZERNIK

In the history of the South Slavs, the First World War was a milestone of enormous significance, not only because of the tragic destruction it wrought, but also because it brought about a geopolitical change that contemporaries called “the realisation of a millennium dream,” namely the establishment of a Yugoslav nation-state. Therefore, the memory of Yugoslav war victims provided an opportunity for reconciliation with the new nation-state, as the Italian threat remained in the postwar period. In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, on the other hand, the memory of Yugoslavs who had lost their lives during the war in Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian uniforms, including those who had fought on the Isonzo Front, was not honoured within the idea of liberation and unification. Over the years, some people, especially in Slovenia and less in other parts of the nation-state, began to look for new ways to honour the fallen soldiers in a different setting, which

opened the door to alternative commemorations with different interpretations of the war and its meaning.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY CONFRONTING THE YUGOSLAV IDEA

On Vidovdan 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie Chotek died as victims of the young Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip. Princip's shooting echoed across the Old Continent for four years, and in addition to the two victims in Sarajevo, millions of Europeans also fell victim to it. It started with loud counter-demonstrations in several cities of Austria-Hungary, which led to pogroms against the Serbian part of the population in Bosnia, Hungary, Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slavonia. During these pogroms, Serbian stores and houses were looted, the Evropa Hotel in Sarajevo was destroyed, and Orthodox churches were desecrated. The pogrom against Serbs took its most brutal form in Sarajevo and in the border towns with Serbia and Montenegro, where there were also several murders (Klemenčič 1914: 17; Banjanin 1915: 20–1; Bartulović 1925: 45–7; Obradović 1928: 7, 17; West 1942: I, 382).

Shortly after the assassination, there were also calls for revenge against the Kingdom of Serbia. The world was watching closely to see how the Dual Monarchy would respond. A month later, when the Dual Monarchy moved to “write its history with the sword and consolidate the foundations of its state with cannons, for the good of all its peoples,” the European powers were also ready to act. On July 31, Russia was the first country to respond to the Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on Serbia by announcing a general mobilisation. The Russian mobilisation served as a pretext for Germany to declare war on Russia on August 1 and on its ally France two days later. As a result of the German attack on Belgium on August 2 and France on August 3, Britain entered the war on August 4 and Montenegro on August 5; Turkey followed on November 1, joining the Central Powers. During 1915, Italy entered the war on the side of the Entente and Bulgaria on the side of the Central Powers. Finally, Romania sided with the Entente in 1916. Europe was turned into a slaughterhouse where millions of people died.

As the dark clouds of war loomed over the Yugoslav lands, they eclipsed the sun that had warmed the Yugoslav idea only a few years ago. The idea of trialism was dead, as was the heir to the Habsburg throne; the Russian plan was to establish Greater Serbia. Only a few refugees



Fig. 1: In commemoration of the World War. Austria-Hungary and Germany will inherit you. Down with the Russians! Down with the Serbs! Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

abroad still dreamed of Yugoslavia, while at home there was strong propaganda against Yugoslavism as those “ideas that are neither ethically nor politically correct” (Ušeničnik 1914: 289). The influential Catholic ideologue Aleš Ušeničnik explained in several places how the Slavs in the Balkans and in Austria-Hungary had the same dream that the great Dual

Monarchy would liberate the Balkans and “bring glory and freedom to Thessaloniki,” but forgot their great mission. The Balkan states have gone into battle without them, and on the field of Kosovo Serbian glory and Serbian freedom have risen from the ancient grave. It was not surprising, Ušeničnik said, that young Slovenian hearts also beat faster and dreamed “beautiful dreams of glory and freedom.” Nor was it surprising that this romanticism, which awakened in some young minds—“a longing for a utopian Yugoslav unity beyond the limits of reality”—was, according to Ušeničnik’s interpretation, “only superficially beautiful,” because it concealed the “political amorality” that was otherwise a feature of modern nationalism, from which emerged united Germany, united Italy, Greater Greece, and free Albania (Ušeničnik 1914: 290).

FIGHTING FOR THE EMPIRE

The mobilised Austro-Hungarian soldiers went to the battlefield to realise the “old ideals” while defending the emperor and the fatherland (Turšič 1914: 105), which in plain language meant throwing the Yugoslav idea into the Sava and the Drina. Many among them admired the German organisation and discipline as a source of German strength and envied the Germans for their intrepidity: “Yes, many of our souls knelt before the German God Mars” (Herceg 1919: 3–4). In this admiration they found courage and determination for the march of the avengers. The press reported daily dozens of heroic deeds from the battlefields of Serbia, Galicia, and the Italian border. According to these reports, the Austro-Hungarian soldiers, especially the Yugoslavs, were true heroes who overcame even the worst battles with “indescribable courage.” They attacked the enemy with joy and laughter and only reluctantly withdrew from the battle (Anon. 1914e: 42–3). At the end of August 1914, *Slovenec* published an article comparing the heroism of Yugoslav soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army with that of their Serbian enemies. “Certainly, no one is hiding, and our war leadership explicitly admits that the Serbs are fighting with great courage,” *Slovenec* reported, adding, “but the courage of our army is even greater.” The Croats, in particular, had distinguished themselves by their heroism: “One Croat for three Serbs,” the author of the article concludes, “that is the lesson of the Austro-Serbian war so far” (Anon. 1914c: 1).

Officially, since the declaration of war on Serbia, all the citizens of the Dual Monarchy sided “as one man” with their emperor and king and his glorious army. Neither their Slavic peoples nor the Yugoslavs,



Fig. 2: Obituary for Serbia. Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

although linguistically and ethnically related to the Serbian people, made an exception. Whoever insults Austria-Hungary, insults them too, they often heard. Therefore, they allegedly never had any doubts about their duty. From their religious leaders the soldiers heard told: “Be a hero!”, be ready at any time to give blood and life for your ruler and your fatherland as a true “man, worthy of your heroic ancestors” (Hafner 1914: 155–56). Although they would joyfully and proudly

take their heart from their shattered breast and lay it on the altar of the fatherland, they will perform only one of their duties in the presence of the Lord of the Troops. A soldier should not worry about his life and fear death, it was said time and again, because he was going to war for a “great holy cause,” he should only obey his commander. And if someone laid down his life for his country, then he sacrificed his life for the highest ideal and died as a martyr for his earthly country in order to win the heavenly country through his death (Hafner 1914: 156–58).



Fig. 3: “If the emperor likes his beautiful heroes, / Our maidens like them even better” (Simon Gregorčič. Postcard published in the series The War in Pictures, from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

The Austro-Hungarian propaganda machinery portrayed Emperor Franz Josef as the personification of the state. “We cannot draw the state, we cannot carve it in stone, we cannot see it, we cannot hear it ...,” declared military reporter Rudolf Peerz. “The only thing that makes it visible to us is the emperor. The state is embodied by the emperor” (Peerz 1917: 14). Loyalty to him had a deeper meaning and content, for it was both an expression and proof of patriotism (Peerz 1917: 3). And so, during the war, Catholic priests urged Slovenian soldiers to joyfully sacrifice their *vitam et sanguinem* (life and blood) to the beloved monarch, the “Prince of Peace” and “Father of the Austro-Hungarian Peoples” (see e.g. Hafner 1914: 7–8; 1915: 4; Palir 1914: 150; Limbarski 1914: 181; Pečovski 1915: 93; Holeček 1915: 2, 4; Šegula 1917: 27).

The ruling circles in Vienna were aware of the strong psychological impact of the Serbian victories in the Balkan Wars on the Yugoslav subjects of Austria-Hungary. In their eyes, the war was a means, first, to destroy the Kingdom of Serbia as the representative of the South Slavs outside the Dual Monarchy and, second, to suppress the growing national sentiments of the South Slavs within the monarchy. “We were united, and our eyes were on Serbia,” wrote Ilija Bošnjak. “Austria saw this and attacked Serbia in 1914, not because of Serbia itself, not out of mourning for Franz Ferdinand, but because of us, in order to suppress any hope of liberation in us” (Bošnjak 1918: 16). Already in the first days of the Austro-Hungarian mobilisation against Serbia, a rumour made the rounds in Zagreb that some high-ranking generals had been discussing whether Yugoslav troops should be sent to Serbia. At this consultation, one general is said to have ended his speech with the strong words, “Let the dogs slaughter each other!” It is not known whether there was any consultation at all or whether these words were uttered. But it was clear to everyone that this was in keeping with the spirit and traditions of the Austro-Hungarian policy of *divide et impera* (Banjanin 1915: 14).

The measures taken to this end had an effect, at least as far as the public was concerned. When the 53rd Regiment went to war in Zagreb in 1914, decorated with flowers and Croatian flags, it was enthusiastically received by the population (Stopar 1938: 19). Carried away by this mood, many mobilised Croats went to war eager to fight, believing that the destruction of Serbia and the victory of Austria-Hungary would also be their victory. Thus, as an Orthodox priest from Bosnia-Herzegovina, himself a recruit, explained, they

went to war in the hope that Austria-Hungary would create a Greater Croatia for them and thus “devour the Serbs inside and outside the borders of Austria” (Obradović 1928: 13). Voices to the contrary were not heard in public. Those who supported the idea of Yugoslavia were forced to remain silent or were driven to the fronts: “Official Austro-Hungarian patriotism celebrated its feast” (Stopar 1938: 19–20).

In order to put as much pressure as possible on the Serbs in the Dual Monarchy, actions aimed at provoking the Croats against the Serbs served the Austro-Hungarian state policy. A whole legend was formed around the name of Archduke Franz Ferdinand to show the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs what they had lost in him. Supposedly, he wanted to liberate Croatia in order to create an equal state within Austria-Hungary. It did not bother the Hungarians that at the same time they talked about the archduke being not only their future king but also their great friend, and that the Hungarians would veto any move in that direction. Some Croatian politicians, under the guise of Croatian patriotism, preached with fiery words that the Serbs had “destroyed all the hopes of the Croats.” They were supported in this by both state authorities and Catholic circles, who saw in the assassinated archduke their greatest hope. Franz Ferdinand was given the halo of a martyr for the Croatian national cause. The Croats were told that Serbia was the enemy of Croatia, not the monarchy, and that this was a war of the Croats against the Serbs. In this way, the mental mood was created with which the Croatian soldiers went to the battlefield (Banjanin 1915: 22–3).

On August 1, 1914, the Belgrade *Politika* published an article on the “use” of South Slavs in the war against Serbia. According to the author of the article, Austria-Hungary was threatening to defeat Serbia with its Slav regiments (nominally 60,000 soldiers each), which were grouped into eight corps. The Austro-Hungarian calculation, as stated in the article, was as follows: “If our Slav regiments defeat Serbia, we have nothing to worry about. But if Serbia defeats them, then these defeated Slavs will have a terrible hatred for Serbia” (Anon. 1914b: 1).

MARKO KRALJEVIĆ VS MILOŠ OBLIĆ

Slavic soldiers, “these Croatian and Serbian pigs,” were often used at the front to “slaughter with the Serbs” (Banjanin 1915: 14; Potočnjak 1915:

6; Anić 1919: 6; Paulová 1925: 84; Supilo 1970: 474). In the battles of Šabac and Valjevo, Croatian soldiers, convinced that they were fighting for themselves, raised the Croatian flag, whereupon the Hungarians threw it down and “disgracefully dishonoured” it (Potočnjak 1915: 6). On the Serbian front, in the front ranks, Serbs from Preko were also sent “to fight in Austro-Hungarian uniforms and fight against their brothers and their freedom and for their slavery” (Obradović 1928: 8). According to some data, a large percentage of those mobilised in Bosnia-Herzegovina were Serbs. When asked if they wanted to be in the line of fire, out of a thousand Serbs “only 18 answered that they wanted to go to another battlefield” (Blašković 1939: 81). However, when they reflected on their fight against their Serbian “brothers” after the war, many felt bad. At that time, many thought that perhaps it would have been better if Patriarch Čarņojević had not settled his flock north of the Sava and Danube rivers, because that way they would have all stayed together. Thus, if they had to fight the enemy, they would fight as united brothers, as worthy descendants of Miloš Obilić and Marko Kraljević, as well as of many other knights and heroes.

In order to properly understand and evaluate this tragedy, Jovan Banjanin, a pre-war Serbian politician from Croatia and a member of the Yugoslav Committee, warned in a text published in Niš (Kingdom of Serbia) in 1915 against making a general judgment that all those who were in the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian army had the same motives for fighting in it. In his opinion, neither education nor national consciousness is equally developed among all people of a nation, including Serbs. But, Banjanin continued, one should not forget that a good part of the generation still lived in the Dual Monarchy among the Serbs, whose most popular song was “The Serb likes to go to the soldiers” with the well-known refrain: “If the emperor wants, the frontiersman jumps to his death” (Banjanin 1915: 18). The troops gathered under the black and yellow flag, composed of South Slavs, who went into battle and fought bravely, were a great success of Austro-Hungarian propaganda and the heaviest blow against the Yugoslav idea. Their war heroism was publicly praised in Austria-Hungary and highlighted with pain in Serbia (Banjanin 1915: 15).

PROPAGANDA IMAGE OF THE YUGOSLAVS AND THE SERBS

Austro-Hungarian propaganda successfully fomented discord among the Yugoslavs by pitting “our Yugoslavs,” against the Serbs,

portraying them as “true heroes” (Kosi 1914: 22), distinguished by their brave battles against the Serbs. The fourth issue of the weekly *Tedenske slike*, which was intended to help Slovenian readers to follow the course of the war, contained a detailed description of the battles fought by Austro-Hungarian troops in western Serbia. In it, Slovenian soldiers were presented who supposedly distinguished themselves by their “special heroism,” in particular the 16th, 53rd, and 79th Infantry Regiments, in which mainly the Kajkavians from Zagorje served—whom the author described as Slovenes “by blood and nature and Croats only by citizenship,” or “true Slovenes”—and who were acclaimed for their bravery (Anon. 1914a: 3). “Well, it has always been like this,” added the official propagandist from the imperial capital, “where the Slovenian soldier has fought for his fatherland so far, he has always fought from head to toe as a hero, and that is how it will remain” (Peerz 1916/: 3).

With these battles, they showed the world that the “old Austrian heroism” had not yet died out, and with their heroism in the fight against the Serbian soldiers they proved that their high opinion of their martial virtues was only a wild imagination. Allegedly, during the war the Serbs made use of the most heinous means: they threw poison into wells, laid ambushes, used all kinds of tricks, and maltreated the wounded in a way that “the pen could not write.” Thus, the Austro-Hungarian soldiers waged war not only to punish brazen murderers and avenge a crime, but also to defend themselves against savages (Anon. 1914d: 6–7).

Black-and-white depictions of “our heroes” fighting “Serbian savages” served, of course, to raise the morale of Yugoslav soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms, but also to erect an ever-stronger *divide et impera* wall between them and their enemies on the other side of the front line. The reality of the war was not so clearly differentiated on the white and black sides, but it was also full of other colours, particularly blood red. Most Czech soldiers considered the Serbs as their “brothers,” and when sent to the front, they were determined not to shoot at them (Hajšman 1932: 35). When the soldiers of the 28th Prague Regiment were ordered to storm the Serbian positions during the Battle of Cer in mid-August 1914, they dropped their weapons and marched against the Serbian positions, while loudly singing a nationalist song: “Hey, Slavs!” Their fate was tragic: none of them survived. It remains unclear whether this was solely due to Serbian gunfire or, at least partly, due to the shots fired at them by Austro-Hungarian officers for their desertion (Bálek 2018: 23).

But on the other side of the frontline, too, the war took on an increasingly mythical image. Even the Serbian army did not simply go to war, but went in defence of the Serbian homeland “From the accursed dragon from Vienna, / Who opened his evil mouth, / To devour our heritage” (Pavićević 1920: 16).

However, the reality on the battlefields did not always and fully correspond to the wishes of the warlords. Lieutenant Marko Jakovljević of the 28th Regiment in Osijek, a Serb from Vojvodina, even achieved a two-hour truce with the enemy at the end of the fifth week of the war. His soldiers, Serbs and Šokci from Srem, and Serbs from Serbia, embraced and kissed each other. When the Austrian artillery began to fire near them, they parted with the cry, “Long live the Serbs and Croats!” (Jakovljević 1923: 5; see also Wendel 1925: 741–42).

On the other hand, even the battle lines of the opposing armies did not exclusively include citizens of one country or another. Thus, one of the first Slovenian casualties of the war in Serbia on the night of August 16–17, 1914, was Avgust Jenko, a Slovenian volunteer in the Serbian army in western Serbia, who could easily have been killed by Slovenian rifle fire (Kolar 1930: 5; Paulin 1936: 135; Ristanović 1989: 60).

After the end of the war and at the height of Serbian nationalistic triumphalism, a serious flaw in the myth of Serbian unity became apparent. Namely, the question arose as to how Serbs across the Sava and Drina rivers, who were sent to the front in Austro-Hungarian uniforms to fight against “their brothers” (Obradović 1928: 8), could be accommodated within this myth. Dušan Obradović, a former Orthodox military priest in the Austro-Hungarian army, offers an interpretation in his book published ten years after the end of the war, in which he refers to two great heroes of Serbian folklore. According to him, many of them on the battlefield thought that perhaps it would be better if Patriarch Černojević did not lead his flock north of the Sava River so that they would all stay together. And if they had to fight a war, they would do so as brothers in arms, as worthy descendants of Miloš Obilić and Marko Kraljević. “But for Miloš to fight against Marko?! Marko against Miloš, Serb against Serb, brother against brother. Is there a greater sadness and tragedy in a nation?” (Obradović 1928: 19).

Jaša Tomić, a Serbian journalist and leader of the Serbian Radical Party in Vojvodina, completely sidestepped this tragic issue. Instead of addressing the issue, he explained that at the end of the conflict, Yugoslavs from the Dual Monarchy fought in the Yugoslav Legion alongside the Serbian Army, emphasising that among the Legionnaires

were “an overwhelming number of Serbs” from Vojvodina. According to Tomić, this was “the only balm for our great wound,” because the Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes had to fight in this war “against those who were closest to them and who finally liberated them” (Tomić 1918: 1–2).

Finally, Serbian propaganda erased from collective memory the Austro-Hungarian Serbs who had fought in the war against the Kingdom of Serbia—they were forgotten as if they had never existed. This interpretation was fossilised in public monuments to the soldiers of the Kingdom of Serbia in Subotica (Vojvodina) and Trebinje (Bosnia-Herzegovina), from where Serb soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms were sent to fight against the Kingdom of Serbia. On the other hand, the collective memory of the “Croats” who had fought against the “Serbs” was not only kept alive, but also bitterly resented.

US AND THEM IN BLACK-AND-WHITE

The reality of the First World War was characterised by a black-and-white division of the world into “Us” and “Them,” with a clear ring of fire between them. The propaganda machinery on both sides of the front eagerly emphasised the facts that confirmed this worldview and sought to silence those who questioned it. However, the black-and-white division of the world, used as a means of mobilising for war, never quite lost its persuasive power. After the creation of the new nation-state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the division into “Serb” winners and “Croat” losers quickly led to deep mutual distrust, especially in times of crisis. In the new nation-state, however, these suspicions and mistrust also led to regular and frequent political and economic crises that caused some politicians to point fingers at others. Some presented these divisions as the main cause of all the problems faced by the citizens of the common Yugoslav state. For example, the famous English writer Rebecca West, author of an extensive travelogue on Yugoslavia, interpreted the country’s current problems in the years leading up to the Second World War as the inability of Serbs and Croats to live together because of the bloody war past. In her travelogue *Constantine*, as the author calls the Serbian poet Stanislav Vinaver, indignantly recalls the Serbian-Croatian conflicts during the past war:

They do appalling things and they make us do appalling things, these Croats. When God works through the Croats He works terribly. I

will tell you what once happened in the war. There was a hill in Serbia that we were fighting for all night with the Austrian troops. Sometimes we had it, and sometimes they had it, and at the end we wholly had it, and when they charged us we cried to them to surrender, and through the night they answered, "The soldiers of the Empire do not surrender," and it was in our own tongue they spoke. So we knew they were our brothers the Croats, and because they were our brothers we knew that they meant it, and so they came against us, and we had to kill them, and in the morning they all lay dead, and they were all our brothers. (West 1942: I, 89)



Fig. 4: E.H. R. Craniology. Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

The government and the population of the Kingdom of Serbia entered the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes with the consciousness of having won the bloody war and considered the Croatian and Slovenian lands as the liberated and seceded parts of the loser, parts incapable of defending themselves against other covetous neighbours (Rothschild 1974: 206). Victory in war never leads the victors down the path of self-denial, and Serbia's political leadership was no exception to this rule. Stojan Protić, one of the leaders of the National Radical Party, for example, said that never in the history of warfare had the victor fed the vanquished. This, according to Protić, would be "a cardinal and catastrophic political mistake," because in no case "can and must the victor feed the loser," but rather the other way around, regardless of who is stronger or socially weaker: "The motto that the defeated must feed, support and obey the victor, that is an axiom" (Protić 2006: 129–30).

It is therefore not surprising that the Serbian political and military leadership viewed the resolution of current political, economic, social, and cultural issues in the newly formed common state through the prism of their own interests. Many Serbs viewed the Croatian and Slovenian parts of the new nation-state as a liberated and detached territory of a war-torn monarchy that could not defend itself against Italy. Because of their war losses and their heroic past, the Serbian population expected a leading position in the new nation-state of the triple named nation. In the plain language of the political reality of the time, this meant that the Serbian political and economic elite was not ready to share power. Emphasising their role as members of the victorious coalition during the war and as the sole force of liberation and unification, they saw no need to share power with anyone, especially those who had served in the enemy coalition during the war and as such had not contributed to liberation and unification (Janković 1983: 389–90). Leading Serbian politicians, who held the lion's share of power in the common state even during the crisis, did not fail to mention the great Serbian sacrifices of liberation and unification. To make their portrayal credible, they had to paint the enemy as black as possible. Many of the claims they made to support this narrative were necessarily exaggerated, if not illusory, which made them easy targets for their critics.

For example, it did not go unnoticed that the Viennese government mobilised "1,356,000 inhabitants of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina" and sent them in Austro-Hungarian

uniforms to the battlefields of Galicia, northern Italy, Serbia, and Macedonia (Protić 2009: 219); however, those who drew attention to this forgot to mention that soldiers were also mobilised for Austro-Hungarian units in Vojvodina. Or that the “Yugoslavs” or “Croats” fought on the side of the Central Powers and committed “countless war crimes, especially against the civilian population” in occupied Serbia and therefore should have been condemned by the decision of the great Entente powers. These “Yugoslavs” or “Croats” had allegedly repeatedly failed to gain the status of allies of the Entente powers, so the only way out for them, according to the Serbian nationalists, was to unite with Serbia. “The idea of an integral Yugoslavia did them good. It was a cure for Croats and Slovenes and a poison for Serbs” (Protić 2009: 219).

In the part of the new common state that belonged to the pre-war Kingdom of Serbia, the interpretation of the war was set in the Serbian national framework with strong biblical connotations. According to this interpretation, the First World War was the struggle of David against Goliath with a dramatic climax of suffering between the retreat of the Serbian army over the Albanian mountains and the glorious resurrection of the nation at the end of the war. The war was anchored in the Yugoslav narrative as the most important historical event that served as the base for the formation of a Yugoslav nation-state (Troch 2015: 91).

The Serbian elites were adamant that their story of heroic resistance to a stronger aggressor, of Serbian suffering, of the martyrdom of the Serbian army, and of final victory was so beautiful that it needed no additions, let alone changes. They did their best to petrify it by erecting numerous monuments in Serbian towns and villages depicting soldiers in the uniforms of the victorious Serbian army, usually wearing *opanci* (traditional peasant shoes in Southeastern Europe) and a *šajkača* (Serbian national cap) on their heads. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Royal Court supported initiatives to erect monuments to fallen soldiers both financially and morally. Especially after the end of the war, Serbian veterans’ organisations frequently erected monuments to King Petar the Liberator. Local monuments to fallen soldiers and monuments erected to commemorate major battles were also popular. The Serbian veterans’ associations that erected these monuments portrayed the Balkan Wars and the First World War as a single conflict. Therefore, the dates 1912–1918 and the inscriptions “Liberation and Unification” were engraved on the monuments, as the liberation and unification of all Yugoslavs was seen as the goal and result of Serbian victories in these wars (Newman 2015: 57).

Soon after the end of the war, the families of the fallen soldiers began to erect monuments in all the villages and towns of Serbia, where mourning family members, relatives and acquaintances gathered. Over time, they came to terms with the loss of their loved ones, and it became a part of their personal and family identity. During this time, local committees for the establishment of memorials began to work to preserve the memory of fallen soldiers. They combined individual initiatives with state-oriented proposals and attempts to create a collective memory of the fallen through “their nationalisation, *i.e.* by placing them within the identity framework of the (Serbian, B. J.) nation” (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 134).

In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Serbian military conquests were celebrated with magnificent public monuments financed by the state, and Serbian soldiers and volunteers were honoured on national memorial days. In the Slovenian part of the country, there were fewer such celebrations, and in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Montenegro, or Macedonia there were quite rare. After several years of silence on the subject of fallen soldiers, in Slovenia complaints were heard from family members who were denied a place of remembrance and mourning. They found it “shameful” that most of the soldiers had not received even a modest nameplate on a church wall or in a cemetery, that not even a simple monument had been erected in a public place, that not a single memorial service had been held in their honour (J. H. 1923: 2).

As we have seen, although numerous Yugoslav soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms fought on the Serbian battlefield, they were not exclusively Croats; in addition to Croats, Bosniaks, and Slovenes were also present, and even Serbs were not absent. However, since they had been taught to see the world through the prism of black and white division into their own and the enemy side, they used formulas for interpreting the world that had been developed by exclusivist war propaganda.

THE UNHAPPY END OF THE STORY OF GOLD FOR BLOOD

After the establishment of the new nation-state, Serbian nationalists made sure that few, if any, Serbs would forget that Yugoslav soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms had fought enthusiastically against the Kingdom of Serbia (see Jelavich 1988: 121). It was all too easy for them

to add to the dozens of mutual prejudices, resentments, and suspicions they already harboured against the “Švabs” from across the Sava and Drina rivers. Nevertheless, this fact alone was a major obstacle to an official common memory of the war. In addition, the issue was never really approached in a thoughtful way, but was left to an unbridled mixture of triumphant complacency on the one hand and a stumbling search for an embellished image of the past on the other. When, after a few quiet years, the massive construction of monuments to the fallen soldiers began in the Serbian and Slovenian parts of the kingdom—a few were erected in other parts of the kingdom—the commemoration of the dead became deeply intertwined with exclusionary nationalist ideologies.

In the new nation-state with the Serbian dynasty, the predominantly Serbian government, and the army stationed in the Serbian capital, Serbian and volunteer military traditions and Serbian war sacrifices tacitly took a special place as a primary factor in nation-building. Croatian, Bosnian, Slovenian, and Serbian losses alongside the defeated Habsburg army were not acknowledged, nor were Yugoslav losses in the Bulgarian and Albanian armies (Bokovoy 2001: 251; Lampe 2006: 100). John Paul Newman, for example, tells of a Croatian war veteran who asked for the financial support he was entitled to. The official asked him if he had fought on the Salonika Front, and then rudely sent him away to beg for money from Emperor Charles I instead (Newman 2011: 56–7). For the former combatants of the Austro-Hungarian army, the new nation-state was “more of a stepmother than a mother,” because until 1925 Austro-Hungarian war veterans, war widows, and invalids received war and disability pensions that were 75% lower than those of Serbian war veterans, widows, invalids, and war volunteers (Svoljšak 2006: 285).

In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, there could be no simple commemoration and re-legitimation of a common history. Instead, citizens constructed the collective memory of the postwar period through complex processes of negotiation and repression. Old animosities, reinforced by wartime propaganda, became a serious obstacle in these processes. When Mars fell silent after four tragic years, the tongues of the Muses loosened again. All of them, especially Clio, were entrusted with the urgent task of transforming the antagonistic and divisive narrative that war propaganda had created and spreading a new, common narrative that would unite the citizens of the new nation-state. According to Karel Ozvald, the division created by the Great War could be overcome only by solving the problem, which he called “demobilisation of souls” (Ozvald 1920: 6). However, this never really happened, and even after the establishment of the Yugoslav

nation-state, the war divisions continued to work in the hearts and minds of the people, undermining the unity of the country.¹

When the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was established, it was crucial to reassess all values, which meant that Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had to be made Yugoslavs. Since it was a historical fact that only the end of the First World War opened the possibility for the establishment of the Yugoslav nation-state, the trials and tribulations of the war inevitably had to be included in the basis of the founding myth. However, for this myth to be accepted by the vast majority in the new nation-state, it was crucial to find a common interpretation of the war. The country's leadership failed to do so, however, because it was too busy pursuing a policy that, on the one hand, swept the issue publicly under the rug and, on the other, capitalised on the "lakes of blood spilled during the war." By doing so, they opened the door for the wicked and bad to gather and make a bad deal, as the saying goes. Without a common memory of the war years and their aftermath, people were left on their own to deal with their grief and pain. They all had a father, a brother, a friend, or a neighbour who was no longer there, and some families had been completely wiped out. This tragic situation provided fertile ground for political parties to capitalise on and mobilise their supporters. The lack of a common memory led to a multitude of particularistic memories that tended, more or less, to confirm the "truth" of the war propaganda about their former enemies.

As Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper (2000: 16) argue, the politics of war memory and commemoration consist precisely of various groups struggling to publicly articulate particular memories and the narratives in which they are structured and thereby gain recognition. In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, commemoration of the war consisted almost exclusively of ceremonies and cemeteries for Serbian soldiers. King Aleksandar and most of the Serbian army leadership made extensive use of their dedication ceremonies. Serbian military conquests were celebrated with magnificent state-funded public monuments, and Serbian soldiers and volunteers were honoured on national memorial days. However, this was not just for the sake of commemoration. The Serbian political leadership used this for its own purposes. By preserving the memory of the "lakes of Serbian blood

1 Years after the breakup of Yugoslavia, some claimed that the war divisions of the First World War provided too shaky a foundation for the unity of the new nation-state. Serbian philosopher Svetozar Stojanović, for example, claimed that "there were far-sighted people who doubted its solidity because it had been created by nations of different sides in the 1914–1918 war" (Stojanović 1997: 80).



Fig. 5: Kranjski Janez, sculpture made by Svitoslav Peruzzi and Lojze Dolinar in Judenburg, 1917. Erected at the Ljubljana Cemetery in 1923 as a “gravestone for the victims of Judenburg and Ivan Endlicher.” Published for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the victims of Judenburg. Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik

spilled in the War of Liberation and Unification,” the Serbian civilian elite arrogated to itself the right to lead the new nation-state founded in 1918 (Lampe 2006: 100).

The oft-repeated statements of Serbian politicians about the “lakes of Serbian blood” spilled in the “War of Liberation and Unification” finally triggered an angry reaction from some Croatian politicians. When Puniša Račić, a deputy from the Serbian National Radical Party, mentioned in the National Assembly on June 20, 1928, that he too had shed his blood “for the king and the fatherland,” a Croatian politician loudly demanded that he say how much his Serbian blood had cost so that he could pay for it in gold and the country could finally live in peace. Deputy Račić demanded an apology. When he did not receive it, he took his gun and started shooting at the Croatian Peasant Party’s deputies. His shots not only killed a deputy and seriously injured Stjepan Radić, but inflicted a mortal wound on the Yugoslav idea.

Thus, the Yugoslav idea was already dead before King Aleksandar christened his kingdom with a single name (Yugoslavia) in order to preserve the “national and state unity and integrity.” By giving the nation-state a single name, the king wanted to emphasise not only the unified form of the state, but also the unity of the nation that formed it, in order to balance the existing ethnic misunderstandings and conflicts. Due to the great authority and prestige that the king enjoyed among his subjects, he could have succeeded in creating the Yugoslavs. However, this did not happen, as the fear of such success guided the hands of the Croatian and Macedonian separatists, who assassinated him in Marseille on October 9, 1934 (Jezernik 2023: xii). After the death of King Aleksandar, nationalists in various parts of the kingdom loudly praised the king; in Slovenia, they even decorated the monument to fallen Slovenian soldiers who had fought in Austro-Hungarian uniforms with his name in gold letters, but they stubbornly insisted on preserving their own (contradictory and exclusive) memories of the First World War.

The First World War, as the first industrial war in history, also proved to be an extremely important milestone in the social development of the Old Continent. The assertion of the nation-state principle as the most “natural” form of organisation of political and social life became the norm. The old empires (the Russian, the Ottoman, the Habsburg, and the German) disintegrated, and on their ruins new nation-states emerged, including the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. On the one hand, the establishment of a nation-state was celebrated as the realisation of the ultimate goal of all nationalist movements, and so in 1918 many rejoiced that with its creation a “centuries-old dream” had come true. However, the First World War, which made possible the establishment of the first nation-state in which the majority of South Slavs were united in one state for the first time in history, proved to be

too great an obstacle. The division and mistrust in the interwar period, coupled with a one-sided focus on one's own right, proved to be such an obstacle that the leaders of the time who spearheaded the unification process were unable to overcome it. Instead of striving for common goals, they prioritised the assertion of particular attitudes and interests.

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Cleaning Up the Battlefield. The Serbian Army and its War Dead (1914–1918)

DANILO ŠARENAC

During the trials at the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia), expressions such as “cleaning up” or “mopping up” were frequently heard. These terms eventually became some of the keywords of the Yugoslav wars. The dictionary meaning of these expressions refers to the treatment of the battlefield once the fighting is over, a process motivated by hygienic and moral considerations. However, at the ICTY trials, “cleaning up” meant something different. In the 1990s wars, clearance and salvage operations also meant transferring the corpses of killed soldiers or civilians to conceal traces of committed crimes (Baljak; Đokić 2019: 407–19). Accordingly, the term acquired an additional, quite sinister meaning (NIN, August 8, 2008: 3).¹

1 This new meaning was also debated by Serbian dramaturge and intellectual, Jovan Ćirilov, in the Serbian weekly *NIN*.

Whether we are speaking about war crimes or other types of war-related violence, this approach offers a lot of potential for digging out some of the most intimate but also unpopular and disturbing aspects of war. The history of war is full of telling examples. Achilles' famous dragging of Hector's body behind his chariot is one of the first such examples that come to mind. There are numerous other equally effective cases, more rooted in reality and historical sources. Historian Dominic Lieven described the gripping scene of the Borodino battle site and how it was seen by the retreating French in mid-October 1812. It was almost two months after the battle:

The battlefield itself was a terrible sight. None of the bodies had been buried. Scores of thousands of corpses lay out in the fields or in great mounds around the Raevsky battery and other points where the fighting had been most fierce. For fifty-two days they had lain as victims of the elements and the changing weather. Few still had a human look. (Lieven 2010: 268)

The issue of sanitation at battlefield sites fits neatly into the vibrant field of the cultural history of warfare—a very dynamic and interdisciplinary part of First World War historiography. Moreover, studying the work of battlefield burial teams meant going a step backward from the currently very successful and still booming studies centred on post-war memorials. As one interwar Belgrade resident pointedly observed: the battlefield site conveys a completely different set of impressions than is the case of a postwar neatly arranged cemetery (Popadić 1931: 526.).

Consequently, questions must also be raised: How were the soldiers' bodies treated in the immediate aftermath of their death? Moreover, what were the consequences of these actions for post-war remembrance? The pathbreaking studies about battlefield clearance came from US historians who researched the Civil War. French historiographical traditions centred on the Middle Ages have also been of particular use in this respect (Faust 2008; Aries 1975). The issue has been tackled in popular culture as well (Tavernie 1989; Kadare 1963).²

Studying the Serbian case of 1914–1918 from this perspective is much desired. The dead on the battlefield show that artillery was only partially “the main killer” as many losses were caused by “culprits” that

2 The movie by French director Bertran Tavernie made in 1989, *La vie et riend d'autre*, tackles this phenomenon. Similarly, Albanian author, Ismail Kadare wrote in 1963 his famous novel *The General of the Dead Army*, which also dealt with the issue of dead soldiers and their remains.

had little to do with industrialisation or modernity, such as typhus and general exhaustion. On the other hand, human reactions when confronted with the “intimacy of death” left a deep imprint on soldiers and bereaved families. It can be argued that the way Serbian military and civil authorities treated the dead during the war marked, in so many ways, Serbia’s approach to its First World War legacy. More precisely, the fact that most of the bodies of dead soldiers were never found or properly buried produced important social but also political consequences. These affected the Serbs but also the entire Yugoslav state.

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE BALKAN WARS 1912–1913

The Serbian army had its battlefield sanitation procedure ready since at least 1875. It was written by the distinguished Serbian doctor Vladan Đorđević based on textbooks used by major European armies (Đorđević 1876; Marković 1890; Anon. 1893). However, in 1909, a newer, more up-to-date book was published. It was another pocket guide for military medical units, also based on the latest European standards. The manual consequently copied the solutions applied in German, French, Russian, and Swedish armies (Žerajić 1909). It was edited by a well-known Serbian military doctor, Milan Žerajić. Dr Žerajić ended his medical manual with a comprehensive description of the necessary post-battle activities. When the fighting started in October 1912, Serbian units used his manual, and they did so until 1921.

According to Dr Žerajić, the motivation for cleaning the battlefield was inspired by the “Serbian faith, moral, and hygiene considerations.” He noted that it was essential to clean up the battlefield site as quickly as possible (Žerajić 1909: 350). This was to be handled by a special burial team. A designated doctor, at the divisional level, was to be the main authority. He was to be assisted by officers of all regiments present at that moment in that specific area. A military priest was also to be part of the team. The workforce was to be composed of a number of soldiers and orderlies, equipped with the appropriate tools. The search for the dead and wounded was to be performed “even at the most remote corners of the battlefield.” Special search patrols were to be sent out on all sides of the site. In addition, not a single burial should be performed without the special permission of a military doctor (Žerajić 1909: 350).

Finding the men was the first task; the second was to separate the wounded from the dead. Then came determining the identity of

the soldiers. Dr Žerajić's pocketbook mentioned a small metal box as the key object in this process. There, each soldier kept a piece of paper with his name written on it. The soldier was given the box to wear around his neck upon mobilisation. All personal belongings were to be taken from the dead and orderly transferred to the command of the soldier's unit (Žerajić 1909: 350). Despite being technical, and in essence dominated by hygienic concerns, this manual is revelatory in terms of the importance placed on those who fell defending the country.

Each one who was killed on the battlefield sacrificed his life for the happiness of his fatherland and, consequently, should be buried with the utmost respect, as a hero and a patriot, and if possible, following the rites of the holy Serbian Church. (Žerajić 1909: 351)

Furthermore, the pocketbook provided detailed instructions for the proportions of individual graves. Dr Žerajić also added grim but realistic instructions for the burial process. Individuals' graves were only to be dug when losses were not "significant in numbers." If the losses were massive, it was allowed to bury up to five dead soldiers in one common pit. As was the case with individual graves, the dimensions of the large pits were also prescribed. The depth was also essential. For individual graves, it should be 1.70 metres, while the depth of common graves should be 2 metres (Žerajić 1909: 351).

The cross with the inscription was to be placed above the head of the buried soldier. The medical mission was also advised about the type of soil that was to be used for burial. Certain types could speed up the decomposition of the body, thus narrowing down the risks of contaminating the local farms. The same manual gave advice for the burial of dead animals. Fear of contamination was clearly the most important message of this section of Dr Žerajić's book. He also underlined that cholera, typhus, and amoebiasis posed the greatest threats on the site where armies once fought or camped. He insisted that all traces of human excreta, all organic waste in general, and anything that had the potential to rot was to be burned or disinfected (Žerajić 1909: 352). The doctor concluded his book with the message that the history of wars has demonstrated that more soldiers perished due to diseases than enemy fire or action (Žerajić 1909: 353). In the case of the Serbian army, his words proved prophetic.

Despite entering the 1912 war with such precise guidelines, as soon as the shooting started it became clear that the reality of war was much more complicated than the pre-war manual anticipated. Despite being victorious in both relatively short conflicts, the Serbian army lost more than 30,000 men. Their bodies were dispersed across the

Balkans, across Kosovo and Macedonia, but also in Albania and the vicinity of the town of Edirne (Šarenac 2013–2014: 85–102). The men were buried in various ways or, as had often happened, were simply left on the site where they had died (*Politika*, April 1, 1914: 1).

In February 1913, the Serbian troops in Albania participated in a nighttime attack on a strategic hill, overlooking the town of Shkoder, which was besieged for some time already by the Montenegrin army. The attack on Brdica Hill ended up being a complete failure for the Serbian army. There were as many as 814 dead, 18 officers included. The dead were entangled in barbed wire in front of the Ottoman positions. During the next few days, the Serbian commander attempted in vain to convince the Ottoman counterpart to bury the dead. He also invoked the articles of the Geneva Convention which Serbia signed in 1874, but the victorious Ottoman garrison nevertheless ignored the Serbian dead (Žerajić 1909: 358–59). The Serbian press wrote about this in May 1913, providing more details concerning the fate of the soldiers' remains. The situation remained appalling, and the dead remained in the "killing zone." Not only were they deprived of a decent burial, but they were also looted. The article revealed that the local Roma were often used for burial work.

The Serbs had around one thousand dead after they attacked the Brdica positions. They all remained on the field below the hill, unable to bury them. Gypsies are usually employed for this work, so they gladly accepted hoping for booty. Turkish soldiers had already deprived the dead of their weapons, but there were still some things left, and the Gypsies returned with shoes, belts, caps, handkerchiefs, and underwear. They later shared the loot in their camp, near the bazaar. That night, four Gypsy women left their camp to wait for their husbands, and when they spotted them, they went to meet them. At that moment, shrapnel, coming over from Shkoder, exploded over their heads, killing them all. (*Ilustrovana ratna hronika*, May 9, 1913: 236)

Soon after the end of the fighting in 1913, it became clear what a great logistical and financial burden the issue of the mortal remains of the war victims represented for Serbian society. From the obituaries in the press, it is clear how difficult it was to transfer the body to the home town or village of the fallen soldier. The families of the bereaved thanked the unit commanders or local authorities for their help in the transfer. The long lists of people involved in this process can be found in the "Gratitude" section of the obituaries (*Politika*, January 9, 1914 4).

After the Second Balkan War, a number of families hurried to the battle sites to exhume their relatives. Sources suggest that these were wealthier people who could organise and finance this intricate

task. Serbian officer Vojislav Šikoparija documented a case involving the exhumation of a lieutenant from his outfit by the name of Dimitrije Nikolić. A family from the prosperous Serbian border town of Šabac brought with them a zinc coffin. The regiment commander was present at the site as he wished to supervise the whole exhumation process. He was very nervous, afraid that the soldiers digging might catch some illness. Indeed, this was a time when cholera had just ceased ravaging the Serbian army. Šikoparija recalled the dead officer's perfectly preserved face that appeared once the coffin was opened: "The parents saw their son and they wept bitterly." The mood was very grim and depressive. Officers pulled the parents aside, attempting to console them until the work was over (Šikoparija 2014: 110–11). A similar scene was documented in Kosovo. A wealthy Jewish family from Belgrade traveled there to exhume the body of their son, also an officer killed while fighting against local Albanians in the town of Uroševac in 1912 (Marković 1977: 58).

Most Serbian peasants, however, had to accept the fact that their beloved would, at best, be left in improvised military cemeteries arranged along major battle sites. The process of properly burring or transporting the dead was never finished as the new conflict erupted in 1914. The news of the mass graves of Serbian soldiers, killed in 1913 and buried in haste, with all their weapons and other belongings, emerged from time to time in interwar Yugoslavia, testifying how abruptly caring for the dead of 1912–1913 was halted.

THE INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF 1914

Serbian artilleryman, Mileta M. Prodanović, left a rare and detailed account of how the Serbian dead were treated in the early days of the First World War. He wrote about his late brother who was killed in the Battle of Cer in mid-August 1914. Moreover, he testified on the impact of the first deaths on Serbian society. His brother, Zdravko Prodanović, was a cavalryman who was engaged in ferocious street fighting in the strategic village of Prnjavor. Mileta Prodanović went to search for his brother's grave practically still during the battle. The men from his brother's unit showed him the exact location of the fight and where he was killed. The fellow combatants also provided other details. Namely, another soldier was also killed on the same spot, and he was trying to assist the first casualty. Prodanović noted in his diary that fresh blood traces were still easily discernable on the ground.

It was very hard for me. I wished to kill myself, but then I thought about my parents and children. My death would kill them as well. (Prodanović 1994: 29–30)

Local villagers provided more information on the fallen men. Not long after the two Serbian soldiers were killed, their bodies were carried inside a local tavern, where a priest was summoned to perform the service for the dead. A candle was lit, while wooden caskets were being made. The villagers wanted to bury the dead as soon as possible, but just as they went out onto the street, fresh fighting broke out as a group of retreating Habsburg soldiers was attempting to fight their way through the village. In the end, the dead were buried in haste, just outside the tavern.

This caused huge problems for Mileta Prodanović as no one could tell him the exact location of the grave he was looking for. What else was there for him to do, but dig out bodies from a long row of graves? Soon, it became clear that this led nowhere. Then, suddenly, a woman appeared claiming that she was the one who buried the two soldiers behind the tavern's barn. Prodanović went there and found two bodies buried in a common grave. As their faces were already unrecognisable, Prodanović could not easily tell which body belonged to his brother. Finally, thanks to personal belongings he found in one of the uniforms, he was able to positively identify his brother's body. With the help of nearby soldiers, he made a wooden casket. He also made a second one for the soldier buried together with his brother. Spontaneously, a number of villagers gathered to witness their reburial, placing flowers on the graves. Prodanović was then granted leave from his unit for several days. As his family lived in relative proximity to the front-line, the news of the tragic event had already reached them. This section of the diary was filled with heart-wrenching details.

I came home at around 11 o'clock at night. It was hard for me, so I was shaking. My heart wanted to burst, but I controlled myself seeing them virtually devastated. I spent three days at home. (Prodanović 1994: 29–30)

The family immediately set out to transport the body to the home village. However, the military declined permission to dig out the remains for the next 20 days as the area was still part of the military-operational zone. The family had to accept this. Nevertheless, a prolonged period of waiting brought one good thing in the eyes of the family. They now had the time they needed to buy a proper metal casket instead of a wooden one (Prodanović 1994: 29–30)

In this testimony, practically everything happened differently than was anticipated by Dr Žerajić's manual. It also shows how quickly

the identity of the fallen was lost. The metal box that Dr Žerajić wrote about was never mentioned in this narrative. The help of the locals and other witnesses of the burial proved essential in discovering the location. It should be noted that this happened in the summer of 1914 when the Serbian army was winning and controlling the battlefield. Later, during the critical months of the autumn of 1914, caring for the dead was even lower on the list of wartime priorities as the entire army was close to a complete collapse.

The war also influenced local burial customs and the rites of the Serbian Orthodox faith. Here, a few words should be said regarding these customs that provide a picture of Christianity and old Slavic customs. As is the case in many other nations, the Serbian cult of the dead insisted on the separation of the soul from the body of the deceased. However, for the soul to be transferred to the other world and become part of the ancestors' cult, it was essential to perform several rituals in a specific order. The Serbian population in 1914 was mostly composed of peasants, so it is interesting to see how the cult of the dead adapted to a prolonged and modern war. The most striking feature was that the body of the deceased was often missing. This became a major phenomenon, as will be discussed later. It is worth mentioning that the Serbian army, like practically all armies entering service at the time, was organised according to territorial principles. Consequently, kinship played an important role in caring for the dead comrades.

There is one additional witness account describing the fate of the remnants of Serbia's dead soldiers from 1914. The appalling conditions on old battle sites were described by Serbian officer Stanislav Krakov. In 1915, he was stationed at the Austro-Serbian border, near the town of Šabac. This town was devastated during the battle in August 1914. Officer Krakov used his spare time to walk around the sites of past ferocious fighting. As he moved towards the town's outskirts, the traces of the violence became omnipresent. Houses had holes in the middle of the walls. These were made by infantrymen as loopholes for firing. Krakov soon found a small cemetery "of heroes," in his own words, just outside the town (Krakov 2019: 105). There were trenches of various types and sizes, all of which were half collapsed. Ammunition and shrapnel fragments, both Serb and Austrian models, were dispersed everywhere (Krakov 2019: 105–9).

It soon became clear that only a fraction of the fallen men were buried in the cemetery he mentioned. Individual graves could be found everywhere between the soldiers' dugouts. There, small wooden crosses, made of dismantled ammunition boxes, stood above the graves. Walking further, he reconstructed the events based on the

traces he was seeing. Large-caliber unexploded grenades were stuck in the ground. Small pieces of piled-up earth indicated that the infantry used these as protection while making small advances. After observing the Austro-Hungarian trenches, he advanced towards the Serbian side. This was a distressing experience:

The unearthed graves were all around me. I saw a disturbing scene there. Hungary dogs dug out the corpse of one of our soldiers from a shallow grave and devoured him. Only a skeleton was now left lying on the field: half of his skull, together with his spine and his thigh bone with parts of his white underwear still visible. These graves were just outside the trenches. It appears that the dead soldiers were just thrown out from the trenches and buried in haste, during the night. (Krakov 2019: 108)

Krakov returned tomorrow with his men and buried the dead properly. Again, this source signals that much depended on individual officers and that regulations were generally not respected.

The authorities brought some decisions to address this problem. The first was to forbid all civilians from wandering near the front. Moreover, any transport of dead bodies from the battlefield was strictly forbidden, which affected the Prodanović family, among others (*Službeni vojni list*, August 14, 1914: 822). However, it became clear that more attention should be dedicated to the war dead. In early September 1914, the Minister of War issued a decree underlying the importance of keeping the graves and military cemeteries in good order.

The minister's instructions were in part technical. It was reiterated that all dead soldiers, regardless of whether the death occurred in a military hospital, on the battlefield, or within the perimeter of an army camp, had to be buried according to existing regulations. Consequently, a list of the dead man's belongings had to be compiled prior to the funeral and these items had to be sent to the local court. All state property, such as military equipment, had to be returned to the military. Similarly, the property of the dead enemy had to be respected.

However, the minister's instructions also brought some novelties. The important symbolic role attributed to dead soldiers and their resting places was explicitly underlined for the first time. Specifically, the funeral had to be as honourary and ceremonious as possible. Church bells were to announce the funeral and continue ringing during the inhumation. Furthermore, military graves should be grouped and placed on a visible and honorary plot of land. They should be protected from flooding and have a clear and lasting inscription indicating the identity of the buried person. Cemeteries were to be protected in cooperation with local civil authorities and special precautions



Fig. 1: Transport of the dead Serbian soldiers for the burial at the sea in the so-called Blue Sea Grave

taken to prevent animals from entering and destroying these sites. As it was said, “the graves of the fallen for the state’s liberty were seen as national sanctity” and were to be protected as such. The importance of proper Christian burial was also underlined. Finally, in his last sentence, the minister underlined the essential role attributed to the war dead during war and peace alike. It was said that “military cemeteries were to be eternal, bright, and elevated examples of sacrifice and self-sacrifice for the holy faith, King, and country, as well as nationality and personal and national freedom” (*Službeni vojni list*, September 14, 1914: 836–37).

Consequently, it was clear that the war efforts, right after the initial battles, had already reached certain critical points or limits of Serbian society and that the state had to do more to show it appreciated the sacrifices of its citizens and their bodily remains. Nevertheless, all these instructions targeted the maintenance of already existing cemeteries and did not encompass the immediate procedures for dealing with the remains of those dead on the battlefield.

In the winter of 1914, Serbia was struck by a typhus epidemic. Soldier and civilian losses were counted in tens of thousands. Consequently, despite the respite on the front, soldiers were lost in huge numbers. This situation, however, raised general awareness within the

military about the importance of maintaining proper hygiene within the army. This also meant more attention to the battle sites. A document from May 1915 revealed that battlefield clearing teams were engaged in cleaning and salvage operations as part of wider anti-typhus efforts. It was reported that these units discovered a number of unburied corpses of both men and animals.

Shallow military graves have been covered with additional layers of earth. Many garbage sites have been burnt. Surrounding peasant houses were painted, especially the ones that were inhabited for some time by the soldiers. (*Veliki rat Srbije* 1926: 130)

Serbia was also dotted with shallow graves of Austro-Hungarian soldiers. They were sometimes buried with the Serbs in common graves, while other times they were separated. Serbian officer Vasa Eškićević described a scene he witnessed while on a boat on the Danube River. It was in the summer of 1914:

My thoughts were wandering as I sat on the boat's roof, observing the Romanian and Bulgarian coasts when all of a sudden I hear the captain saying: *Corpses of Austrian soldiers!* We all stood up and looked ahead, and on the calm and blue Danube, we saw Austrian horses and heroes slowly sailing towards us. (Eškićević 2019: 22)

At the end of 1914, there were numerous cases of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers being buried together. Clearly, this was seen as a quick solution for preventing any hygienic problems on the battlefield. This was happening, for example, in Belgrade in 1915, when a mass grave was created for the two sides. The dead were, however, separated in 1927 and each side was placed in its own cemetery. This "separation of the dead" provoked some criticism on the part of the Belgrade public (Popadić 1931: 525). In any case, the treatment of the enemy dead took on various forms, from respect to utter neglect. It is worth mentioning a positive example that took place in Belgrade in 1914.

Namely, during a short but fierce close combat at Ada Ciganlija, an island just outside Belgrade, a number of dead Austro-Hungarian soldiers were discovered. Among them was Lieutenant Colonel August Schmitt, the commander of the Austro-Hungarian 32nd Regiment. After searching the pockets of his bloodied uniform, the Serbian officers found an unopened letter. These were not important military documents as the Serbs had hoped. The letter was written by his daughter living in Switzerland. The Serbian officers decided to write her back, sending attached all of her father's personal possessions. This

correspondence was saved by the family of Lieutenant Petar Kunovčić, one of the Serbian officers involved in the event.

We have buried your father honourably with all due respect, marking his grave with a cross, so that you, once the military operations are over, can come with your family to Serbia and find the body of your father respectfully buried and his grave intact, so that if you are unable to see your father, you will, at least, be able to see his grave and do whatever you deem suitable. Please receive our deepest and chivalry condolences, may God provide you and your family with a long and happy life. (Nikolić 2018: 21)

After six months the reply arrived from Switzerland. The daughter thanked the officers for such a decent treatment of the dead and their polite letter. She mentioned that she desired to arrange the transfer of the bodily remains to Vienna once the war is over (Nikolić 2018: 21).

It is not certain what happened at the end, but the ferocious artillery bombardment of Belgrade in 1915 probably also destroyed all improvised memorials on Ada Cingajja.

ALBANIA, THE ISLAND OF VIDO, AND THESSALONIKI

The period of the Serbian retreat in late 1915 and early 1916 was a time of almost complete neglect of the burial and honourary treatment of the dead. Tens of thousands of men were listed in the units' documents as "unaccounted for." For many contemporaries, these months signaled the collapse of civilisation and humanity.

Officer Milutin Velimirović, for example, mentioned the fate of the Serbian Combined Force, a unit that served as a rearguard along one of the retreating routes through Albanian mountains. The unit continuously fought in minor skirmishes with local armed Albanians. After being killed, the soldiers and civilians were usually stripped of their clothes by the local population:

The losses of our forces are very great. It is sufficient to say that only the X recruits' regiments suffered 46 dead and 170 wounded. There was no time for burial, the men were left naked in places where they were killed, as well as several wounded men, as they could not be transported away and saved. (Velimirović 1968: 116)

Other records and recollections are replete with accounts of men falling into the abyss of snowy Albanian and Montenegrin



Fig. 2: Dead Serbian soldiers on the island of Vido, before they were loaded on the ships.

mountains or ice-cold rivers. It is difficult to provide reliable figures for the losses during the Great Retreat, but even the lowest estimates claim at least 20,000 dead soldiers. The Serbian army took with it thousands of Austro-Hungarian prisoners. Only a small fraction survived to be transferred to the Italians. The dying continued even after the Serbian forces finally reached the Adriatic coast. Serbian doctor Vladimir Stanojević left a disturbing account of the situation in the town of Shkoder after it became crowded with exhausted Serbian troops. He noted that men were dying in masses, without any apparent reason. They all suffered from starvation, but this was not the main cause of death. He concluded that all soldiers reached the limits of their endurance due to immense suffering after two months of continuous deprivation during the retreat. The men died due to the utter collapse of their organism. The local chapel was packed with piled-up bodies, almost reaching the roof. Corpses of men and animals lay on the streets for days as the authorities were unable to collect them all. Finally, order was somewhat restored, and medical teams collected the dead while burial teams worked day and night to inhumate hundreds of bodies (Stanojević 1921: 20–1).

Sources are abundant with similar accounts across Albania. Serbian writer Andjelko Krstić was working in a Serbian hospital in Tirana in late 1915. He writes in his memoirs:

Every morning, two or three wagons were packed with dead soldiers who had not managed to recuperate. They threw them into the wagon like jumbled-up bulrush: some legs were placed near other ones' heads, while others were thrown across all of them. Serbian soldiers did not deserve this. If they are dead and do not feel this, the living should at least feel something. Is it so difficult to lay them properly, to place their heads on one side and legs on the other, at least for the sake of passersby? (Krstić 2000: 122)

However, the worst scenes were witnessed on the Greek island of Vido. Serbian soldiers were evacuated to Corfu, but those with serious health problems had been sent to Vido first. Thousands of Serbian soldiers died there after being evacuated on Allied ships. Dr Stanojević described the grim impression one had upon being disembarked on the island. The first thing one saw was a large number of dead bodies piled up as logs (Stanojević 1921: 21). The men were buried in haste, in part due to fear of cholera spreading, as well as other diseases. Moreover, the soil was extremely hard to dig. The authorities ultimately decided to dispose of the bodies at sea as they were unable to bury so many dead at the desired rate. Ultimately, around 1,200 men were buried while somewhere between 4,500 and 5,000 men were buried at sea (Nedok 2014: 100–1).



Fig. 3: Dead Serbian soldiers outside the town of Lezhë, Albania, 1916.

Six months later, the Ministry of War, now operating in exile on the Greek island of Corfu, sent a special commission to investigate the state of Serbian graves on Vido island. There was evidently some pressure from soldiers and civilians who were not fighting and living in Greece. The opinion of the local Greek population probably also played a role.

The findings of this commission were appalling. After visiting Serbian military cemeteries on Vido Island they wrote that “the stench was so unbearable that it made walking through the cemetery impossible” (*Arhiv Srbije*, RG, IV/41, July 31, 1916). The reason for this was that the corpses were buried poorly and placed in shallow graves. Consequently, due to the weather, especially rain, the graves were partially opened, exposing parts of the corpses (*Arhiv Srbije*, RG, IV/41, July 31, 1916).

Due to very specific military developments, by early 1916, the Serbian army ended up fighting at the Salonika front. By late 1918, its dead were scattered across northern Greece, but also France, Italy, and northern Africa, as the wounded were sent there for treatment. This meant that those who died could not be transported to Serbia for burial. At least not for some time. The fact that the bodies of their beloved were missing forced the Serbian population still living in, now occupied, Serbia to modify their funeral rituals. Symbolic funerals took place in villages. For example, in the village of Slatina, near the town of Bor in Eastern Serbia, soldier Jovan Simonović’s cloth was buried in a grave at his estate. The soldier’s body was never transferred from the Salonika front where he was killed. However, the memorial, ordered by his sister, provided the family with a site where all necessary rituals could be performed (Zečević 1982: 60).

Those killed at the Salonika front, more than 9,000 of them, were mostly properly buried at the frontline. After the war, most of them were transferred to the newly built ossuary at Zejtinlik near Salonika. However, some recent research has proven that not all of the dead have been transferred as Serbian cemeteries can still be found along the lines of the former Salonika front (Vlasidis 2018: 189–90).

CONCLUSION

Despite being based on anecdotal evidence, this brief analysis suggests that the Serbian theatre of operations witnessed a specific type of warfare within the broader conflict. If the artillery was the primary destroyer in 1914, it was no longer so in 1915 when diseases and exhaustion took over. At the Salonika front, the artillery once again became the dominant weapon and prime cause of losses. The huge impact of war casualties was felt early into the war. The deceased added more pressure on the soldiers who were already forced to cope with other psychological strains of the fighting. On the other hand, civilians had to adapt to a world where the dead often had no remains to be buried anymore.

One of the key challenges in estimating the impact of the First World War on Serbian society is the lack of precise data on the fallen. The poor results in terms of the proper burial of the dead were caused by officials who disregarded precise and useful prewar guidelines. The conditions on the Serbian front were, indeed, extremely difficult, especially during the critical months of 1915. It may be argued that during such high-intensity and maneuverable fighting, caring for the dead was not the priority. However, Serbia had spent almost 10 months in relative peace in 1915 and the impression remains that more could have been done to preserve the remains and identity of the dead. The vague position concerning the numbers, identity, and exact circumstances of the death of Serbian Great War casualties, proved to be favourable for political manipulations throughout the twentieth century as well as for the construction of an uncritical self-victimhood narrative.

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Financing Yugoslav First World War Memorials

NENAD LAJBENŠPERGER

Between the two world wars, Yugoslav First World War memorials were financed in several ways. One of them was state funding. The other was voluntary contributions. These contributions took the form of money, material, or volunteer work (although the latter was sometimes *corvée*) (Lajbenšperger 2008: 316–19; Lajbenšperger, Mamula 2014: 212–14; Šarenac 2018: 230–31).

State funding went through several channels. One of them was the budgets of several Yugoslav ministries and lower-ranking authorities—regional (*oblasts* or *banovinas*) or municipal ones. The most important backers were the Ministry of Religion and later the Ministry of Justice, specifically the departments with sections for military cemeteries. In addition to the specially allocated funds, the authorities also provided support through volunteer contributions (most often for the construction of ossuaries). Contributions were also made by the Yugoslav king and members of the royal family.

One of the budget lines, and probably the most important one, was the Fund for the Implementation of the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland. To understand its purpose and what it funded, we must first look at state legislation concerning the development of war cemeteries and the national acknowledgment of individuals of merit for the fatherland.

After the end of the First World War, the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Kingdom of SCS) encountered many challenges. In addition to efforts to rebuild the destroyed areas where the battles took place, to provide basic living conditions for impoverished residents, to help numerous families who had been left without breadwinners or individuals who had become orphans, the state also took upon itself the role of caring for war cemeteries. Through legislative solutions passed in 1919, 1922, 1925, 1928, and 1931, the state decided to set aside every year a portion of the funds for the development and maintenance of war graves.

The Kingdom of SCS issued the Decree on the Development and Maintenance of our Military Cemeteries and Graves in the Homeland and Abroad in 1919. Through this document, the state established that the Ministry of Religion should have the ultimate responsibility and control over the development and maintenance of military cemeteries. Taking care of war cemeteries was to be done by church municipalities and priests of the parishes in which they were located. The cemeteries abroad were to be looked after by the respective embassies and consulates, as well as the specially appointed priest-guardians. The costs for developing war graves, along with their regular visitation and maintenance and the erection of ossuaries in the country and abroad, were to be borne by the Ministry of Religion. Furthermore, it was possible to finance all of the above through voluntary contributions. The Decree gave families the option to transfer the remains of their relatives by themselves (Uredba o uređenju i održavanju naših vojničkih groblja i grobova u domovini i na strani, Articles 2, 3, 7, 9 and 14; Lajbenšperger, Mamula 2014: 209; Manojlović Pintar 2014: 202–3; Jezernik 2018: 129–30; Hameršak 2020: 383–84; Živanović 2020: 83–5).

Through the Law on the Development of Our Military Cemeteries and Graves in the Homeland and Abroad, as well as the Graves of Fallen Soldiers and Sailors, Prisoners of War and Internees, Citizens of Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, Buried in Our State Territory from 1922, the Kingdom of SCS prescribed and elaborated on the development of war graves. In addition to religious institutions, the preservation, maintenance, and development of war graves were also

entrusted to some lower-ranking political authorities. They had to assist the Ministry of Religion financially. It was also stipulated that compensations to persons on whose property the war graves were located, as the salaries and expenses of the priest-guardians abroad, would be financed from the state budget. Reliefs were foreseen for the transfer of remains of the fallen soldiers, but it was not specified exactly which ones (Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova u otadžbini i na strani, kao i grobova izginulih vojnika i mornara, ratnih zarobljenika i interniranih lica, državljana: Nemačke, Austrije, Ugarske i Bugarske, sahranjeni na našoj državnoj teritoriji, Articles 2, 3, 7, 9 and 14; Lajbenšperger, Mamula 2014: 210; Jezernik 2018: 130; Šarenac 2018: 227–28; Hameršak 2020: 384–85; Živanović 2020: 83–8).

The state wanted to express special gratitude to certain political and military figures who played an important role in the past, especially during the First World War. To do that, in 1925, the Kingdom of SCS declared the Law on the National Acknowledgement of King Petar the Great Liberator and the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland.

The Law on the National Recognition of King Petar the Great Liberator stipulated that King Petar would be acknowledged and gratitude shown to him by erecting an appropriate monument in his honour in Belgrade. That task was delegated to the Committee, which would be formed pursuant to the Law on the National Acknowledgement of the Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland, which had been promulgated. The erection of the monument was to be financed through this Committee (Zakon o narodnom priznanju Kralju Petru Velikom Oslobodiocu, Articles 1–2; Šarenac 2014: 170).

The Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland declared that a special monument called Temple-Monument to the Liberators (in Serbian: Hram Spomenik Oslobodiocima) would be erected for all those who perished during the Balkan Wars and the First World War. For those who had survived and demonstrated great historical merits for the liberation and unification, an appropriate monetary reward would be provided. Furthermore, the widows and children of Serbian war-time military leaders, *vojvodas*, would receive a monetary reward and a lifetime pension in recognition of *vojvodas'* merits. As for the meritorious soldiers and citizens who had died abroad, the transfer of their remains to the Kingdom of SCS and the erection of a special tombstone at the state's expense was foreseen. As regards the other deceased soldiers, it was foreseen that the transfer of their remains from abroad back to the country would be paid for by the state. It was decided that a special fund named Fund for

the Implementation of the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland would be created for financing monetary awards, pensions, the transfer of remains, and the erection of the monuments. It was foreseen that ten million dinars would be allocated every year for the implementation of provisions of the Law on the National Acknowledgement of King Petar the Great Liberator and the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland. The financial resources from the Fund were at the disposal of the Ministry of Religion. In order to implement the provisions of these laws, a special committee was formed at the Ministry of Religion. It was named The Committee for the Implementation of the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland (Zakon o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu, Articles 2–5, 7 and 9; Šarenac 2014: 171)

The Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland was amended in 1928. The amendment stipulated that the remains of the soldiers deceased abroad should no longer be transferred individually but in larger transports. This was for the state to be able to partially save on those costs. It was also foreseen that the personal and material expenses related to the work of the Committee would be borne by the Fund. Furthermore, the pensions of the members of vojvodas' families were no longer a part of this Fund but were transferred to the state budget allocated for all state pensions (Zakon o izmenama i dopunama u Zakonu o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu od 23. avgusta 1925. godine, Article 1–3, 5; Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 252; Lajbenšperger, Mamula 2014: 211).

Amendments to all of the mentioned laws took place in 1931. At that time, it was established that all future funding for the maintenance of war graves would be provided by the Fund. Moreover, all money collected for the monument to King Petar (which was never erected in Belgrade) was transferred to the Fund (Zakona o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova u otadžbini i na strani od 22. aprila 1922. godine; Zakona o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu od 23. avgusta 1925 godine i Zakona o izmenama i dopunama u Zakonu o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu od 31. decembra 1928. godine, Article 3).

As we have seen, the Fund for the Implementation of the Law on the National Acknowledgement of Individuals of Merit for the Fatherland was established to finance the erection of the monument to King Petar, the Temple-Monument to the Liberators, and tombstones for meritorious persons, then for monetary awards, pensions, and transfers of the remains of the deceased soldiers and meritorious citizens.

However, following law amendments in 1928, pension entitlements were excluded from the Fund. The change was not directly related to the Fund itself and the pensions of vojvodas' families, but to the pensions of other officers, who were a part of the Serbian or Montenegrin army until the end of the First World War. Namely, the Law on the Organisation of the Army and the Navy from 1923 introduced a significant difference between the pensions of those who retired under the previous Law on the Organisation of the Army and those who retired under the Law on the Organisation of the Army and the Navy. The difference was noticeable—some could live easily, while others had to live hard. To ease the situation of retired war officers, additional changes were introduced to make those pensions uniform. However, as the law amendments were being prepared, it was realised that these changes would constitute too big an expense for the Fund, so it was decided to transfer the pensions for vojvodas' families to other budget lines. The provisions on the transfer of the remains of the deceased were amended to reduce government costs because it was more economical to transport several coffins in train wagons at once than to transfer them separately (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 252).

Over the years, the Fund was supplemented with financial resources that were gathered within some other funds: Fund of Major Ilić (Ministarstvo Pravde 1931), Fund for Fighters Who Died under Edirne; Fund for Erecting Monuments to Fighters for Their Bravery in Past Wars; Fund of the Gornji Milanovac Branch of the Liberal Party for Erecting a Monument to Fighters Fallen for Liberation and Unification; Fund for Erecting a Monument to Heroes Fallen in the Serbian-Turkish War (Partijalnik 1 1935); and Fund for the Monument in Blaznava (Ministarstvo Pravde 1936).

In addition to income from the budget and voluntary contributions, the Fund also acquired resources from various other sources. The most important was through bank interests. One part of the interest was for the money already in the account, with the Committee also regularly depositing other available funds to increase the yield (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 249). The Fund also included small sums of money resulting from the exchange of coins that were found during the exhumations of warriors whose identity was unknown (Ministarstvo Pravde 1934). Contributions paid by families as a part of the costs for the transfer of their relatives' remains from abroad also passed through the Fund's budget (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 244 and F 249, 1928).

The ten million dinars that were supposed to go into the Fund every year never did. Already in the first budget year (1926/1927), instead of ten million, six million were transferred to the Fund, leaving no money for the rest (Ministarstvo vera 1928). In the next budget

year (1927/1928), the Fund received seven million dinars (Odbor za izvršenje zakona o narodnom priznanju zaslužnih za otadžbinu 1927; Odbor za izvršenje zakona o narodnom priznanju zaslužnih za otadžbinu 1928). Following that, the state's contributions were very small, in tens of thousands of dinars. In some years, the government did not transfer any money from the budget to the Fund. By 1931, the Fund received 11 million dinars in total (Odbor za izvršenje zakona o narodnom priznanju zaslužnih za otadžbinu i zakona o narodnom priznanju Kralju Petru I Velikom oslobodiocu 1931: 11). The amount of money from the budget increased in the late 1930s—in 1938/1939 and 1939/1940 budgets, they totalled around one million dinars per year (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 249).

The Fund started to work on June 16, 1926, with the first sum received from the government (Ministarstvo Pravde 1941). Until the start of the Second World War on Yugoslav soil, the Fund had fulfilled its purpose stipulated by the aforementioned legal provisions. All except building the Monument to King Petar and the Temple-Monument to the Liberators, which was never done. The resources from the Fund were spent on erecting tombstone monuments, ossuaries, memorial chapels and churches, and memorial plaques on churches; the exhumation of the remains of warriors and meritorious persons, their transfer from inland or abroad to new gravesites or ossuaries; compensations to persons on estates where the war graves were located; monetary rewards and pensions of vojvodas' families; state taxes, postal, and other material expenses produced by the work of the Committee, but also compensation for the work of the Committee's staff (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 249).

The amounts disbursed from the Fund differed from one year to the next. However, we may say that the average amount was around 1.8 million dinars. Sometimes it was much lower and sometimes much higher, but it usually varied by several hundred thousand dinars from the mentioned figure. The lowest amount was in 1933, when only 669,919.50 dinars were spent. The highest amount was in 1929 when 3,869,610.60 were spent from the Fund. However, not all of the available funds were spent. It also happened that the majority of funds were not distributed, so only 10% were spent in 1933, or 20% in 1931 (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 249, and 252). We do not know exactly the reasons for this, because we have not found a single document that would provide explanations. Perhaps the funds were saved for the Temple-Monument to the Liberators, or it was simply the sluggishness of state authorities.

In the segment of the erection of monuments to meritorious persons, the Fund did finance the exhumation, transportation, new

burials, and erection of special memorial tombstones for several military leaders and significant persons who died during the First World War, that is, for individuals of merit for the fatherland. They were all believed to have played a prominent role in the war or in efforts for the unification of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Almost all of them were Serbs from pre-war Serbia. Only one was from pre-war Montenegro—Serdar Janko Vukotić. The most important figure was Serbian military commander Vojvoda Radomir Putnik. He was granted a special tomb in the form of a chapel, in a specific place at the New Cemetery in Belgrade, the capital of the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia. Others were given a special kind of tombstone, made of marble. These monuments were tall, with the representation of a cross in the upper portion and special bronze emblems in the middle. Their appearance conveys dignity and monumentality (Obrenović 2013b: 182–83). These monuments were erected for the following military commanders of the Serbian army: General Vukman Aračić, General Ilija Gojković, and Colonel Milan Nedić; and one military commander of the Montenegrin army: Serdar Janko Vukotić. The politicians who were granted these monuments were: Andra Nikolić, Stojan Novaković, Bogdan Janković, Pavle Bulić, Đorđe Kurtović, David Simić, Milan Mostić, Čeda Urošević, Dimitrije Mihailović, Dimitrije Sredojević, Đura Prokić, and Milan Đurić who was also a priest. These works were performed during 1929 and 1930 (Odbor za izvršenje zakona o narodnom priznanju zaslužnih za otadžbinu i zakona o narodnom priznanju Kralju Petru I Velikom oslobodiocu 1931: 2–5). Later on, in 1938, the erection of a tombstone for Serbian writer Petar Kočić was also financed through the Fund (Ministarstvo pravde 1938). He was considered meritorious to the fatherland because of his patriotic literature and work.

During the period from 1927 to 1931, money for the Fund was spent on activities regarding mentioned tombstones for individuals of merit for the fatherland, and for developing a Serbian military cemetery on Zeitenlik in Thessaloniki, Greece, with an ossuary within it (Figure 1). Works in Thessaloniki were massive and lasted almost a decade – from 1928 to 1937. The only exception in financing from the Fund during this period was a small contribution to the erection of the Monument to King Petar the Liberator in Gnjilane, given in 1928 (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 242 to F 244 and F 249, 1928).

In the decade following the legislation change in 1931, until the commencement of the Second World War, several capital projects for building ossuaries were financed through the Fund, and help was also provided for erecting a larger number of other memorial objects in the



Fig. 1: Ossuary at the Serbian military cemetery on Zeitenlik in Thessaloniki, Greece (Documentation of the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia, photo by P. Marjanovic, 5. 9. 2014).

country and abroad. Considerable resources were provided for the ossuary on the Greek island of Vido. Further on, large sums were contributed for the construction of a church with an ossuary in Cetinje, Montenegro,¹ a church with an ossuary in Lazarevac, Serbia, and an ossuary in Ljubljana, Slovenia (Figure 2). Various sums were contributed to help in raising ossuaries, churches, or chapels with ossuaries, monuments, memorial plaques, etc. These sums ranged from several thousand to several tens of thousands of dinars and were provided yearly. The majority of such contributions were around ten thousand dinars. Most of the funded objects were located in parts of the country that belonged to the Kingdom of Serbia before the First World War. Even when funds were directed to other parts of the country, they were mostly for objects related to Serbian soldiers or persons. This is not to say that the soldiers from other regions, i.e., the Austro-Hungarian army, were completely neglected. In addition to the aforementioned ossuary in Ljubljana (Figure 3), the development of military cemeteries in Osijek, Croatia, and Ptuj, Slovenia, was supported by the Fund. Moreover, funding was provided for the development of cemeteries

1 This church supposed to be a cathedral. It was planned that the ossuary beneath the church receive over a thousand mortal remains of martyred fighters. Although certain activities were carried out to raise it, it was never built (Partijanik 2 1935; Žunjić 2019: 527–31).

abroad—Czechoslovakia, France, Albania, Holland, etc., where soldiers who died as members of Serbian, Montenegrin, and Austro-Hungarian armies (of Yugoslav origin) were buried (Arhiv Jugoslavije, F 245 to F 249; Dobrovšak 2022: 405–8).



Fig. 2: Ossuary in Lazarevac, Serbia (Documentation of the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia, photo by N. Lajbenšperger, 3.8.2006).

We must not forget that Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers were buried alongside in many ossuaries built on the battlefields or in the background – like in Lazarevac in Serbia, or Jindřichovice in Czechoslovakia (Figure 4) (Vukosavljević 1975: 238; Sokolović 1991: 142–43; Pavlović 1995: 115–30; 2014: 15, 24–35; Lajbenšperger 2008: 326–27; 2014: 14–6; 2015: 509–10; Lajbenšperger, Džamić,



Fig. 3: Ossuary of the First World War Victims, Žale Central Cemetery, Ljubljana, Slovenia. (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c8/Kostnica_na_%C5%BDalah.jpg; author: AwesomeSauceLtd, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons)

Radovanac Živanov 2015: 258–70, 273–82; Obrenović 2013a: 81, 132–33, 135, 137–38, 281–82, 288, 238–41, 340, 549–50; Dobuševa, Krymova 2013: 61–4; Skoupý 2016: 84–5; Borovnjak 2017: 267–87; Bogdanović 2018: 342–46, 459–74, 485, 489–92; Šarenac 2018: 226, 230–34). Although Serbian symbols were highlighted on the monuments, proper attention was also given to the enemy soldiers. In this way, lasting peace was made possible for soldiers from once opposing sides.

We could not find any archival material that would tell us how the funding decisions for the construction of memorial ossuaries were made. From that documentation, it might be possible to see whether there were any rivalries towards former enemy soldiers or some special interest to finance only memorials to Serbian soldiers. We did not discover any rejected applications for the allocation of funds. However, we believe we can rightly make two assumptions. The first is that the Fund was intended for individuals of merit for the fatherland who died during the war. These were soldiers of the Army of the Kingdom of Serbia who won the war, liberated the country, and created conditions for unification. Because of those merits, cemeteries for those soldiers have been developed. The second is that most of the battles took place in the territory of the pre-war Kingdom of Serbia, and later in the territory of Greece. Far smaller battles were fought on Austria-Hungarian soil. The



Fig. 4: Ossuary in Jindřichovice, Czech Republic (Documentation of the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia, photo by V. Džamic, 11. 11. 2014).

layout of the soldiers' graves, which were created as a result of those battles, dictated where the appropriate memorial ossuary would be erected (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 212).

As we have seen, the financing of the development and maintenance of military cemeteries was supposed to be funded by the state, with the possibility of voluntary contributions. However, the situation in the field was quite different. Many of the cemeteries were not cared for properly and many of them perished during the period of the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 204–5, 210; Hameršak 2020: 385; Živanović 2020: 89–93). On the other side, the construction of ossuaries was sometimes funded using amounts obtained from voluntary contributions, which were larger than the funds provided by the state. Many of the planned ossuaries were never built or were left unfinished because funding was insufficient and the Second World War broke out and halted all the works.

The state did manage to erect several monuments to persons of merit, as well as a large number of ossuaries and other memorial objects for deceased soldiers, but it did not manage to build a respectful monument to King Petar I and the Temple-Monument to the Liberators. The state had bigger issues to solve in terms of its economy, so it lacked the resources to provide proper burial places for all soldiers who perished in the war.

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The First World War Cemeteries and Monuments in Subotica (1914–2021)

STEVAN MAČKOVIĆ

INTRODUCTION

The first public sculpture was erected in the centre of town in 1815. It was a representation of the Holy Trinity. The last battle that took place near Subotica was the one near Kaponja in the war of 1848/49. At the said place, 15 km away from Subotica, Hungarian troops won against the rebellious Serbs. A monument to this battle was erected in 1899 in the centre of Subotica, a grey marble obelisk 10 m high with a *Turul* (steppe falcon), a symbol from Hungarian mythology. Until 1918, the monuments to the victims in new conflict follow the same tradition. The government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes removed the Turul bird from the top of the obelisk and had the date November 13, 1918, carved above the Hungarian symbol. During the later remodelling of the square in 1927, all trace of the obelisk was lost. From the

auction an offer of the company “Industrija mramora d.d.” has been preserved, which includes all activities connected with its relocation (SR-IAS-47-SGS, IV 6933/1938).

After one hundred years a new obelisk near the site of the battle was erected, on which is it written: “Here, in Kaponya, there was a Battle for Subotica on March 5, 1849. The monument is erected on the occasion of 150th anniversary of the 1848–49 revolution by the city of Subotica”. With the end of the First World War and the fact that the border of the new Yugoslav state was only 7 km away from Subotica now, there was a constant feeling in the winners of potential danger from the nearby neighbouring country. This was shown in the relocation of symbols and monuments of the old regime, as well in the new manner of erecting up monuments that testify to conquests, affirmation, and conformation of the new government.

The wave of prevailing national ideology reflected in public monuments about the First World War, seems to continue and culminate in 2021, when was placed a monument of King Petar I in a considerable size. Only the base of the monument is 5,6 m high and on the top of is a 4,2 m high figure.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

There is a winning side and a losing side in every war. That significantly determines the way in which the remembrance is marked. The winners can use the memorials to glorify and demonstrate their own triumph, heroism, and righteousness, and to justify the victims. The losers can only complain and regret, limited by the impossibility and selective use of public space.¹ War always brings devastating destruction and many victims for both sides. Besides the material loss, there is always the indispensable human sacrifice in great number of deceased, handicapped, and sick.

During the major military operations, Subotica was far from the front, yet people from this region participated in the war and died all over Europe. It is very difficult to estimate the total loss of life in

1 Since 1944 there has been a memorial stone in a place near Senčansko Cemetery, plot no. 44, where the arrested were executed without trial towards the end of the war. At that time, in a very inaccessible and remote place, a name plaque was placed with the names of the deceased from 1941 to 1946. Next to the name board, the Turul bird was also placed. Since then, commemorative ceremonies have been held regularly at this place.

	a temek,	ideje.	
20. Alicia Orsien	1914.	Dec.	27.
Klug Guntáv	"	"	28.
Eckert Károly	"	"	27.
Sagei Eduárd	"	"	28.
Mijatov Mišován	"	"	29.
25. Choura Vencel	"	"	29.
Nieder József	"	"	29.
Uro Gábor	"	"	30.
Falk ödön	"	"	31.
Jansen Frigyes	"	"	31.
30. Brunellen Káma	"	"	31.
Breck Lajos	1915.	jan.	1.
Fürst János	"	"	2.
Pencz István	"	"	2.
Mlinarik Antal	"	"	3.
35. Livia Márton	"	"	5.
Platzer György	"	"	6.
Hajdu István	"	"	6.
Tóth István	"	"	7.
Bacum Alajos	"	"	8.
40. Heinrich Guntáv	"	"	9.
Trestler Henrik	"	"	10.
Jensen János	"	"	10.
Fell György	"	"	10.
István Antal	"	"	12.
45. Paveljak Ivaniló	"	"	12.

Fig. 1: List of the buried (SOURCE: F:2. II 184/1914).

Subotica. One of the most competent sources for researching the number of deaths are the death registers kept by the regional registry offices. The registry office in Subotica kept a register of dead soldiers as an official state agency. Tibor Molnár of the Senta Historical Archive provided us with this information, which shows that 1460 deceased soldiers are recorded in the registers for the period between 1914 and 1919 (Molnár 2018: 328).

Most of the soldiers from Subotica who fell in the battles of the First World War found their final resting place in cemeteries far away. The wounded and sick soldiers from many parts of Austria-Hungary who died in the military hospital in Subotica are buried in graves of the local cemeteries, which do not exist today. (Molnár 2018: 380).

Most of the soldiers (462) died on the fronts in Galicia, Italy and other places. It was very rare that these soldiers were buried in Subotica, they were buried on the spot, which was common in war conditions. Soldiers sent to Subotica for hospital treatment, prisoners of war, and other hospitalised persons were buried in Subotica in case of their death. Using the above list, we found 7 soldiers from Croatia whose remains are still in Subotica, and 14 soldiers from Subotica who were buried in cemeteries in Croatia. There is a list of soldiers from Croatia who died in the First World War and were buried in Subotica, probably in a military cemetery established as part of the cemetery in Senčanski Street (near the Paganini monument). These soldiers are: Leopold Kruškin (34 years old), Josip Kušler (23), Mihajlo Lovrić (36), Josip Sambolok (37), Jožef Nester (23), Josip Zaplalič (39) and Josip Žitomjerec (31) (Mačković, *Gdje su u Subotici pokapani*).

People were declared dead during the First World War and for a long time after the war. Those procedures often took place in appropriate courts up until the 1960s. There were victims in the first days of the war already.

In the later descriptions, not only the heroism of the Serbian army was emphasised, but also the following was emphasised: “The worst thing was that they fought against their brothers, whom they wanted to liberate. Our bloodthirsty oppressor forced us to fight against our own brothers, to come into conflict with those who wanted to liberate us, to pay with death for those who brought us life” (Protić 1930: 44). Their relationship after the war did not quite correspond to the above-mentioned ideas.

Obtaining the “Slavic” majority in Vojvodina and, accordingly, in its northernmost point—Subotica—was the guiding principle of the government’s “nationalisation” policy. The local census of 1919 for the purpose of the Paris Peace Conference gives information about 101,286 inhabitants: Bunjevci – 65,135, Serbs – 8,737, Hungarians – 19,870, Germans – 4,251 and Jews – 3,293. One of the measures taken by the government to change the situation of the population, besides the possibility of leaving the city, was the immigration of all persons who had settled in Subotica after the beginning of the war. A strong lever for this demographic engineering was the agrarian reform, colonisation, and settlement of volunteers, which changed the ethnic appearance of this region.

After 1918, a strange mixture of existing Hungarian and new laws prevailed. This often led to complicated situations, not only in the field of law. Political life and its effects were very significant. Only a small part of the population of Subotica had full citizenship and possessed all civil rights. The non-Slavic minorities, Hungarians, and Germans, had a hard time and were not allowed to vote until 1923. They were also excluded from the possibility of acquiring land confiscated by the agrarian reform. Civil servants and officers had to take an oath to the king in order to keep their posts, and they had to fulfil all conditions for using the official state language. Even after the Treaty of Trianon, a sense of border insecurity and volatility prevailed to some degree, supporting (heated) Hungarian irredentism and revanchism and the ruling side’s harsh reactions to them.

In the creation of memorials or individual monuments, there was a need for a certain way of expressing significant ideas—the idea of glorifying the victims, heroising the individual and the nation. However, the modest financial possibilities of the state, the city, and the individual conditioned the construction of numerous monuments in simpler forms, so there were no monumental architectural or sculptural forms in Subotica until the twenty-first century.

The direction in which the culture of the First World War monuments in Subotica was going, is clear since the first modest memorial in urban surroundings from 1925, when a statue of an unknown soldier was erected, complemented with symbols of battle and victory, up until 2021, and instalment of enormous monument to a specific historical person, a prominent military leader which brought victory and freedom—King Petar I.

The series of change mentioned had a clear goal—strengthening of the new state and its ideology and removal, weakening, and obliteration of the old.

INITIAL PLANS FOR COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR AFTER THE TREATY OF TRIANON

At the ceremonial formal assembly of the city council – The Expanded Senate, on April 20, 1920, the signing of the Trianon Treaty was celebrated. The focus of the speeches held on that occasion was on the gratitude towards Serbian army and all the rest who sacrificed themselves for liberation. There were calls for forgiving our “non-Slavic” fellow residents and forgetting “all the things they did to us under their own rule”. King Petar I and his family were enthusiastically greeted and there was a suggestion that the park in front of the railway station be called “Park of his Royal Highness King Petar the First” in his honour. That was accepted with great enthusiasm, the dynasty was saluted as the ruling house of Karađorđević. Telegrams were sent out to the government. It was also decided for the main street which leads to the city square and The City Hall to be called the “Street of His Majesty Regent Aleksandar” instead of the previous name “Kossuth Street.” All the present parties were invited to participate in “formal thanksgiving in churches and temples.” Proposal for the naming of the park contained the following:

Expanded Senate, in order to perpetuate the historical meaning of today, determines the park in front of the railway station be named Park of his Royal Highness King Petar the First, as a memory to our liberation and merging with Mother Yugoslavia, and a monument be placed in this park as wakening warning to future generations of brotherly unity and love and unified work. Furthermore, previously named “Kossuth Street” shall be called “Street of His Majesty Regent Aleksandar.” For the instalment of the monument there shall be a public fund established that will acquire a necessary principal amount by donations, to bring this idea to life.

The city council is notified about the existing decision for further execution.

In Subotica, on June 20 1920, an assembly held Orčić Notary Public. (SR-IAS-47-SGS, kut. 1201. I 13/1920)

On the same day, “there was an extraordinary celebration in Subotica regarding the peace treaty signing with Hungary” (*Subotička Danica* 1921). Special church masses were held, the priest held a

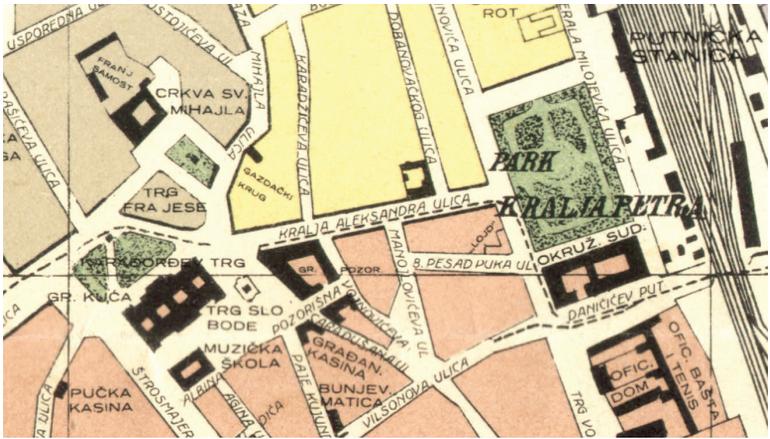


Fig. 2: Detail from a map of the city from 1928, King Petar Park

speech on the balcony of the City Hall that afternoon, there was a big celebration and a dancing party and a theatre show, an ox was roasted in the square.

The park was indeed named as it was suggested, but the monument was never built, warning of brotherly unity and love soon faded and turned into complete opposite. The process of removal of the symbols from the old state also commenced at that time. It is clear that the elements from Hungarian national history and culture did not suit the new ruling ideology and practice. At the end of 1918 already, the bust of Queen Elizabeth of Bavaria–Sisi disappeared, as did the one from the barracks. All the national symbols, art work, reliefs, signs etc. that were embedded in the City Hall, were supposed to be removed or replaced. The outer stained-glass windows were removed from the Great Assembly Room, and the plastic coat of arms ornaments on the outer parts and the signs were replaced. This process was taking a long time, and it was not yet completed in the second half of the 1920s.

Before the placement of new monument to the mystic Jovan Nenad in the central part of the city square in 1927, the monument to the Battle at Kaponya was removed—the obelisk from which the Turul bird was already removed before.

REGULATION

Considering that the Kingdom of Serbia endured a great burden in many crucial battles in the First World War, and had an enormous loss

of soldiers and civilians' lives, it was only logical that after the war the new government puts an effort into organising military cemeteries, building of ossuaries and memorials. For that purpose, a Regulation was passed in 1920 and two years later Law for Regulation of Military Cemeteries and Tombs in Fatherland and Outside (*Službene novine Kraljevine SHS* 1922: 87).

It is worth mentioning that the mentioned law made no distinction between the graves of enemy soldiers within the borders of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In Subotica there were two military cemeteries, one for Serbian soldiers and one for Austro-Hungarian soldiers. The Serbian military cemetery was established next to the existing Orthodox cemetery in Dudova šuma (Mulberry Forest), and the remains of Serbian soldiers brought from the battlefields, soldiers who died in Subotica after the invasion of the Serbian armies, and later colonists and volunteers who settled in Subotica were buried there. Next to the existing Catholic Senčansko Cemetery, a second military cemetery was established, where Austro-Hungarian soldiers of Roman Catholic and Protestant faith and later members of the French army who died in Subotica were buried.

CEMETERIES

The dead had to be buried. Each religious community residing in the region used parts of the municipal cemeteries for the members of their faith. The local census of 1919 counted 87,655 Catholics (and 8,582 Orthodox, etc.), who were the most numerous (over 80% in the entire period between the two world wars) and used three cemeteries named after the city districts: Bajsko, Kersko, Senčansko. In these cemeteries, in addition to religious graves, there were also public graves. The Orthodox cemetery was separate and was located near Dudova šuma. There was also a Jewish cemetery and since 1921 a Muslim cemetery ("Mohammed's cemetery") (SR-IAS -47-SGS, kut. 1493. 1355/921).

These cemeteries had special burial places, marked plots, where soldiers were buried. Soldiers were also buried in other places, mostly family tombs. In the Senčansko Cemetery soldiers were buried in a separate military part of the cemetery. Since the beginning of war until September 1914, there were 72 soldiers buried there. Witness to that is Marija Kovačević, wife of the cemetery guard, who was called to army duty (II 184/924), so she had to organise the burials (SR-IAS-2-SGS,

Mern. 108/1917). The number of buried soldiers grew during the following years and an individual list of the buried was kept by the official priests from St George parish since the Senčansko Cemetery was on their territory.

This military part of the Senčansko Cemetery was located next to Senčanski Street (then called Put Oslobođenja) and was diagonally 134 m long and 34 m wide. The central part of this plot was occupied by a monument in a crypt dedicated to Captain Jožef Paganini, who tragically died in 1849, around which the „Heroes‘ Cemetery“ (Hósoek temető) was built. The crypt is still in this place today, it is properly maintained and wreath-laying ceremonies are held there. The first reference to it was already recorded on September 29, 1914, in a written request to the city administration (I 294/1914). One of the applicants from the letter of October 4, 1914 was the landowner Gyula Törlei (SR-IAS -2- GV, Mern. 108/1917). In 1917 the municipality organised an auction for the procurement of building materials (50 m³) for the construction and maintenance of the graves (SR-IAS -2- GV, Mern. 108/1917). It was planned to order 350 gravestones for the resting places of the fallen heroes. The number of “war graves” in this part in 1931 was 820, while in the Orthodox cemetery it was 296 (SR-IAS -47-SGS, V 3566/1934).

There was an initiative in 1916 by the Jewish Holy Association in Subotica *Chewra-Kadischa* to place a special monument for deceased Jewish soldiers—a memorial stone with their names engraved in their cemetery (SR-IAS-2-GV, Mern. 108/1917). There were invitations to make donations for the production of the board.

Military cemetery was regularly maintained until the change of the government. One of the bigger problems in maintenance in the entire between wars period (1918–1941) was a chronic lack of financial resources in the city budget. Even besides the examples of declaring the need for their regular maintenance and marking, there were no appropriate actions in that direction.

We find confirmation of this in a letter from 1933, in which the technical department of the city informs the Ministry of Culture: “The military cemetery in the Senčansko Cemetery is in a very sad state. The paths are no longer recognisable because they are overgrown with weeds. Except for some graves that are maintained, all other graves are deserted, many wooden crosses are rotten” (SR-IAS -275-ZP, 32.2. fol_029).

However, plans to organise the cemetery were present in the war times already. There is a photograph saved of an arranged military cemetery model, with decorative fence and gate, tombstones and gravestone monuments.

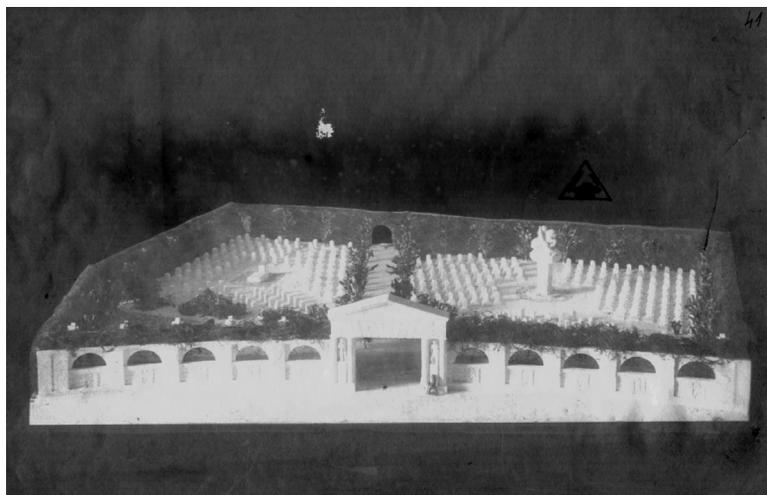


Fig. 3: Model of the military cemetery (SOURCE: F:2. mern. 108/1917)

With the new war in spring of 1941, the government was once again confronted with the question of realising the final resting place for the deceased soldiers. Thus, the previously used part of the old cemetery was designated for new “heroic victims.” This was the expression—heroically deceased and victims (“hősi halottai és áldozatai”)—used by the Hungarian government for the fallen soldiers of the First and Second World Wars (SR-IAS-275-ZP, 32.2).

That part of the cemetery today does not give an impression of war victims being buried there back in the First World War, it is disorganised and neglected and the dislocation of the remains of the buried has still not commenced for new burial or other purposes as it is done in some other parts of cemeteries in Subotica. Part of the Orthodox cemetery containing the graves of the First World War victims does not exist anymore and the gravestones are also destroyed.

MONUMENTS IN CEMETERIES

Families who had lost their sons in the war erected monuments in the cemeteries according to what they could afford. One of the most famous and best preserved monuments is the family monument at the entrance of the Bajsko cemetery. It was erected in memory of Dr. Gábor Regényi (1879–1914), who was killed at the very beginning of the war during war operations near Kupinovo. He was taken to Subotica

and buried there in the spring of 1926, when his body was found. He was a young and successful lawyer, son of Lajos Regényi, a lawyer, banker, and entrepreneur from Subotica. His mother was also very socially involved. It was his parents who erected a monument to their son, on which he is depicted in hussar uniform with sabre and horse, so that he would never be forgotten and would always be with them, at least symbolically. Gábor went to war to return glorious, instead he fell as one of the first victims. He was loved by a girl, and they waited to be together again after he left. After he died, she lost her will to live and died of grief, it is believed. The girl came from a wealthy and distinguished family who built her a magnificent tomb, which is directly across the street from Gábor's final resting place. Even in death they lie side by side forever. Regényi's tomb is now a cultural asset and is under the protection of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments in Subotica.



Fig. 4: The grave of Gábor Regényi, Subotica (photo B. Jezernik)

In the same battle near Kupinovo, Dr Beno Sudarević, a lawyer was killed. The date of his death, September 6, 1914 is recorded in the Register of Deaths, although the entry itself was made only on December 12, 1920 (SR-IAS-478-DMK, 1914. pag. 255, upis br. 2039). After his body was found, he was buried on September 27, 1914, in Kersko Cemetery in the family tomb. After the year 1918, one street in centre

of Subotica was named after him as it can be seen on a map of the city from 1921 (SR-IAS-3-KZ. 2.1.17). Family house Sudarević was located on the corner of the neighbouring street (after 1918 Jelačić Street).

A small detail from 1912 shows how the political struggle was conducted and how widespread it was. In that year after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, Dr Vranje Sudarević, doctor of medicine and acting mayor, filed a lawsuit against unknown persons, drunken students who had destroyed the street name plaque on April 30 (Dr Beno Sudarević, *No 1 street*) of his brother dr Beno Sudarević (Mačković, *Dr Vranje Sudarević*). After being appointed Mayor and Great Župan by the central government, Sudarević does not turn on to the faculty of law, but files a lawsuit, and orders the city departments under him (engineering department and city police), to replace the damaged name plaque and to investigate who the perpetrators were.

GRAVES OF THE FALLEN GERMANS

German soldiers that died were buried in military cemeteries in Subotica. During the war in 1917, German military command from Košice took interest in maintaining their tombs and engraving information about those soldiers in German on the tombstones (SR-IAS-2-GV, Mern. 108/1917). A commemorative list of 8 German soldiers was delivered. It was ordered to Engineering Department to take care of that.

In May 1927, a German Association for Search of the Fallen Soldiers' Graves sent a letter to the "Magistrate of Subotica–Szabadka (Maria Theresiopol)," in which they inquire about the grave of a German soldier killed on August 14, 1917, and buried in Central Cemetery in Subotica No 378 by the name of Friedrich Herrmann, and his war comrade Karl Bücherl, killed October 16, 1918, also buried in Central Cemetery No 37 (Mačković, *Potraga*). They also asked for two photos of the grave. However, the search by the city and military government, which took a long time according to the date (June 30, 1928!), brought no results. The answer of the mayor's office stated: „[...] we inform you that all possible measures were taken with the government and unfortunately we could not recover any information about the deceased in question and their graves“ (SR-IAS-47-SGS, II 38/1928).

It turned out that local authorities did not maintain the graves of the deceased enemy soldiers in Senćansko Cemetery, nor did they have information how and where were the fallen soldiers buried.



Fig. 5: Attachment form the letter in which German graves are looked for (SOURCE: F:47. II 38/1927).

MEMORIALS

Besides maintenance of the military cemeteries, another way of remembrance in the following years will be achieved by building many memorials. The most common type of memorials were chapels or memorial churches with ossuaries. Next to those, there were memorial boards, memorial fountains, monuments in the shape of columns, obelisk or pyramid. One of the most important types of

memorials were of course the figure monuments, which had the purpose of remembering certain events or persons from the First World War. This is why so frequently the monuments to King Petar and Aleksandar were built, often in form of bust, and also of certain prominent military commanders, and figures of a Serbian soldier which have a general meaning and can be connected to Yugoslav ideas. These types of memorials are erected in urban surroundings, in squares or parks, and what is important is that every city in Serbia, including Subotica, will get this kind of monument by the end of the 1920s.

SAME MONUMENT-DIFFERENT COUNTRY

In 1915, National Committee for Perpetuating the Memory of Heroes (*Hősök Emlékét Megörökítő Országos Bizottság*) was formed. It was designated by the law from 1917 that every city must join the action of putting up monuments to fallen heroes, so Subotica (Szabadka) got the obligation to put up monuments to the victims of the war.

For the burial of soldiers who were born outside Subotica and had no relatives or family graves in the city, the government of the time designated a certain part of the Senčansko Cemetery as their final resting place. The city organised an auction for the production of the sculpture, in which a local company *Kőfaragó és márványipar* (Marble and Stonemasonry Industry) won the bid (SR-IAS -2- GV, Mern. 108/1917). The sculptor János Matuska (Mačković, *Braća Franjo Matuska i Janoš*), who designed a figure composition and modelled it in plaster, chose the already known motif of the Merciful Jesus caressing the head of a wounded Austro-Hungarian soldier. This motif, in the form of the Good Shepherd with a stick in his right hand touching the head of a wounded soldier with his left hand, was already known in the Western European art of the early Middle Ages. I found the description of the sculpture in a local newspaper of February 1917 (*Bácskai Hírlap* 1917: 3). The monument consists of pyramid shaped composition of Jesus who is bent over the wounded soldier. It is carved in limestone and positioned on a high granite base with three steps around the entire monument. It is obvious that the artist wanted to preserve the memory of the horrors of the war exactly like shown—with a universal theme which would present a contrast to horrible battles and suffering of the war.

The monument did not see the intended place for its installation, the war ended and it was set aside to await its further fate. It was expected that this monument to the fallen soldiers of the defeated Austro-Hungarian army would not see the light of day and be presented to the public in a country that emerged from the war with a pathos for the victor, but the opposite was the case. When the need arose in the newly established Subotica County for the erection of monuments commemorating the war, the choice, unexpectedly, fell on this monument. It underwent a small metamorphosis; the soldier of the losing side was transformed into a soldier of the winning side—Serbian soldier as the hero. Thus, it became the “Monument to Fallen Heroes for Liberation and Unification 1912–1918.”

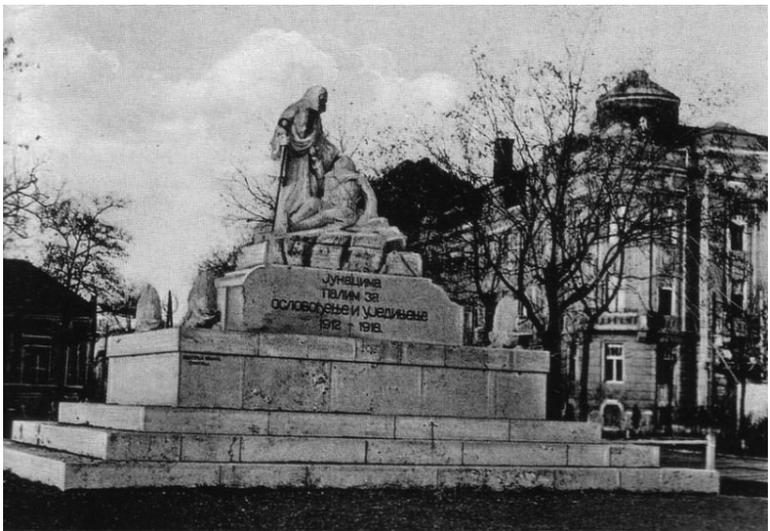


Fig. 6: Monument to the fallen heroes of liberation and unification 1912–1918, Subotica, private collection of B. Jezernik.

With small interventions in the carving, the Austro-Hungarian soldier is transformed into a Serbian soldier, while the figure of Jesus remains intact in specific Western iconography. This transformation of the soldier was done with minimal intervention, by carving the familiar curls around the legs of the wounded soldier. With these changes, this monument became the first large public monument dedicated to the memory of the First World War in Subotica. For the erection of the monument a special committee, the Festive Committee for the Unveiling of the Monument to the Fallen Heroes of the Liberation and Unification 1912–1918, which developed the flag of the Yugoslav Sokol Association in Subotica.

In addition to the importance of the monument to the fallen heroes themselves and the idea associated with it, the manner in which it was first presented to the public was also significant. The solemn unveiling of the monument took place on Sunday, May 31,

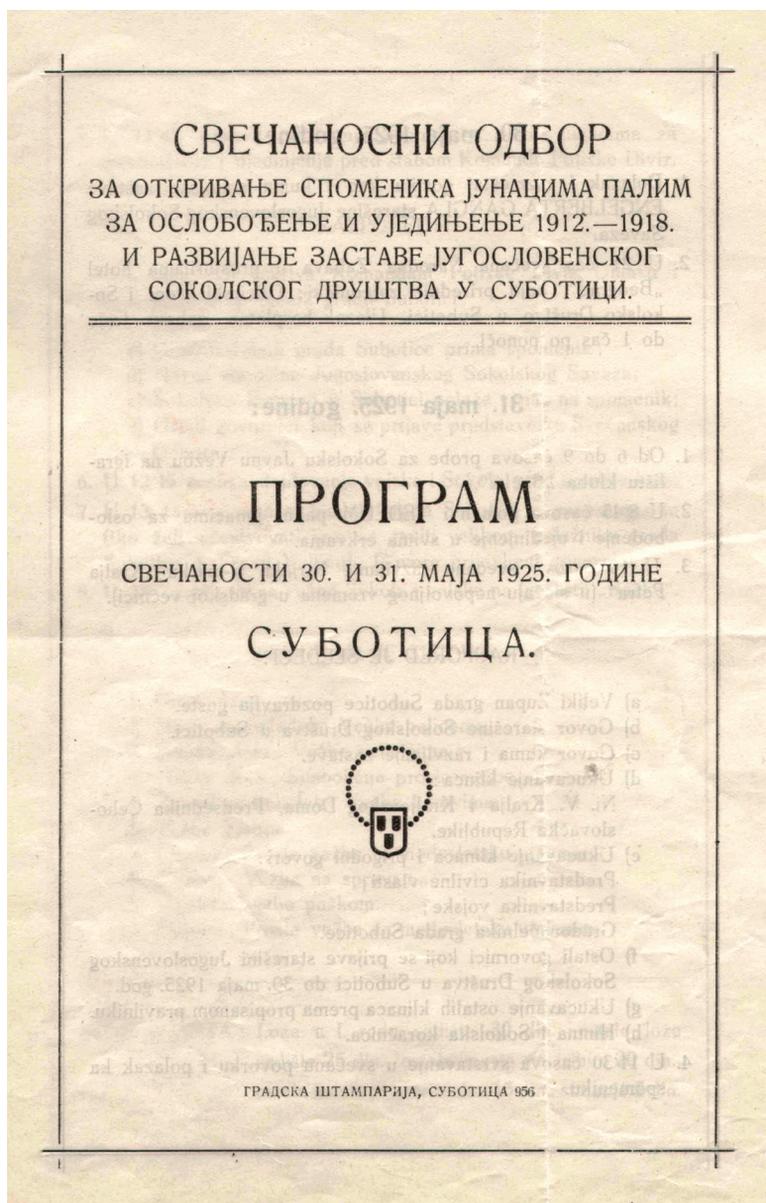


Fig. 7: Ceremony program from 1925 (SOURCE: F:47. II 66/1925).

1925, on Vojvode Putnik Square in front of the building of Potiska divizija, a square that was not in the centre of the city, but 600 metres away from the City Hall. The programme included the solemn consecration of the flag of the Sokol Association. The army stationed in Subotica actively participated, Sokols from other cities, guests, important personalities and many citizens of Subotica were present. The unveiling was a kind of spectacular event, a public event of great importance, attended by both important personalities from the central government and a significant local public. The idea of erecting the monument, which existed before, was led and implemented by the local Sokols.

The programme of the celebration was scheduled for two days, Saturday and Sunday, May 30 and 31. On Saturday the guests arrived and were accommodated together with the flag's godfather from the Sokol movement, Engelbert Gangl from Ljubljana, the head of the Yugoslav Sokol Association. In the evening, a festive party was held at the Beograd Hotel, admission was free.

There were a lot of guest from all over the country. Admiral Dragutin Pric was present in the name of King Aleksandar Karađorđević, also Minister of Traffic Ante Radojević, and representative of Czechoslovak president Tomáš Masaryk, Jan Šeba. Thanksgiving was served in all churches in Subotica on that day. The procession moved from the park through crowds of people through street of Subotica to Vojvode Putnika Square, where patriotic speeches preceded the revealing, first by general Miroslav Damjanović, chief of staff of the Šumadijska division, and then by Admiral Pric and mayor of Subotica Albe Malagurski, who commenced his speech with the following words:

He who has not been a slave does not know what freedom is, and does not appreciate it. But we, the people of Vojvodina, the Serbs and Bunjevci, who lived for centuries in national slavery under the oppression of Austria-Hungary, just as the Serbs lived under the Turkish oppression, appreciate it. We will preserve the heritage of our Great Martyr as strong and reliable frontiersmen of our united Fatherland and beware of those who try to touch it. (Šokčić 1934: 293)

The last speaker was minister Radojević, after which a wreath laying ceremony² and ceremonial revealing of the monument took place. After the wreath laying the army took a ceremonial step, which was the end of the ceremony and this spectacular revealing event. It

2 16 wreaths laid on the monument on that occasion are kept in the City Museum.

was an extraordinary experience for Subotica and a public event that was spoken about for a long time after.

The comments in the local newspapers, such as *Hrvatske novine*, described the event but had some critics as well. It says at the beginning of the article: "A beautiful monument to fallen heroes is placed in Subotica. That monument was unveiled and given to the public on the Pentecost, May 31, 1925. It shows a dying soldier over which Jesus Christ, God and man, is bent, accepting his head, to bring him to eternal life over death." It further states: "If the idea is right, and man dies for it, Christ makes him a part of his glory, part of the apotheosis, part of the deity." Then it states an objection: "There was only one mistake, but so great that we must draw attention to it of all concerned. It was a great tactlessness to connect the unveiling of this great monument with unfurling the flag of the Sokol Association. It was a gesture which had to achieve this: You who want to bow to the shadows of the fallen heroes, must also bow to Sokols. This was a capital mistake of the organisers of this ceremony. The idea of the Sokol movement became crystal clear and gained the shape of materialistic understanding of life, and so became not only disgusting to 7 million Yugoslavs and 300 million other Catholics, but is considered a bitter enemy to Catholic faith. They can thank that gesture for 10,000 Catholics not coming to the ceremony, Catholic associations and their leaders. We suggest to the organisers of future events to take this into consideration" (*Hrvatske Novine* 1925: 2).

The following year, the dust over the event has already settled, but minor problems have arisen with the monument. An organisation of Serbian National Youth "Dušan Silni" from Subotica, during the flag consecration on June 28, 1926, requested permission to place a two-headed white eagle on the monument with the following inscription: "The two-headed white eagle was placed by the Serbian National Youth as a sign of the victorious entry of the Serbian army." The Senate approved the placement of the symbol, but not the sign (Mačković, *Dvoglavi beli orao*).

Organisation "Udruženje ratnika i oficira" from Subotica is addressing the government on May 31, 1926, and they say that "the golden lettering on monument in front of the Potiska divizija building are fading, parts of the structure are falling away," and they are asking who is in charge of maintenance (SR-IAS-47-SGS. IV 4130/1934).

Only two years after the unveiling, there was discontent over the location and the impression the monument gave. Some demanded that the government invest more financial resources in the monument. "A unity monument should be a worthy representation of this historic act in the life of our people and one of the most beautiful

decorations of our city, not a rag we inherited from outsiders” (SR-*IAS-47-SGS, II 23/1927*).

There were plans considering the monument in 1938. The Board for the 20th Anniversary of the Liberation of Subotica Celebration suggested, which was accepted by the City Council on assembly on December 1, 1938, that a monument ossuary be installed on Obilićev Venac near the Liberation monument. It is stated in the proposition: “The World War is far greater in number of life sacrifices than other wars, the most precious thing that people have. Statistician working day and night still cannot determine the correct number of deaths even after 20 years [...] every war so far gave a hero [...] but World War being so vast, we apprehend how many heroes it gave. Heroism was always the most sublime, because its results are eternal. Every life lost hides a heroic act in itself. As many lives are cut by the war, so are many heroes dead. We can only imagine the number of the ones we know nothing about.” They intended 300,000 dinars for that purpose. The plan was to “carry over the bones of dead soldiers from Orthodox and Senčansko Cemetery and bury them by religious affiliation.” All of it ended with just plans. The unification in victims and heroism and “putting up ossuary and monument to fallen warriors” waited for better more suitable times (SR-*IAS-47-SGS, IV 6933/1938*).

OTHER MONUMENTS AND OBJECTS

The monument to Emperor Jovan Nenad on the other hand, the national Serbian (Slavic) symbol, was ceremonially revealed on November 27, 1927. The monument is the work of sculptor Petar Palavičini (1886–1958). Prince Pavle was present at its detailed planned and organised revealing event, next to many other officers and important persons. It was clearly stated in the entire event that the purpose and goal of its instalment is the conformation of the fact that his territory always was and always will be Serbian.

Memorial board in honour of Serbian army arriving was set up on November 12, 1938 as part of four-days celebration of the 20th anniversary of liberation of Subotica (from November 10 to 13), on the wall of the railway station building, at the entrance from the track.

In 1931, construction of the Sokol House (Sokolski Dom) in Subotica commenced. The building was ceremonially opened in 1936 under the name “Yugoslav National House of King Aleksandar I” (SR-*IAS-275-SGS, 68.2. fol-17*).

PROGRAM PROSLAVE

10 NOVEMBRA

- 1 U 8³⁰ časova parastos u pravoslavnoj crkvi.
- 2 U 9 časova zadušnica u crkvi Svete Terezije.
- 3 U 9⁴⁵ časova otkrivanje spomen-ploče na zgradi bioskopa „Avale“.
Govori g. Dr. Mirko Ioković Ivandebić.
- 4 U 10¹⁵ časova otkrivanje spomen-ploče u svečanoj sali Državnog matičarskog zvanja. Govori g. Mijo Mandić.
- 5 U 10³⁰ časova obnavljanje događaja iz 1918 g. isticanjem državne i plemenskih zastava na toranj Gradske kuće.

12 NOVEMBRA

- 1 U 18 časova sakupljanje svih ustanova, udruženja, korporacija, društava i škola pred željezničkom stanicom, u Đenerala Milojevića ulici i Parku Kralja Petra.
- 2 U 18²⁰ čas. doček počasnih građana i vojske na stanici. Govore: gg. Dr. Jovan Manojlović pozdravljajući vojsku i Pretsednik gradske opštine pozdravljajući počasne građane.

- 3 Otkrivanje spomen-ploče na želj. stanici. Govori g. Dr. Dragomir Dimitrijević.
- 4 Polazak vojske i povorke sa bakljadom pred Diviziju kod spomenika „Palim junacima“. Povorka ide ovim ulicama: Park Kr. Petra, Kralja Aleksandra, Kara-dordev trg, Štrosmajerova, Vilsonova, Trg Vojvode Putnika. Pred spomenikom Pretsednik gradske opštine pozdravlja vojsku.
- 5 U 21 čas sokolska akademija - Sokolskog društva „Stadion I“.

13 NOVEMBRA

- 1 U 10 čas. svečana sednica gradskog veća sa ovim dnevnim redom:
 - a) Pozdravna reč Pretsednika grada Subotice;
 - b) Pozdradni telegram Njegovom Veličanstvu Kralju Petru II;
 - c) Državna himna;
 - d) Značaj 10 i 13 novembra - govori g. Jašo Mačković, gradski većnik;
 - e) Predaja diploma počasnim građanima: Miji Mandiću i Mihajlu Nediću;
 - f) Sveslovenska himna;
 - g) Donošenje odluke o podizanju spomenika biskupu Ivanu Antunoviću;
 - h) Donošenje odluke o promeni naziva ulica: Pozorišne, Gimnazijske i Zmaj Jovinov trga.
- 2 Odlazak na pukovsku slavu 34 peš. puka.
- 3 U 13 časova svečani banket u čast počasnih građana i vojske.
- 4 U 21 čas svečani bal u koncertnoj sali Gradskog pozorišta.

Fig. 8: Program for 20th anniversary of Liberation celebration (SOURCE: F:47. IV 835/1939).

WAR PERIOD 1941–1944

Monuments put up after 1918 did not last for long. Hungarian government was back in rule in this region after 23 years. Just like when the government changed back in 1918, Hungarian returning government

demanded reckoning with memorials built after they left. Monument to liberation was damaged and taken down, so was the memorial board in the railway station. Monument to Jovan Nenad in the square was damaged in way that the head from the statue was knock down, so the unfortunate so-called Black Man was beheaded in death as he was in life (Papp 2013: 32).

Hungarian government organised in 1941 a special Committee for Instalment of Monuments in Remembrance of the Soldiers from 8th Hussar Regiment that have died a heroic death in the First World War, and so a new monument was indeed eradiated on September 8, 1942. It was a monument to a hussar soldier in uniform holding a rifle, about 3 m high. It was put up in front of the old barracks on Miklós Horthy Road, Senčanski Road today (SR-IAS-60-GN, XX 13464/1943). That part of the city underwent the bombardment by the alliance at the end of the war, when military objects were heavily damaged, as well as the monument.



Fig. 9: Photograph of the monument to hussar soldier (SOURCE: F:60. XX 13464/1943).

Monuments that were removed were being restored and new ones were also built by the Hungarian government between 1941 and 1944.

Jovan Nenad monument was additionally damaged in bombardment of Subotica in September 1944. It was moved in the 1950s to the yard of the Museum where it waited for 4 decades to be restored and put back in its place, even though that did not happen quickly either. After the Second World War ended, the social system changed and in such political conditions, memorials of the former war were forgotten completely. They were replaced by new ones without any follow-up. Only with the break of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the return of the Serbian government, the awareness of the First World War victims' significance has returned.

In the Square in front of the city Hall, almost at the exact same place as before, president of Executive Council of Vojvodina dr Radoman Božović and president of Matica Srpska academician Boško Petrović revealed on September 9, 1991, the monument to Emperor Jovan Nenad the Black Man. All the signs were in Cyrillic.

In 1992, the memorial board from the railway station was restored. The writing on it is in Cyrillic and it says: "Arrival of the Serbian army on November 13 Liberation". The original board was destroyed by the Hungarian occupiers in 1941 (*a Pričam ti priču*).

The monument to the liberators which was damaged by Hungarian government during the war only to be additionally damaged in the bombardment of Subotica by the alliance, was removed in 1955. Thirty-eight years later it was returned and the sculptures restored. However, it was not possible to return it to its former place because in the meantime, the former Vojvode Putnika Square became occupied by a new apartment building and road. Monument was ceremonially installed in the nearby Lazara Nešića Square on November 13, 1993, where it still stands today. On the same day, a wreath laying ceremony is held every year.

On the occasion of centenary since the First World War, in 2014, repair and reconstruction work were carried out. The missing grey granite slab in the base was replaced, joints in the base were filled, the monument itself was cleaned, the lettering was repainted, and new light poles with narrow-beam reflectors were installed. A granite walkway to the monuments was constructed for the laying of wreaths. On this occasion, an exhibition was organised next to the monument, under the title the Memorials of the First World War in Northern Bačka and Banat, which was to show all the memorials in Subotica and other

8 municipalities: Bačka Topola, Mali Idoš, Senta, Ada, Novi Kneževac, Čoka, and Kikinda, all of which fall under the jurisdiction of The Intermunicipal Institution for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Subotica.

On private initiative, in 2002, a life-size bust of King Petar I, the Liberator, was erected near the Teachers' College (Preparandija) in Vodice, a place located 5 km from the centre of Subotica on the south-western bank of the Palić River. It is a sacred place for two religions, both Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

Assembly the city of Subotica declared in May 2020, that King Petar I Karađorđević, former mayor of Subotica Karolj Biro, and Bishop Ivan Antunović should have a monument in their honour in Subotica. A monument dominating by its size in the main street was unveiled on November 30, 2012, by Minister Darija Kisić Tepavčević with the following words: "Under the rule of King Petar, Serbia had its finest moments. Generations remember glorious victories in Balkan Wars and the First World War, and liberation of the Old Serbia from Ottoman rule, and the result of his rule was the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in which all Serbs were united in one state" (*Subotica.com*, November 30, 2021).

CONCLUSION

After more than one century since the ending of the First World War, official institutionalised remembrance of it in the form of memorials and monuments is still in focus of the public and is only getting stronger. On the other hand, unofficial, spontaneous, family remembrance and their way of marking it naturally and understandably is fading. Victims of the war and their final resting places in cemeteries were more witnesses to new burials than permanent maintenance and remembrance,

What is the situation today? Part of Senčansko Cemetery where local and foreign soldiers deceased in the First World War were buried is neglected and unmarked. The situation is pretty much the same in Orthodox Cemetery in Mulberry Forest.

It went from the monument of universal character—merciful Jesus and apotheosis of dying soldier, to glorification of specific historical person King Petar I with a clear goal of expressing symbolic domination of strong national idealistic connotation, which only needs to reflect, mark, form and direct the real situation in Subotica in the present and project it into the future.

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The First World War Monuments and Memorial Heritage in Macedonia¹

INES CRVENKOVSKA RISTESKA AND LJUPČO RISTESKI

Topics such as the place and meaning of the events of the First World War are classic readings in Macedonian historiography and are mainly focused on examining the military developments in global frameworks, as well as considering them in local and regional frameworks in the Balkans. However, the increasing popularity of issues regarding the First World War, particularly the resurgence of politics of remembrance and attitudes towards monuments and memorials, happened on the occasion of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the war's end. Thus, public debate intensified in the Republic of Macedonia during the commemoration period, and the number of articles in

1 Due to the historical perspective of the analysis that follows, we use the name Macedonia for the country that had used the constitutional name Republic of Macedonia since the declaration of independence in 1991, and was recognised in the UN under the “temporary” name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, until in 2019, after the signing of the Prespa Agreement, it changed its constitutional name to the Republic of North Macedonia.

daily newspapers, online portals, and on local and national television channels increased, especially regarding events on the Macedonian (Salonika) Front and their representation in politics of remembrance and commemorations. The public discourse and media reports were mainly in line with the historiographical narrative of the First World War, which presents ethnic Macedonians “as subjects of violence and inevitable victims of their neighbours and their nationalist policies. Thus, in these papers the prevailing claim is that as a result of the wars, Macedonia was divided between the neighbouring states by artificial borders, and the Macedonian people were exposed to intensified denationalisation and assimilation” (Todorov 2016: 9), a claim supported by history textbooks, shaping the myth of the eternal victim. To this one can add representations of the First World War built into the verbal narratives of history teachers, which we listened to in history classes more than 25 years ago, in which the First World War was rarely referred to as “the Great War” in Macedonia, as was defined in the Western European discourse, but as “fratricidal war.” This naming is due to socio-political circumstances in which the local population in Macedonia, especially the male population, was involved in the two warring sides of the frontline, being brought into a situation where close relatives killed each other. Such an association among people, especially among those living in settlements on the frontline at the time, is also connected with the large number of killed family members, the stories of which are still fresh, providing a reason to strengthen and maintain the already strong representation of Macedonians as victims of the First World War (Stojanov 1969; Andonov and Emšov 1982; Stojčev 2007; Stojanova 2019).

Both of them were mobilised in 1914 by the Serbs and, following Serbian command, were sent to the Serbian-Austro-Hungarian front near the Drina River. Petre was taken prisoner by the Austro-Hungarians and then sent to Bulgaria as a “Macedonian Bulgarian” in one of the Bulgarian divisions on the Salonica Front, in the sector of the Mariovo Mountains, namely, the Sokol Hill. His brother Mitre was in Corfu with the Serbian army, after which his 21st Infantry Regiment was sent to fight against the Bulgarians precisely at the position of the Sokol Hill, from where you can also see the village of Staravina and the entire Mariovo valley. One serving in the Serbian, and the other in the Bulgarian army, for two whole years buried in the trenches of the Sokol Hill, fighting for the interests of others, both Petre and Mitre did not know that they were fifty meters away, separated by a wire barrier (Boseovski 1997).

In a remark by historian Vanče Stojčev, precisely this is cited as the reason why the Macedonians killed in the First World War

remained only in their families' memories, which are slowly fading. And according to author Petar Stavrev, "the reason can be seen in the effort to forget why wars take lives and create tragedies, and if we think about them, perhaps the future will seem darker" (Stavrev 2006).

HOW DID UNRECOGNISABLE SOLDIERS ON THE SALONIKA/MACEDONIAN FRONT FROM MACEDONIA BECOME FORGOTTEN?

Apart from armies that came from other parts of Europe, the most numerous population on the front was the local population living in the area along the frontline. After the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, followed by the First World War, as a result of nationalist and big-state ideas in this area, the borders between the created Balkan states began to shift. Depending on the success of the warring parties' military conquests, the local population was mobilised in various armies for their military campaigns, without taking into account their local identities.

Although the First World War started on the Salonika/Macedonian Front, there was an assumption in historical accounts that the front played a smaller role compared to others, such as the Western or the Gallipoli Front. Such an assumption is based on the impression that in terms of military developments, the Salonika/Macedonian Front was quite static, like many other fronts, during all four years, except for the last few months. However, this did not mean that the loss of human life was smaller compared to other fronts.

Depending on the military successes of armies in the Balkans, parts of Macedonia became part of the Kingdom of Serbia (South Serbia), and the population was included in Balkan developments as part of the Serbian army; whereas after the military successes of the Bulgarian army, they became conscripts in the Bulgarian or other armies. Usually, both sides did not recognise the identity of the local people originating from Macedonia, especially of males who were actively involved in the army forces, and often even had a negatory attitude towards it. The attitude of non-recognition due to denial of the population's local identity has been discussed on several occasions by Eric Hobsbawm (2001; 2015), Božidar Jezernik (2002), Ilka Thiessen (2006), and others. Their discussion on the non-recognition of Macedonian identity complements and covers the period before and after the First Balkan War, the Second Balkan War, and the First World War, when the region of Macedonia was divided between the already-formed Balkan

states. In the period after the “Great War,” in 1918, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Kingdom of SCS) was formed. In their discussions, Hobsbawm and Jezernik recognise these wars as a singular contextual unit due to their temporal closeness, but mostly due to influences of cause and consequence. Macedonian historians have also written about the military events of 1912–1918 as a singular contextual unit, starting from 1969 with the first historiographical work that represents “the most descriptive and still the most referenced historiographical work in Macedonian historiography” (Todorov 2016: 9). This points to the fact that historical texts on this period of war, regardless of their approach, are still in relatively few numbers, and therefore, according to historian Todorov, the historiography of the First World War “is almost absent, if compared to that dedicated to the Second World War” (Todorov 2016: 14).

The epitaph on the tombstone of the soldier Petko Liskovski can serve as confirmation of the contextual whole, where one clearly sees the dynamics of changing armies on the territory of Macedonia, as well as the impact of changes in the war on the dynamics of the local population’s identity construction in their role as soldiers on both sides of the frontline. The tombstone and inscription, placed and written by Petko’s descendants, sheds light on the construction of the local people’s identity discourse, or the myth of the “suffering” victims in the military context. Journalist Žaneta Zdravkovska, in an article on the case of Liskovski Petko, equates this soldier’s fate with the fate of Macedonia:

This is how relatives describe the life of the former suffering soldier from Macedonia, Petko Liskovski, who from 1910 to 1918 was forced to fight in three foreign armies, which were sometimes enemies. Irrefutable proof of this horror, say relatives, is Liskovski’s tombstone next to the church Ascension of Jesus in the Bitola village of Dobruševo. Through it, relatives wanted to depict, in the shortest manner possible, one of the bloodiest periods of Macedonian history. They wrote on the grave: “Here lies Petko Liskovski, a Turkish soldier from 1910 to 1912, a Serbian soldier from 1914 to 1915, and a Bulgarian soldier from 1916 to 1918.” Next to each date, they placed photos of Liskovski from the time when he was a Turkish, Serbian, and Bulgarian soldier.

“He had five sons. The grave was made based on their idea. They found the pictures and arranged them on the monument. The idea was for this to serve as evidence of Macedonia’s history, of how our people were mobilised in foreign armies. There were other soldiers from the village who changed several military uniforms, but their children did not bother to put pictures on the graves so that too would be remembered,” said Metodija Talevski, grandson of the deceased Liskovski. (Zdravkovska 2013)



Fig. 1 and 2: The soldier Liskovski Petko's grave, Dobruševo village

THE POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE AND MONUMENT NATIONALISM AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE TERRITORY OF MACEDONIA

After the end of the First World War and the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, a part of Macedonia entered the composition of the newly created kingdom, although not as a recognised separate entity with its own ethnic uniqueness and characteristics. Immediately after the establishment of the new state, a special Decree for the Arrangement and Maintenance of Military Cemeteries and Graves in the Homeland and Abroad was passed in 1919, which, was translated into law in 1922 (“Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova”) wherein, in accordance with general human values, it was determined that “regardless of the religion of the deceased,” their eternal resting places should be organised and well-maintained. As such, according to the signed agreements, graves of soldiers, prisoners of war, and integrated persons, as well as former citizens of Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria, would also be maintained (Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova, 3–4).

According to the rhetoric of the newly-created state, military cemeteries and graves were to be maintained “as bright memories of difficult days in the battle for freedom and unification of our tri-named nation,” while priests of the parishes where these cemeteries

were located, were obliged “to perform religious rites in the name of their relatives and the grateful motherland on Saint Vitus day and all Saturdays of Souls” (Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova, čl.5, 5). The Law in Article 17 also regulated the appointment of priest-guardians, which gave the military cemeteries a sacred character, especially in the region of Macedonia, in localities “in Thessaloniki for cemeteries in the territory of Greece from Thessaloniki to Lerin and Kanal, along the Serbian-Greek border in the localities: Kajmakčalan, Ostrov, Sorovič, along the villages of the Meglen plain, Kožuv, Zborsko, Veternik, Dobro Pole, Sokolec, Vertekop, the cemeteries from Lerin to Čegan as well as the cemeteries in Thessaloniki ... On Kajmakčalan a priest-monk would be appointed as priest-guardian” (Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova, čl. 17, 9). All priest-guardians were designated by law as civil servants. Since military cemeteries were considered temporary solutions, the law established that as soon as the appropriate conditions were created, the cemeteries would “be concentrated in such a way that in every area where they are located, respectable memorials will be erected in the form of chapels, churches, mausoleums with ossuaries underneath” (Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova, čl. 20, 10). Thus, through memorial commemoration, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes began to construct the ideals of liberated and united territories, gradually introducing the idea of Yugoslavism, primarily in the spirit of unification of the “tri-named nation,” while erecting special memorials to mark national and ethnic boundaries of the new state. Having no place for the Macedonians, the significance of Old Serbia (Kosovo) and South Serbia (Macedonia) was especially emphasised in the creation of mythical images of Serbdom in these areas, for the purposes of which special cultural and educational policies were planned in state policy. In the period leading up to the Second World War, on the territory of Macedonia, all previously known locations of military cemeteries were constructed and arranged in accordance with the Law on the Arrangement of Our Military Cemeteries, as well as a large number of chapels, memorial ossuaries, and monuments dedicated to the battles of the Balkan Wars and the First World War.

After the establishment of the Kingdom of SCS and the adoption of regulations for the treatment of military cemeteries and graves, some of the deceased soldiers’ remains were relocated to collective cemeteries in larger cities along the frontline: Bitola, Prilep, and Skopje.

GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY IN PRILEP

In 1916, German soldiers built a cemetery with 2000 grave sites in Prilep. Fifteen years later, the official German cemetery service converted these war cemeteries into collective cemeteries. Although there were no battles in Prilep, here one also finds a German sanitary tent (field ambulance). Not far from Prilep stretched the Salonika/Macedonian Front.

Soldiers from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Turkey, as well as civilian workers from Serbia and Albania, found their eternal peace here. Heinrich Ebert, the son of the first president of Germany, Friedrich Ebert (1871–1925), is buried in this cemetery. The cemetery was built after the First World War and the Second World War, and for a long time, it was in bad condition. The renovation process started in 2006 and lasted until 2009 (*Kraljevine Srbija i Crna Gora u ratovima 1912–1918*).

GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY IN BITOLA

The battles that took place in May 1917 in the vicinity of Bitola between the French armies on one side and the German-Bulgarian armies on the other side resulted in a large number of victims, who were initially buried in the surrounding areas. Later, they were transferred to the newly created military cemeteries. As a result, the German military cemetery in Bitola was built on a hill in the northwestern part of Bitola. “Tottenborg” or “City of the Dead” had been constructed for more than a year, and is the work of the famous German architect Robert Tischler. The project was completed in 1929–30, and construction work began in 1934. The German military cemetery in Bitola holds the remains of 3406 German soldiers who died and were originally buried in the vicinity of Bitola.

BULGARIAN MILITARY CEMETERY IN THE VILLAGE OF CAPARI, NEAR BITOLA

In the western part of the village of Capari, there is a Bulgarian military cemetery with around 300 soldiers who died in the battles around Crvena Stena on Pelister in May 1917. The cemetery has recently been restored.

FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY IN BITOLA

The French military cemetery in Bitola is the largest military cemetery in the Republic of North Macedonia, where more than 13,000 soldiers of the French army killed on the Salonika/Macedonian Front are buried. The cemetery contains 6262 individual graves and around 7000 soldiers buried in a common grave. The cemetery was built following the end of the First World War. The remains of fallen soldiers along the frontline through Mariovo, as well as in parts of Pelagonia and Prespa, were carefully searched for and exhumed. Above each grave, a metal cross with the French tricolour was placed, with basic information about the deceased engraved. Among the Muslim soldiers, an Islamic religious symbol was placed instead of a cross. The French military cemetery in Bitola was opened on September 15, 1923, on the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Dobro Pole. The Battle of Dobro Pole took place from September 15 to 18, 1918, during which the Entente Powers made a breakthrough on the Salonika/Macedonian Front. On the eve of the 100th anniversary since the end of the First World War, the construction and opening of a memorial museum was announced. It is a memorial to the fallen French soldiers and the Macedonian civilian population who suffered during the war. In the memorial museum, the life of the soldiers and the civilian population is shown through photographs of the Manaki brothers, dolls depicting soldiers and their life stories, personal memorabilia, and a relief map depicting the Macedonian front, which is particularly interesting (<https://bitola.info/mk/muzej-francuski-grobishta/>).

SERBIAN MILITARY CEMETERY IN BITOLA

The Serbian military cemetery in Bitola is located in the southern part of Bitola as an extension of the so-called Bukovo Orthodox Cemetery. Serbian soldiers who died in the Battle of Bitola and soldiers who died in the vicinity of Bitola during the First World War are buried here. Additionally, one can see tombstones of people who died after the end of the war in the cemetery. There are 1321 metal crosses there, and the remains of the deceased are placed in the memorial ossuary under the central cross-shaped monument. The construction of the memorial ossuary began in 1926, based on the project of architect Momir Korunović. The cemetery was reconstructed on several occasions, once in 1980, and most recently in 1998 with the support of institutions of the Republic of Serbia.

SERBIAN CEMETERY VILLAGE IN SKOČIVIR, MARIOVO

In the autumn of 1916, during the the First World War, the village of Skočivir was on the front line, after which the fighting moved a few kilometres away, becoming an important communication point for the Entente powers. In 1916, the hospital of the Russian princess Alexandra Naryshkina was established in Thessaloniki, and the following year, 1917, the Polish Hospital for Scottish Women also operated near Skočivir. The location of these two hospitals provides an explanation for the large number of graves from the First World War that are noticeable in two places: the first is the courtyard of the church “St. Petka,” and the second is today’s military cemetery by the road passing through the Konjarka picnic area and leading to the Kajmakčalan peak. In addition, there is still a so-called “French road” near the village that once connected Skočivir with today’s abandoned village of Cegel. There once used to be a cable car between these two villages that served to deliver military material. The cemetery covers an area of around 3,500 square metres, and around 500 Serbian soldiers who died in the battle of Kajmakčalan are buried there (Solakovski 1998: 7–12).

SERBIAN CEMETERY NEAR THE VILLAGE OF DOBROVENI, BITOLA

The Serbian military cemetery in the village of Dobroveni is located within the local cemetery at the entrance of the village. During the First World War, there was a hospital in the village, which is why several hundred soldiers were buried here.

GREEK MILITARY CEMETERY IN VALANDOVO

The remains of 118 soldiers of the Greek army who died during the fighting on the Salonica/Macedonian Front in September 1918 are buried in the Greek military cemetery near Valandovo.

FRENCH CEMETERY IN SKOPJE

The First World War French military cemetery in Skopje is located on the hill of the Skopje Fortress. It was built in 1926 and holds the remains of 2930 French soldiers, of which only 930 have names. Among these soldiers, there are quite a few from Morocco and Senegal. The graves are divided into two larger plots with a path leading to the central memorial monument. The monument is reached through a centrally placed gate and a tree-lined stairway, while the two side paths lead to tombs of the same type. From the highest point, there is a pleasant view of Skopje and mountain Vodno. The opposite side is accessed via a large staircase.

The commemoration is done in the spirit of classical styles, characteristic of the eclectic period. The comparison with antiquity is unavoidable.

On a large base, four columns with Ionic capitals are placed, above which we find an architrave, a frieze, and a cornice. A sculptural torch with an eternal flame rises above the roof elements.



Fig.3: View of the central monument in the cemetery (photo by MARH, <https://marh.mk/francuskite-voeni-grobishta-vo-skopje/>)



Fig.4: A close-up view of the central monument in the cemetery (photo by MARH, <https://marh.mk/francuskite-voeni-grobishta-vo-skopje/>)

BRITISH MILITARY CEMETERY IN SKOPJE

The British military cemetery (124 soldiers) in Skopje is located next to the church of St. Archangel Michael and the student campus of St.

Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The Skopje British Cemetery was created after the Armistice when burials were gathered together from Kumanovo British Cemetery, Prilep French Military Cemetery, Veles British French Military Cemeteries, and other burial grounds. The great majority of those are buried here were men of the RASC (MT), who died of influenza after the Armistice with Bulgaria. (<https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/54345/skopje-british-cemetery/>).

GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY IN GRADSKO

The German military cemetery in Gradsko belongs to the lesser-known military cemeteries in Macedonia, which have gained relevance in recent years. Located on the outskirts of Gradsko, the cemetery is hard to see, especially due to its neglected state.

STRUGGLES IN THE POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE ON THE TERRITORY OF MACEDONIA FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO TODAY

During the Second World War, Macedonia was invaded and occupied by Germany and its allies, during which it was annexed to the Kingdom of Bulgaria and placed under its administration. In the period from 1941 until the liberation of Macedonia by the Communist Party-led partisan movement, the Bulgarian government established its own policies of memories and historical narrative from the position of the official Bulgarian state, denying the official and historiographical discourse of the Serbian state, and of Serbian victims until then. This particularly affected the commemoration of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, especially in terms of the attitude towards memorial heritage, which primarily celebrated Serbian national history. Thus, the Serbian memorial ossuary in Dolno Karaslari, near Veles, was destroyed by the Bulgarian authorities during the Second World War, and after liberation, a meteorological station was built in its place. Today, there is only a sign that there used to be a memorial ossuary on the site (*Kraljevine Srbija i Crna Gora u ratovima 1912–1918*).

In April 2022 in Karaslari, a memorial ossuary dedicated to 12 Muslim soldiers from Algeria who fought in the French army during

the First World War was restored. The memorial ossuary was erected in 1929. The monument was restored in 2022 by the French organisation *Souvenir Française* from Paris, and the French ambassador to the Republic of North Macedonia, representatives of the Macedonian authorities, and the local self-government attended the celebration (*Rekonstruirano spomen obeležjeto na zaginatite francuski vojnici vo selo Karaslari*).

In memory of the Kumanovo battle (October 23–24, 1912), after which the Turkish military forces withdrew and the territory of Macedonia was liberated, in accordance with the politics of remembrance and in honour of the fallen soldiers of 1937, the monumental



Fig. 5: The memorial ossuary devoted to the 12 Algerian Muslim soldiers in the French Army renewed and re-opened in the village of Karaslari in April 2022 (Photos from the portal Duma.mk, <https://duma.mk/region/rekonstruirano-spomen-obelezjeto-na-zaginatite-francuskite-vojnici-vo-selo-karaslari/>).

memorial complex of Zebrnjak was built near Kumanovo, based on the project of architect Momir Korunović (*Kraljevine Srbija i Crna Gora u ratovima 1912–1918*).

In the ossuary, at the foot of the monument, the bones of fallen soldiers from the Battle of Kumanovo, soldiers who died during the First Balkan War, as well as remains of those who died during the First World War were laid. The common memory of all three conflicts, commonly represented as the “wars from 1912 to 1918,” was preserved. In May 1942, the obelisk was blown up by the Bulgarian army.

Following the liberation of Macedonia and the creation of socialist Yugoslavia, the memorial heritage of the First World War and collective memories of the Great War—a fratricidal war in Macedonia—were pushed to the background. Despite strong and impressive images of military actions, the large military presence of the warring sides, participation of the local population in the military, and

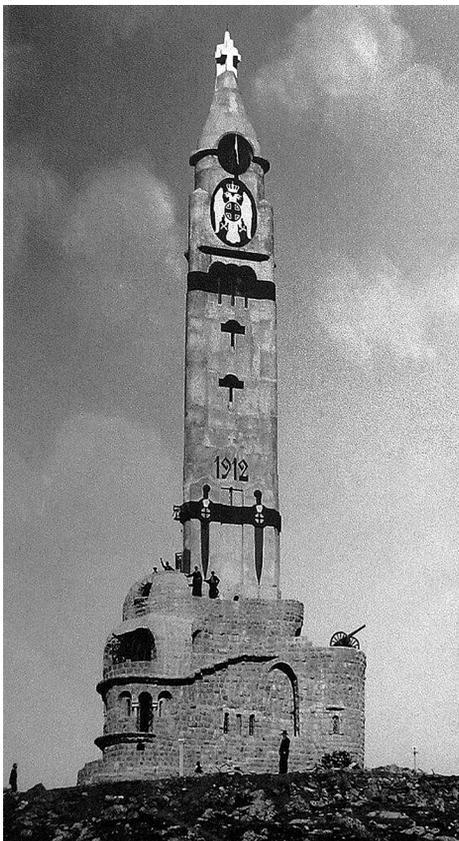


Fig. 6: Zebrnjak, memorial complex, Kumanovo region, in its original form.²

background actions along the Salonica/Macedonian Front, public discourse and politics of remembrance were met with a large dose of indifference, with a tendency of complete forgetting these events, as a result of the official animosity towards Macedonians who actively participated in the events yet were never mentioned. More importantly, collective memories were increasingly conceived of in local contexts, in the sense that animosity towards the warring sides was supported as an answer to the Greater Serbian and Greater Bulgarian national concepts, which continued to consider Macedonia and Macedonians as part of their own national territory and remembrance. The maintenance of military cemeteries and other memorials from the wars between 1912 and 1918 in Macedonia was generally incentivised by the

2 MARH – Makedonska arhitektura. Zebrnjak, Kumanovo, https://marh.mk/zebrnjak_kumanovo_korunovich/



Fig.7: Zebrnjak, memorial complex, Kumanovo region, today.³

states (Serbia, Bulgaria, Germany, France) whose armies were involved in the military actions through their embassies, ministries, and institutions for the protection of cultural monuments (*Ambasada Republike Srbije, Skoplje*).

With the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1991 and the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, most military cemeteries and other monuments dedicated to the First World War were left in a devastated and neglected state, clearly showing that official Macedonian politics at that time did not yet have an interest in their maintenance. The practice of ignoring remembrance continued by “Macedonian society and its political and intellectual elites, who were mainly guided by a national approach to remembering the past, [and] never erected a monument or a memorial centre to commemorate this event” (Todorov 2016: 17).

And after the creation of the Macedonian state of Ilinden in Prohor Pčinjski, they were left to celebrate and glorify the states that forced them to fight for them, to represent them as their warriors. No

3 Photographs by Filip Mihajlov, MARH – Macedonian Architecture. Zebrnjak, Kumanovo. https://marh.mk/zebrnjak_kumanovo_korunovich/

one has yet desired or had the courage to tell them that these were our people, and not Bulgarians, Serbs, or Greeks, as was represented by the propaganda at the time. Those people deserve much more respect from the Macedonian state, their grandchildren and grand-grandchildren should know of the military suffering they survived. Almost a century has passed since that hell, their memories are fading, and those people of ours should not be forgotten, erased from our memory. If nothing else, a monument should be erected to them that testifies and warns of that terrible time so that it never happens again (Cvetanovski 2010).

Thirty years after Macedonia's independence, a period of redefining memories of the First World War began after the year 2000, so interest in the suffering of the local population, and especially fallen soldiers from Macedonia, began to be profiled through ideas for the construction of monuments or memorial landmarks where the Macedonian ethnicity of the deceased would be clearly marked. In the context of growing interest from European countries that participated in the First World War and events to mark the 100th anniversary of its end, a number of military historians started to propose erecting a monument in honour of fallen Macedonian soldiers in the war. Historian Vanče Stojčev, a professor at the Military Academy in Skopje and the Faculty of Law in Štip, suggested such an idea publicly in 2006, claiming that:

The only way to repay them is for the state to erect a monument in their honour, on which it would be written that they fought in various armies, that they were put in positions where they had to shoot at one another and die for the interests of others. (Cvetanovski 2010)

Such ideas, which aim to legitimise the ethnic status of deceased Macedonian soldiers, contribute to the reactivation of the animosity in memories and memorial nationalism related to the wars in the Balkans, including the First World War. On September 20, 2016, several high-ranking Bulgarian officers, accompanied by Greek officers, erected a plaque on Kajmakčalan, commemorating Bulgarian soldiers without permission from Macedonian authorities. According to their explanation, the reason for not requesting permission was the fact that until then all similar requests for placing monuments dedicated to Bulgarian soldiers were left without a response from Macedonian authorities. Two days later, on September 22, Bulgaria's Independence Day, journalist Milenko Nedelkovski published photographs of himself breaking the plaque with a hammer. The incident gained widespread media attention (Peev 2022).

In the context of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, a team from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments from Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, conducted a field visit and provided a report on the inspection and conditions of the memorial complex in Kajmakčalan. The report includes another incident, indicating that memorial violence and conflicting memories of the First World War are still present, with Macedonia still being a battlefield for memorial symbols. The report states:

On the cross before the chapel, the chapel fence, and lighting rod base, there are visible remnants of a painted Bulgarian flag. At the end of August, an unidentified individual spray-painted the Bulgarian flag on these places. As a result of photographs from the scenes spreading on social media networks, over the next several days (if not the very next day) unidentified individuals painted over the flag using white paint. (Lajbenšperger)

By the end of 2021, Bulgarian president Rumen Radev, in the context of an escalating dispute between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia related to the negation of Macedonian ethnic identity, the Macedonian language, and Macedonian history,



Fig. 8: A Bulgarian delegation on Kajmakčalan, 2016 (“Pretstavnici na bugarskata i na grčkata armija se poklonija na Kajmakčalan“).



Fig. 9: Serbians on Kajmakčalan.



Fig. 10: A plaque placed by Macedonian activists on Kajmakčalan.

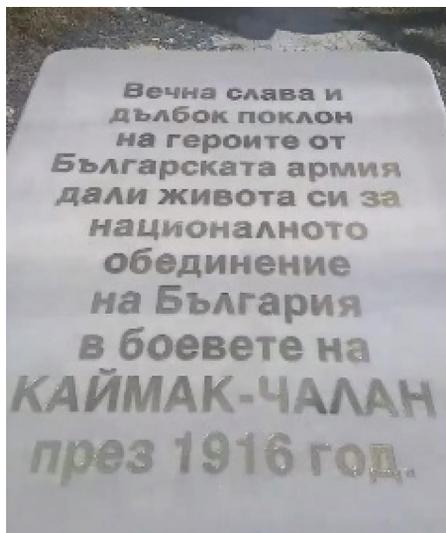


Fig. 11: A plaque, which Bulgarian citizens wanted to be placed on Kajmakčalan (“Dinko vraten vo Bugarija zaedno so spomen pločata koja sakaše da ja postavi na Kajmakčalan”).



Fig. 12: Journalist Milenko Nedelkovski breaking the plaque placed secretly by Bulgarian citizens on Kajmakčalan (“Kleveti, kritiki i zakani za novinarot Milenko po uništenata spomen ploča na Kajmakčalan”).

publicly condemned the “desecration of Bulgarian military cemeteries in North Macedonia” (Blaževska 2021), stating that he had asked the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria to investigate the case, without providing any explanation for the potential reasons behind such an act. As a result, the issue of memorials in Macedonia was associated in the public, both domestic and foreign, with the apparent ignorant and careless attitudes towards all things related to Bulgarian history. Regarding the memorial monument for the

193 Bulgarian soldiers based near the Gradsko-Prilep expressway route, in the vicinity of Kavadarci, for which Bulgarian media (Tomčev2022) published accusations against Macedonia, the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Ministry of Culture announced:

First, the main monument does not fall under any regime of protection for a monument of cultural heritage, but despite that is in good condition, without damage; second, the monument is surrounded by agricultural that which is tended to by circling the site; third, the monument is outside the planned zone for construction and is not affected by any kinds of construction activities; and fourth, this monument does not include any cemeteries or graves, while based on the field visit, it is unknown whether its state had been different in the past. Hundred metres from the monument, there is another smaller landmark of unknown memorialisation. (MNR 2021)

MACEDONIAN MEMORIALS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Despite numerous initiatives coming from individuals and citizen's associations, the state has not yet constructed or accepted any memorial landmark dedicated to the First World War as a state monument. The state's memorial indifference in terms of articulating collective memories of the past and wars from 1912 to 1918 in Macedonia was overshadowed by the monument "boom" of the "Skopje 2014" project that took place in the city of Skopje. This national project in the sphere of memorial nationalism indicates that the intention was to skip the wartime period of 1912–1918 and engage in the construction of a national stratigraphy, aiming to strengthen the ancient layer through numerous "antiquisation" projects of monuments in that style.

Nevertheless, individual memorial projects commemorating the end of the First World War were not entirely absent. One such memorial landmark was discovered in the village Brod, in the vicinity of Bitola. The monument, as is written in Macedonian, French, Serbian, English, German, and Bulgarian, is dedicated: "To the fallen soldiers and civilians on the Macedonian (Salonika) Front, commemorating 100 years of the end of the First World War (1914–1918)." (*Vo Brod otkrien spomenik za žrtvite od Prvata svetska vojna*).

Near the village of Crnobuki in Bitola, right next to the monastery St. Atanas, a memorial cross is raised in honour of the Macedonian population that died during the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The plaque below the memorial cross includes the text: This memorial cross is dedicated to all known and unknown Macedonian soldiers



Fig. 13: Memorial to fallen soldiers and civilians of the First World War (Vo Brod otkrien spomenik za žrtvite od Prvata svetska vojna).

forcefully mobilised by Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, and to the suffering civilian population in the Balkan Wars 1912–1913 and the First World War 1914–1918. May their memory be eternal. From the Macedonian people, November 8, 2015, Crnobuki village. (Spomen krst na makedonskoto naselenie zaginato vo Balkanskite vojni i Prvata svetska vojna vo blizina na selo Crnobuki, opština Bitola).

VICTORY–100 YEARS LATER MONUMENT IN GRADEŠNICA VILLAGE, MARIOVO

The monument Victory–100 Years Later was placed in the village of Gradešnica, Mariovo region in 2019. The village of Gradešnica is located in the Mariovo region, which was on the very frontlines during the Salonika/Macedonian Front. During the First World War it was set on fire twice, and the population was displaced several times. The author of the monument is artist and sculptor Zlatko Bojkovski, born in the village of Gradešnica, having grown up with stories of the First World War from his grandparents.

“I am sorry that there is no monument in our country dedicated to the First World War. This monument is dedicated to the victims. We cannot glorify this war because there were horrible consequences here, however, we must acknowledge the victims, as our land has given many of them,” Bojkovski stated. (M. M. 2019)

The monument (a sculpture of a horse with a raised hoof) weighs around two tons and is constructed from shrapnel, bombs, helmets, and other remnants of the First World War, and honours *all victims* of the war.

“In Gradešnica there still are remnants of the war that took place a century ago. But, because this is a larger monument of around two tons, I ventured through Kajmakčalan mountain and collected the pieces one by one. It is hard to find them now. They are dangerous, there are some unexploded grenades in the border strip, so I carefully collected the ones that exploded. Then I worked on thoughtfully putting together every piece of shrapnel, grenade, bombs, helmet, creating a horse that symbolises life above death,” says Bojkovski. (Zdravkovska 2019)

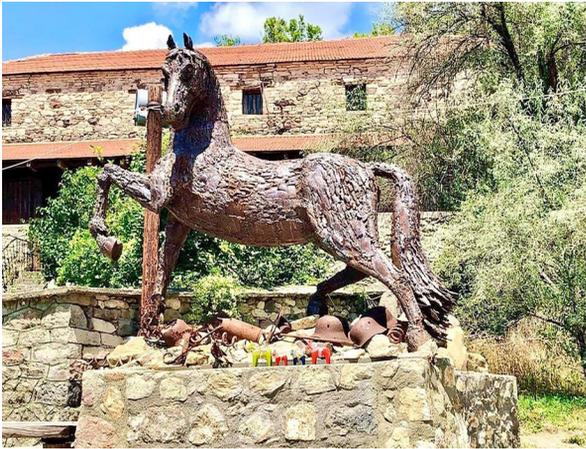


Fig. 14 and 15: The monument Victory–100 Years Later in the village of Gradešnica, Mariovo region, by sculptor Zlatko Bojkovski (Monument “Victory - 100 Years Later”, Gradešnica village, Mariovo region”; М.М. “Споменик за жртвите од Првата светска војна откриен во Градешница,” Нова Македонија [Skopje], online publication, 5.8.2019, accessed on 05.05.2022).

CONCLUSION

The increasing attention to questions relating to the First World War, especially the politics of remembrance and attitudes toward monuments and memorial landmark, began with the 100th anniversary of the war's end. In that period, an intense public and media debate was taking place in the Republic of Macedonia, especially in regard to events on the Macedonian (Salonica) Front and their representation in politics of remembrance and commemorations. In these debates, a special accent was placed on the attitudes of warring sides toward the local population of Macedonia, which was mobilised in different armies without taking into account their local identities.

After the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and the adoption of the decree, later law,⁴ on the treatment of military cemeteries and graves dating to the First World War, some of the remains of the deceased soldiers were transferred to collective cemeteries in larger cities on the frontline, including Bitola, Prilep, and Skopje.

After the liberation of Macedonia and the creation of socialist Yugoslavia, the First World War memorial heritage and collective memories of the Great War, referred to in Macedonia as the fratricidal war, were relegated to the background. Collective memories were increasingly conceived of in a local context, in the sense that animosity against the warring sides was supported as a response to the Greater Serbian and Greater Bulgarian national conceptions, which continued to consider Macedonia and the Macedonians as part of their national territory and remembrance.

Around thirty years after the independence of Macedonia, a period of redefining remembrance of the First World War began after the year 2000, and interest in the suffering of the local population and particularly the fallen soldiers from Macedonia began to be profiled through ideas for the construction of memorials and memorial landmarks where the Macedonian ethnic identity of the deceased would clearly be marked.

The memorial indifference of the state in terms of articulating collective memories of the past and the 1912–1918 wars were overshadowed by the monument “boom” happening in Skopje as part of the “Skopje 2014” project.

4 Law regarding military cemeteries of soldiers of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as well as cemeteries of missing soldiers and sailors, prisoners of war, and interned persons of German, Austria-Hungarian, and Bulgarian armies buried on the territory of KSCS.

Nevertheless, individual monument projects commemorating the end of the First World War were not entirely absent.

The memorial monument Victory–100 Years Later was placed in the village of Gradešnica, Mariovo region, in 2019. The village of Gradešnica is located on the frontline and during the First World War was set on fire two times, and the population displaced several times. The monument (a sculpture of a horse with a raised hoof) weighs around two tons and is constructed using shrapnel, bombs, helmets, and other the First World War remnants, and is dedicated to *all victims* of the war.

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Zakon o uredjenju naših vojničkih groblja u otadzbinu i na strain, kao i groblja iyginulih vojnika i mornara, ratnih zarobljenika i interniranih lica, državljana: Njemačke, Austrije, Ugarske i Bugarske sahranjeni na našoj državnoj teritoriji, Državna Štamparija Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, Beograd, 1922, 1–13. Accessed on 09.05.2022. <https://www.uzzpro.gov.rs/doc/biblioteka/digitalna-biblioteka/1922-zakon-o-uredjenju-vojničkih-grobalja.pdf>

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Monuments and Commemorations of Fallen Soldiers from the First World War in Montenegro, 1918-1941

FRANTIŠEK ŠÍSTEK

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary scholarship conventionally divides cultures of memory of the First World War in the interwar period of Europe into two main groups. The “culture of victory” was predominant in those countries that emerged victorious from the war, including France, Great Britain, and Italy. It was also typical of states that owed their independence to the break-up of old multi-national empires and the new Versailles order, such as Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The “culture of defeat,” on the other hand, was characteristic of countries that ended up on the losing side after the war, such as Germany and Hungary. Collective feelings of defeat were only prolonged and excavated by post-war territorial losses, partial limitations of state sovereignty, reparations, and other measures often perceived as unjust and humiliating.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the Kingdom of Montenegro was an independent European state that entered the conflict on the side of allied Serbia and the Entente. In January 1916, the country was occupied by Austria-Hungary, shortly after the empire occupied neighboring Serbia. As an integral part of the new Yugoslav state established in 1918, Montenegro appears to belong to those lands where the memory of the First World War during the interwar period developed under the ruling paradigm of the culture of victory. However, as historian John Paul Newman argues, in Central and Southeastern Europe, “the culture of victory was not an exact fit (...): it masked the far more ambivalent legacies of the war in this region” (Newman 2015: 11). In the nominally “victorious lands” such as Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1929), certain victims and their perceived collective contributions to victory and liberation (typically members of the largest, politically dominant, or “state-building” nations) were glorified at the expense of others that tended to be purposefully marginalised or simply overlooked in the official discourse. Even in states that largely owed their existence to the outcome of the First World War and the new Versailles order, not every citizen necessarily felt as a victor: “...Yugoslav veterans, be they Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, or members of the state’s many national minorities, may have served in the Serbian or Montenegrin armies alongside the Allies, or in the Austro-Hungarian army. Underneath the post-1918 triumphalism, various, often competing, notions of the meaning of the war sacrifice coexisted...” concludes Newman (Newman 2015: 11).

The official culture of memory of the interwar Yugoslav monarchy gave a central place to the narrative of the Serbian army’s heroism, sacrifice, and decisive contribution, which (according to the official interpretation) liberated not only the Serbs but also other Yugoslavs at the end of the First World War (Jezernik 2018: 140). The case of the memory of fallen soldiers from the First World War in interwar Montenegro, which represented a peripheral zone of the new Yugoslav state, provides abundant material for observations on marginalization, elimination from collective memory, and poorly developed culture of memory. At the same time, the Montenegrin case, which is closely linked to the wider Serb narrative of the First World War that occupied a central place in the interwar Yugoslav state, reveals, apart from specific features, some wider trends and tendencies that shed light on national politics and the culture of memory at the Yugoslav level. Montenegro, as an independent state with its own army, state administration, and dynasty – and a close military and political ally of Serbia

from the first days of the First World War – had its own, specific experience of the war, its own heroes, fateful battles, its own victories, defeats, and traumas. In the official interwar narrative, the memory of the Montenegrin experience of the conflict and the perceived contribution of the Montenegrin army to the “common cause” (*opšta stvar*) of Serb and Yugoslav unification was systematically marginalised. In line with the ruling centralist and unitarist tendencies, positive references to an independent Montenegrin political history and distinct collective identity were considered unwelcome and potentially subversive, given the internal fragility of the new state. Montenegro’s participation in the First World War was officially treated as an integral part of a wider narrative of Serbian liberation and unification led by Serbia, its army, and its dynasty.

Montenegro did not exist as a separate administrative unit under the centralist Yugoslav monarchy of the Karađorđević dynasty. Territories acquired by the Kingdom of Montenegro in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 were administratively detached and placed under direct Serbian administration soon after unification (Rastoder 2006: 179). At the beginning of the dictatorship of King Aleksandar, who changed the country’s name into Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, echoing the new official state ideology of integral Yugoslavism, the new administration made the entire territory of present-day Montenegro a part of the new Zeta Banovina (one of the total nine banovinas, mostly named after major rivers), which also encompassed some neighboring territories such as parts of southern Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern and western Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija (Rastoder 2015: 12–5). The Zeta Banovina covered 30,741 square kilometers, or 12,4% of the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and was formed around the former Kingdom of Montenegro, whose historical and cultural heritage was seen as an integral part of the larger Serbian narrative and Serbian “ethnic space.” As such, despite permanent social discontent and a recent history of resistance against centralism, including armed struggle after the First World War and the unconditional union with Serbia, Montenegro was still considered a relatively promising area for the state-sponsored dissemination of Yugoslav patriotism (Babović Raspopović 2002: 66-67).

This contribution aims to analyze and explain the main features of the culture of memory of the First World War in interwar Montenegro by focusing on the most important monuments and commemorations of fallen soldiers erected during this period (1918-1941). It will first focus on the changing political and economic context of building monuments and organizing commemorations for fallen soldiers in

Montenegro. The main focus will be on the largest, but also the last, commemorations held in Montenegro in the final months of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's existence in 1940 reflecting on two major events: the sinking of the Brindisi ship carrying Montenegrin volunteers, commemorated in Cetinje, and the Battle of Mojkovac, commemorated successively in Cetinje and Mojkovac. In the Montenegrin case, major events and victims of the First World War were properly commemorated for the first time only after the Second World War was already raging throughout much of Europe.

STATE POLITICS AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN MONTENEGRO IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Montenegro was often labelled as a “passive region” in the period's discourse, sometimes even as “Yugoslav Siberia” and “Yugoslav Tasmania,” especially by critically-minded authors who were convinced that the main culprit for Montenegro's peripheral position and marginalization in the unified Yugoslav state was the ruling regime's insufficient care for the region, if not outright political subjugation and economic exploitation of this land by Belgrade. In the 1920s, the state-sponsored infrastructure that stimulated cultural and public life, including the building of monuments and the culture of memory of the First World War, was practically inexistent in Montenegro. In the first decade after unification, there were no funds in the state budget destined for such purposes. Particularly during the turbulent period immediately after the First World War, the state administration focused on security problems and the establishment of law and order (Rastoder 2006: 34). After the introduction of King Aleksandar's royal dictatorship on January 6, 1929, the territory of present-day Montenegro formed the backbone of a new administrative and political unit – the Zeta Banovina or Province (*Zetska banovina*), with Cetinje as its political and administrative capital. After the assassination of King Aleksandar in October 1934, the government of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović (1935–1939) gradually decreased the previous stress on the concept of integral Yugoslavism characteristic for the period of royal dictatorship in the years 1929–1934. The pragmatic acceptance of different historical experiences of individual Yugoslav nations and regions resulted in a partial decentralization, which began to be reflected in the sphere of cultural and public life, including the culture of memory. In the words of historian Senka Babović-Raspopović: “While in the earlier period, almost all basic questions of

educational and cultural character were dependent on the decisions of the highest political leadership, from now on, they found themselves more or less under the jurisdiction of lower administrative units – the administrations of banovinas. (...) Although the Yugoslav orientation in the work of cultural institutions continued to prevail, at the same time, there were also cultural activities drawing on tradition and cultural specificities of Montenegro and other regions of the Zeta Banovina.” The first attempts by the Banovina administration to institutionalise the care and aid for the affirmation of historical and cultural memory and heritage date back to Stojadinović’s tenure as Prime Minister. The research of historian Senka Babović Raspopović revealed that funds for the publication of books and magazines, work of cultural associations, and similar needs first appear in the budget of the Zeta Banovina in the mid-1930s. The budget for the years 1937–38 included financial help specifically planned for committees for the completion of churches, monuments, and other similar needs (Babović Raspopović 2002: 305–6).

Political changes after the royal dictatorship of King Aleksandar combined with certain liberalisation in cultural politics opened the space for initiatives calling for the building of memorials to two major events associated with Montenegrin participation in the First World War – the tragic death of over four hundred Montenegrin and other South Slavic volunteers in a shipwreck near the Albanian coast and the heroic battle of the Montenegrin army at Mojkovac. Both events occurred almost simultaneously at the beginning of January 1916, when neighboring allied Serbia was already occupied. Montenegro, small, exhausted, and deprived of the help of its faraway allies such as France, Italy, and Russia, was forced to deal with the new reality of looming military defeat and occupation in the wake of the massive Austro-Hungarian offensive on Mount Lovćen on its own. Both commemorations of these events took place in 1940, in the shadow of the increasingly disturbing news of the Second World War engulfing Europe, only several months before the Kingdom of Yugoslavia’s military defeat, occupation, and territorial division in the spring of 1941.

MONUMENT TO THE VICTIMS OF THE MEDUA TRAGEDY IN CETINJE

In the morning of January 6, 1916, the Italian steamboat Brindisi, carrying several hundred volunteers from Montenegro and neighboring

South Slavic lands, collided with a mine and quickly sank near the North-Albanian coast, which was under the control of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies at the time. The event became known as the Medua Tragedy (*Medovska tragedija*). It was named after the nearest port, known as Medova in South Slavic languages, Shëngjin in Albanian, and San Giovanni di Medua in Italian (Šišteć 2018). I use the name Medua in this contribution, an anglicized version of the Italian name close to the South Slavic version Medova that is most often found in Montenegrin sources.



Fig. 1: *Lovčenska vila*, Risto Stijević: The Fairy of Lovćen (1939). Monument to the victims of the Medua Tragedy (1916), unveiled in Cetinje on July 6, 1940 (photo F. Šišteć).

After the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914, thousands of Montenegrin citizens, joined by volunteers from South Slavic lands neighboring Montenegro, especially the Bay of Cattaro (*Boka Kotorska*), Montenegrin Littoral (*Crnogorsko Primorje*), and Herzegovina, decided to return to Montenegro for patriotic reasons. Several thousands of them managed to reach the Balkan shores and join the ranks of the Montenegrin army. In December 1915, another group of some 600 volunteers from North America sailed from Canada to southern Italy as part of an organised transport. Most of them continued their voyage across the Adriatic aboard the steamboat Brindisi. Within eyesight of the Balkan shores, the ship collided with a mine and sank in a matter of minutes. According to current scholarship, over 400 passengers lost their lives (389 volunteers and 12 members of the Czech-American Red Cross mission). The lives of 150 volunteers and two members of the Red Cross mission were saved. Given the sheer number of victims, the sinking of the Brindisi steamboat is the largest single loss of human life on sea not just in the history of Montenegro but in the entire history of South Slavic peoples (Špadijer 2016: 63).

The memory of the Medua Tragedy was particularly cultivated among Montenegrin emigrants in North America. Their efforts to preserve the memory of the volunteers who perished aboard the Brindisi often had a very personal note, as they were remembering their own relatives, friends, and countrymen of similar life trajectories. The first call for the erection of a monument in Cetinje to the Medua Tragedy victims was formulated in California. On September 22, 1930, Miloš F. Radunović from Sacramento, whose brother Veliša and cousin Boško died at Medua, published an article in the journal *Američki Srbobran* entitled “The Spirit of Gratitude” (*Duh zahvalnosti*) (Radunović 1939: 6–7). Radunović proposed that a memorial to the “sunken volunteers” (*potopljeni dobrovoljci*) be built in the vicinity of the Cetinje Monastery and their memory personalised by inscribing all of their names on it.

The idea strongly resonated among Montenegrin emigrants. In 1931, The Brotherly Volunteer Association of America and Canada for the Erection of a Monument in Cetinje to the Volunteers Sunken by San Giovanni di Medua in 1915 (*Bratsko dobrovoljačko udruženje širom Amerike i Kanade za podizanje spomenika na Cetinju potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod San Giovanni di Medua 1915*) was founded in Sacramento (the year 1915 referred to the date of the shipwreck according the old Julian calendar). Local committees were formed “all across America and Canada” to stimulate and coordinate fundraising. On

March 22, 1931, the newspaper *Slobodna misao* published in Nikšić, Montenegro, printed a letter from the North American committee whose authors encouraged their “brothers in the homeland” to join their financial efforts (Borović 2016: 127). The committee also wrote to the *Ban* (governor) of the Zeta Banovina Aleksa Stanišić. On March 5, 1933, Stanišić founded the Banovina Committee for the Erection of a Monument to the Volunteers Sunken by Medua (*Banovinski odbor za podizanje spomenika potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod Medovom*) headed by Petar Martinović, former brigadier of the Montenegrin army and retired general of the Yugoslav army. However, according to researcher Gordana Borović, it seemed “that quarrels among the members of the Banovina Committee arose. As a consequence, at the initiative of the new Ban Mujo Sočica and under his official auspices, the Banovina Committee was personally reconstructed at a new official meeting. Respectable personalities from Montenegrin public life, including physicians, bankers, high-ranking officers, and others, joined the Committee. Lieutenant Colonel Risto Stojanović was elected as its new chairman” (Borović 2016: 121).

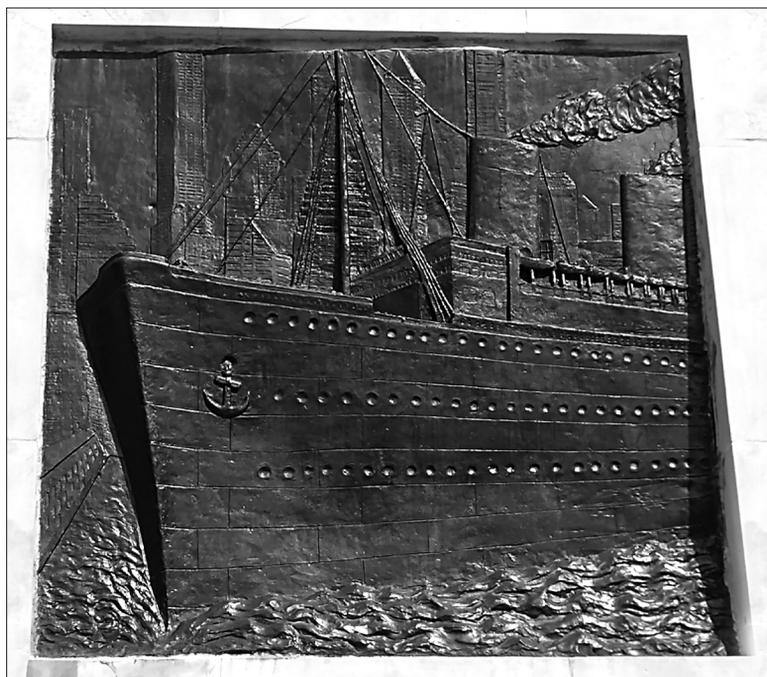
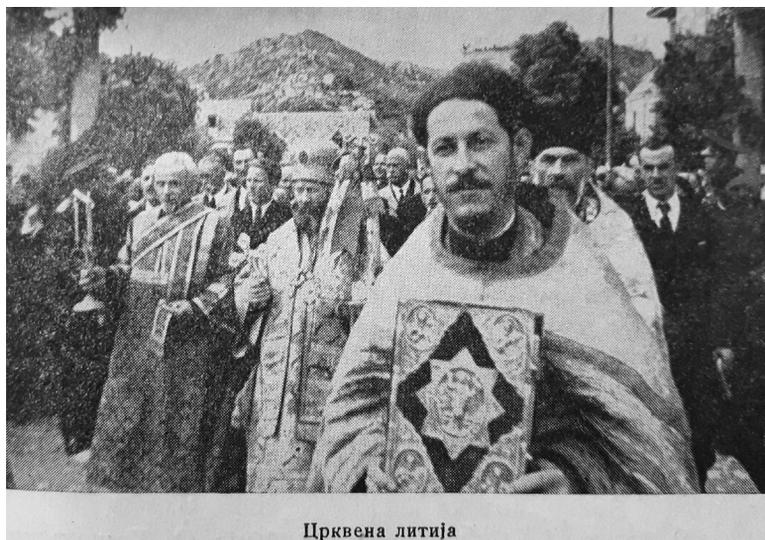


Fig. 2: Risto Stijović: Montenegrin volunteers sailing from America to help their motherland. Relief from the monument to the victims of the Medua Tragedy in Cetinje (photo F.Šišteć).

For several years, the official preparations for the erection of the monument dragged on under several successive Bans without tangible results.¹ The first mention signalling that the project was not indeed forgotten appeared in the newspaper *Zetski glasnik* on May 1, 1937: “In accordance with the wishes of our brothers from America, Ban Ivanišević was asked to become the official patron of the Committee for the monument’s erection. The American Committee of our expatriates will decide whether the monument will be executed by Risto Stijović from Belgrade or Marijan Matijević from Cetinje” (Borović 2016: 129–30). Matijević was a Croatian sculptor who taught at a primary school in Cetinje in the years 1934–1937. Stijović was a Montenegrin sculptor who was born in Podgorica and had lived in Serbia since 1912. He had already distinguished himself as an artist and author of several public monuments. On October 3, 1937, the newspaper *Slobodna misao* published the news that “the work of Risto Stijović was selected. The monument represents the Fairy of Lovćen (*lovćenska vila*) which in a gesture of an avenger is holding the yatagan in her right hand and bringing forth a laurel wreath with her left hand.” The names of all the deceased volunteers were to be engraved on the monument in golden letters (Borović 2016: 130). (The idea of personalising the victims in this way was later abandoned. Their names appeared instead in the memorial publication – *Spomenica*.) Stijović visited Cetinje in 1937 to coordinate the preliminary works together with members of the Banovina Committee. A location in the town centre was chosen, not in the vicinity of the Cetinje Monastery as Radunović had proposed in his initial text but in front of the Vlach Church (*Vlaška crkva*). The church dated back to the fifteenth century, making it the oldest in Cetinje, and was encircled by a fence made of “Turkish guns” that came into the possession of the Montenegrins as war booty during the last phase of what they perceived as national liberation wars against the Ottoman empire (1858–1878).

The final preparations for the erection of the monument dragged on again for some time. At the beginning of March 1939, the newspaper *Slobodna misao* announced that the ceremonial unveiling of the monument would take place “by May 1 of this year at the latest” and accompanied the text with a photograph of the monument’s model (*Spomen potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod Medovom 1915. Godine; Zetski glasnik*, March 4, 1939: 4). In mid-May, the same newspaper informed its readers that it was too early to speculate about the

1 Ban Aleksa Stanišić (†1934) and the first Chairman of the Committee General Petar Martinović (†1940) did not live to see the unveiling of the monument.



Црквена литија

Fig. 3: *Crkvena litija*, Christian Orthodox Procession before the unveiling of the Fairy of Lovćen monument, Cetinje, July 6, 1940.

exact date of the unveiling because it was still unfinished (Otkrivanje spomenika potopljenim dobrovoljcima kod Medove; *Slobodna misao*, May 13, 1939: 3). Finally, on April 20, 1940, it was announced that the monument will be unveiled on the Day of Ascension (*Spasov dan*)—July 6. That day marked the anniversary of the Battle of Grahovac from 1858, one of the most famous Montenegrin victories in their struggles against the Ottomans. There is no evidence in our sources regarding the reasons for this decision. The exact anniversary, which falls on January 6, was probably less suitable for reasons of weather conditions: Cetinje was known for its severe winters and abundant snowfall. The proclamation released by the Cetinje Committee gives the impression that the organisers wanted to ensure that, apart from high-ranking officials, the “people’s masses” (*narodne mase*) would also be present at the commemoration. They particularly appealed to “participants of the Medua Tragedy who are still alive, the mothers, sons, wives, sisters, and friends of those who had sunk to gather around this monument and pay their last respects to the fallen victims.” The memorial was presented as a symbolical grave: “Since they could not visit the graves of those reposing somewhere in the dark depths of the sea, they are all invited to gather around this common memorial-grave (*zajednički spomen-grob*) in which they can see the shadows of their deceased from now on.” (Otkrivanje spomenika potopljenim kod Medove; *Zetski glasnik*, April 20, 1940: 2).

We can distinguish between two major types of representations of the dead volunteers' identity in the interwar public discourse. While some authors felt compelled to stress the volunteers' Yugoslav identity and sacrifices for the "higher" ideals of Serb and Yugoslav unity, others stressed that they came from Montenegro and the neighbouring Dinaric areas. Many believed Montenegrins' contributions and sacrifices in the First World War and the process of Yugoslav unification were unfairly overlooked in the interwar Yugoslav state. In the first years following unification, centralist ideology and politics dominated the public discourse in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and even more so in Montenegro, where the new centralist administration and security forces encountered serious political as well as armed opposition to the unconditional union. In an article from January 22, 1923, the newspaper *Slobodna misao* presented the Medua Tragedy as "part of Serbian sacrifice" (*diosrpske žrtve*) offered on the "altar of unification." As for the volunteers' origin, the article stated that they "came from all regions of our present homeland" (Borović 2016: 126–27). In March 1939, one could still come across the claim that they came "from all regions of our present large homeland" (Spomen potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod Medovom 1915. Godine; *Zetski glasnik*, March 4, 1939: 4.) However, in texts and appeals for financial support, one frequently finds references to the volunteers' Montenegrin origin, the noteworthy Montenegrin contribution to "the liberation and unification," Montenegrin honour, and Montenegrin pride. In the article entitled "Appeal to Montenegrins" (*Jedan apel Crnogorcima*) published in the newspaper *Lovčenski odjek* on May 11, 1934, the author called for "our people to contribute to the erection of the monument to fallen Montenegrins who rushed home to help their fatherland in its hour of need" (Borović 2016: 129). According to *Slobodna misao* of April 27, 1940, instead of volunteers from all Yugoslav regions, the "martyrs" of Medua were identified as "our countrymen from all the regions of Montenegro and present-day Zeta Banovina" (Borović 2016: 133). According to the proclamation of the Banovina Committee for the Erection of the Monument to the Volunteers Sunken by Medua–Cetinje (*Banovinski odbor za podizanje spomenika potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod Medovom – Cetinje*) of May 18, 1940, released almost a decade after the first appeal of Miloš F. Radunović from Sacramento announced the final date of the ceremonial unveiling of the Fairy of Lovćen, the volunteers were described as "three hundred of our kingdom's best-chosen sons from all tribes" (Otkrivanje spomenika potopljenim pod Medovom; *Zetski glasnik*, May 18,

1940: 2). In the proclamation of the same Committee from June 1, 1940, we find “three hundred chosen Yugoslavs, united in spirit and heart, who rushed from faraway America so as to, in the last hour, save their unjustly attacked fatherland” (Proglas odbora za podizanje spomenika; *Zetski glasnik*, June 1, 1940: 2) In a historical overview published several days before the commemoration, the greatest attention was paid to the individual who differed the most, a foreign volunteer from the most faraway place: “The great majority of these volunteers were from Montenegro, and apart from them, they came from various Yugoslav regions, from Czechia, Slovakia, and there was even a young Russian among them who was given the Serbian flag to unfurl it on free Serb land and carry it in front of them from battle to battle, from victory to victory” (Meduanska katastrofa; *Zetski glasnik*, June 1, 1940: 1; Vukmanović 1939: 32–4.) Finally, in the press release about the commemoration of the monument, the origin and identity of the victims of the shipwreck from January 6, 1916, was described as follows: “[A]mong them, there were, apart from Montenegrins, volunteers from the Littoral (*Primorci*), Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Lika, and other Yugoslav regions (...) There was also a Czech medical mission travelling along with them with a large amount of medical material. They rushed from faraway America to help the army of Montenegro and sacrifice their lives for the freedom and unification of the Yugoslavs.” (Svečano otkrivanje spomenika potoplojenim pod Medovom, *Zetski glasnik*, 8. jun 1940: 1.)



Fig. 4: View of the main podium during the commemoration of the volunteers perished at Medua, Cetinje, July 6, 1940.

The unveiling of the Fairy of Lovćen memorial in Cetinje on June 6, 1940, was the largest commemoration in interwar Montenegro since the reburial of the most revered Montenegrin national poet and ruler Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813-1851) on Mount Lovćen in September 1925 in the presence of the late King Aleksandar. “The town had a rare festive look. It was decorated with flags and triumphal arches” (Na Cetinju juće osvećen spomenik; *Politika*, June 7, 1940: 12) Apart from remembering the victims of the shipwreck, who were presented as protectors of the fatherland and fighters for Yugoslav unification, the commemoration honored the volunteers in general as a specific group of fallen soldiers. The commemoration was organised by the Banovina administration and was also attended by the army. Although the contribution of emigrants from North America to the monument’s construction was periodically mentioned, their representatives were not present. The Nazi Blitzkrieg against France, whose defeat seemed increasingly imminent in the first days of June 1940, had just entered its final phase. Despite the festive atmosphere in the streets of Cetinje, the erection of the monument to volunteers from the First World War was organised in the shadow of the Second World War.

The commemoration began with an Orthodox Christian Liturgy in the Cetinje Monastery presided over by Bishop Joanikije of Budimlje, followed by an assembly of the Sokol Association of Cetinje in the National Theater. A church procession headed by Bishop Joanikije, envoy of the Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Gavrilo, marched from the monastery towards the new monument. Joanikije and the clergy then remained seated in front of the veiled monument, surrounded by the honorary guard composed of soldiers of the Cetinje garrison. Representatives of the state and Banovina institutions, including the Yugoslav Minister of Interior Stanoje Milačić, Ban of Zeta Božidar Krstić, personal envoy of King Petar II General Antonije Stošić, and other speakers, stood at the stand, decorated with kilims (ćilim), flags, and flowers. In front of the monument, the Bishop held a memorial service (*parastos*) for the warriors who fell in the battle of Grahovac on June 6, 1858, and for the volunteers sunken by Medua on January 6, 1916. The honor of personally unveiling the monument was granted to General Antonije Stošić, commander of the Zeta Army Division, who “descended from the stand, approached the monument and pulled the silk tricolor. The curtain covering the monument fell, revealing the imposing figure of the Fairy of Lovćen with the hanjar raised high and the wreath she is laying on the blue tomb. A truly successful work of our countryman and recognised artist Mr Risto

Stijović. The cry: Glory to the sunken heroes! /*Slava potopljenim herojima*/, emerging from thousands of throats, while the troops of the Cetinje garrison magnified the occasion with festive shooting” (Svečano otkrivanje spomenika potoplojenim pod Medovom; *Zetski glasnik*, June 8, 1940: 1) The inscription on the monument highlighted the emigrants’ key contribution to the project: “To the volunteers sunken by Medua, erected by the Yugoslavs of America and Canada 1939” (*Potopljenim dobrovoljcima pod Medovom podigoše Jugosloveni iz Amerike i Kanade 1939*) (Vukmanović 1939: 35-42).

The first wreath was not conventionally laid down but fell from the sky, the work of Yugoslav military aviation. Two planes, “two guardians of the Yugoslav sky,” took part in this spectacular performance: “Flying over Cetinje, the planes made several circles, always descending lower and lower, until they parted in one moment and continued the free flight on their own. While one plane rose high above, the other approached the monument and threw the laurel wreath, which was greeted with open arms by soldiers from the First World War, Mr Marko Plamenac and Mr Novica Bošković, heads of the Banovina administration. They picked up the wreath, which had fallen close to the monument, and placed it under the pedestal. The brave performance of the victor of the sky (*pobjednik neba*), who flew above the monument once more and veering to the right sent his greeting in respect of the martyrs and heroes commemorated by the monument, was met with long-lasting cheers in honour of our army and our aviation.” (Svečano otkrivanje spomenika potopljenim pod Medovom; *Zetski glasnik*, June 8, 1940: 1)

While the planes were still flying over Cetinje, the obligatory official telegram from the organisers to King Petar II was read aloud. The public speeches that followed provide an interesting glimpse into the official discourse of the period, especially with regard to issues of collective identity and memory of the First World War. On the one hand, there is an evident continuity with the ideology of integral Yugoslavism and the earlier discourse on Yugoslav unification from centralist positions as it had developed since the early 1920s. On the other hand, there was also a notable increase of positive references to Montenegrin historical traditions, sacrifices, and contributions, albeit mostly connected to what was perceived as the wider Serbian and Yugoslav context. In his speech, the Ban of Zeta Božidar Krstić, as official patron of the commemoration, tried to rekindle the flames of alleged Montenegrin superiority within Serbdom. The concept was relatively widespread in the 19th century and best popularly summed up in the saying that the Montenegrins are the best of all the Serbs (rather than

being an equal nation on par with the Serbs, as some Federalists and Communists argued already during the interwar era on the margins of the régime-controlled public space): “Numerous are the virtues that have adorned the Serb nation since its genesis. More than in any other Serb region, these virtues have been vigilantly protected, cared for, and safeguarded right here among these rocks beneath the Lovćen, Kom, and Durmitor mountains” (Ibidem: 3).

The envoy of the Ministry of the Army and Navy, General Miljenko Varjačić, portrayed the victims of the shipwreck as primarily Yugoslav volunteers. Through a creative application of the idea that graves represent the markers of national territory, their tragic death provided him with an opportunity to stress the rights of Yugoslavia to the Adriatic Sea: “These martyrs and knights, whose graveyard is the blue Adriatic, left behind earthly treasures and rushed to help their fatherland, which had found itself in danger. God may have wished that not only the land but also the sea become a graveyard, so that young generations would be reminded that the sea was also ours and would remain ours.” (Ibid.) As a representative of the army, General Varjačić used the occasion to discuss the current political and military situation in Europe and the danger of a new war. He did not hide the fact that the commemoration was taking place “in the most fateful time of the global conflict, at a time when all of us know what is going on around us, in a situation when, at any moment, even we can be dragged into the war against our will.” He then highlighted the importance of unity and readiness to defend the homeland, inspired “by the spirit of our immortal volunteers.” (Ibid.)

The following speaker was the blind Croatian volunteer from the First World War, Lujo Lovrić, a notable individual of the interwar period who provided the régime with a welcome role example of a veteran volunteer, firmly committed to the new unified fatherland and its King (Gulić 2018). Lovrić, chairman of the Association of War Volunteers (*Savez ratnih dobrovoljaca*), saw the monument as “a tomb denied by fate to those who repose in the dark depths of the blue sea.” The volunteers, in his words, “gave up their lives for our nation and our sea.” In his speech at Cetinje, he addressed the audience primarily as Montenegrins: “Montenegrin brothers” (*braćo Crnogorci*), “Montenegrin sisters” (*sestre Crnogorke*), and also referred to the cult of Montenegrin heroism (*junaštvo*): “What else could a Montenegrin be but a knight, what else but a hero just like his ancestors.” (Na Cetinju juče osvećen spomenik, *Politika*, petak 7. jun 1940: 12)

In the speech of Gavro Milošević, head of the Cetinje Sokol Association, we find a characteristic mix of the Serb narrative about

Montenegro's alleged historical mission and calls for unification in the spirit of the slogan "one King, one nation, one Yugoslavia." Milošević presented the Medua Tragedy as a logical consequence of prior Montenegrin history, with phrases that bordered on parody: "[T]he shipwreck is characteristic of the whole time from Kosovo to Grahovo, because Montenegro was nothing but an eternal national shipwreck" (*u brodolomu okarakterisano je sve ono vrijeme od Kosova do Grahova, jer Crna Gora nije ništa drugo bila do vječiti nacionalni brodolom*). Milošević presented a utopic vision of Yugoslavia as a country destined to become the nucleus of a new, far greater state: Slavia. According to his bombastic vision presented to audiences gathered around the monument, Montenegro had safeguarded the idea of a mighty Yugoslavia for centuries. Today, Gavro Milošević argued, it was Yugoslavia's turn to safeguard and promote the creation of Greater Slavia (*Velika Slavija*). The Sokol Association was obviously envisioned as one of the key agents in the creation of the coming Pan-Slavic state, as evident from the slogan "With Sokolism towards Yugoslavism, and with Yugoslavism towards All-Slavism!" (*Sokolstvom u Jugoslovenstvo, a Jugoslovenstvom u Sveslovenstvo!*). In the closing part of his speech, Milošević warned that future battles cannot be excluded: "Glory to our heroes from Kosovo to the present day, and glory to all who have yet to fall for Greater Slavia!" (*Svečano otkrivanje spomenika potopljenim pod Medovom, Zetski glasnik, 8. jun 1940: 4*)



Мајке и сестре потопљених мученика за вријеме парастоса

Fig. 5: *Majke i sestre potopljenih mučenika za vrijeme parastosa*, "Mothers and sisters of the drowned martyrs during the parastos", Cetinje, July 6, 1940.

At the end of the ceremony, Risto Stojanović, the chairman of the Banovina Committee for the Erection of the Monument, officially presented the Fairy of Lovćen to the town of Cetinje. He stressed the decisive contribution of “our brothers in America” who initiated the monument’s construction, which they had envisioned for Cetinje from the very start. Stojanović expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the present generation was erecting monuments not only to great military commanders but also to regular soldiers who have their rightful claim to fame for their bravery and sacrifice. After the Yugoslav anthem was played, the chairman of the Cetinje municipality Tomo Milošević officially accepted the monument in the name of the municipal administration. T. Milošević repeated the idea that the monument served as the “gloomy and wavy tomb of heroes in the blue Adriatic. (...) The souls of these martyrs can now rejoice because their monument is being erected on the day of Montenegrin weapons’ most glorious victory over the enemy.” (Ibid: 4)

The main part of the ceremony, the laying of the wreaths, began after the speeches. The first wreath was laid by the Minister of Interior Affairs Stanoje Mihalčić, who himself was a volunteer in the First World War. According to the Belgrade daily *Politika*, over 70 wreaths were laid under the pedestal that day. The last was brought in the name of the mothers and sisters of the deceased volunteers by an old woman “wearing a black scarf” who “was choking with tears for her sons.” (Na Cetinju juče osvećen spomenik, *Politika*, petak 7. jun 1940: 12) Women dressed in black, mostly the victims’ mothers and sisters, appeared in great numbers at the unveiling of the monument and their presence was documented by photographs. However, apart from laying the final wreath, representatives of those who were most directly and personally affected by the shipwreck did not get an opportunity to speak. They most likely did not even try to get it, as there is no evidence of any discussion regarding the possible participation of survivors or the victims’ relatives on the stand as speakers.

The Fairy of Lovćen survived the Second World War without damage. In the following decades, it became one of the country’s most renowned and recognisable monuments. Commemorative gatherings of the victims’ descendants and survivors of the Brindisi shipwreck from 1916 have been taking place annually to this day. They are regularly attended by the descendants of Montenegrin emigrants from North America (Borović 2016: 150). The monument has been regarded in more general terms as a potent symbol of the Montenegrin diaspora, its sacrifices, and continued links with the homeland.



Fig. 6: *Čuvari našeg neba nadlijeću spomenik*, “Guardians of our skies fly over the monument”. Yugoslav military planes during the commemoration in Cetinje, July 6, 1940.

COMMEMORATIONS OF THE BATTLE OF MOJKOVAC IN 1940

The decisive role in the organisation of two successive commemorations of the Battle of Mojkovac from January 1916 (at two different locations: Cetinje on August 31 and Mojkovac on September 1, 1940) was played by the Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, or more precisely, the Sokol Association (*Sokolska župa*) of Cetinje. The Sokol gymnastic and nationalist mass movement was founded in Bohemia in 1862. In later decades, Sokol organisations modelled upon the Czech example were established in other Slavic lands as well. In Montenegro, specifically the Bay of Cattaro, the Sokol tradition dates back to 1906. That year, a delegation of Czech Sokols, who publicly performed their gymnastic exercises, visited these South Slavic regions

for the first time. After Kotor and Herceg Novi, a Sokol association was also founded in the Montenegrin royal capital of Cetinje in 1914 (Babović Raspopović 2002: 136). The Sokol movement was revived and reached mass proportions after the war in the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. During the dictatorship of King Aleksandar (1929-1934), the Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia played an important role in disseminating and safeguarding the official ideology of integral Yugoslavism. Although the importance of the Sokol and its influence on Yugoslav public and political life somewhat weakened in the second half of the 1930s, this mass organisation contributed to the “identification with the state in its existing form, the ruling order, and Yugoslavism” until the country’s occupation in April 1941 (Babović Raspopović 2002: 136).

At the initiative of the elder (*starješina*) of the Cetinje Sokol Association Gavro Milošević, the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (*Savez sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*) accepted the idea that the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Battle of Mojkovac (January 6–7, 1916) be marked by a public ceremony in 1940. The decision to organise the commemoration in late summer instead at the beginning of January 1941 was again most likely motivated by weather and travel considerations. The memory of the battle and soldiers who fell at Mojkovac was supposed to provide “an exciting example of a heroic patriotic endeavour,” which would serve the purpose of “encouraging the present generations in these great times” (*Devedeset i tri dana borbe od Drine do Mojkovca* 1939: 11). This calls into mind the observation of historian Maria Bucur, who noted that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “politicians and other nationalist enthusiasts used the glorification of past actions in monuments and anniversaries to claim a direct connection with the heroic past and urge the populace to emulate such heroic deeds for the future of the country” (Bucur 2001: 289).

After the defeat and occupation of Serbia by the Central Powers at the end of 1915, Montenegro was unable to hold off the far mightier Austro-Hungarian army on its own for long. The Battle of Mojkovac, which took place on January 6–7, 1916, on the continental Sandžak Front, in which the Montenegrin army under the command of *Serđar* Janko Vukotić defeated the advancing Austro-Hungarian troops, is considered the most memorable Montenegrin military victory in the First World War. However, it was also the last great battle of the Montenegrin army before the collapse of the Montenegrin armed resistance and the country’s occupation by the Dual Monarchy. Simultaneously, a massive Austro-Hungarian offensive against Montenegrin positions

on Mount Lovćen was launched at the beginning of January. After several days, Austria-Hungary managed to overpower the defenders and take over the strategic mountain range. This opened the way for a further advance toward the key cities of Cetinje and Podgorica. At the time of the glorious victory at Mojkovac, Montenegro's fate was already sealed and the heroism of the men and women led by Janko Vukotić could make no difference in this respect (Šístek 2017).

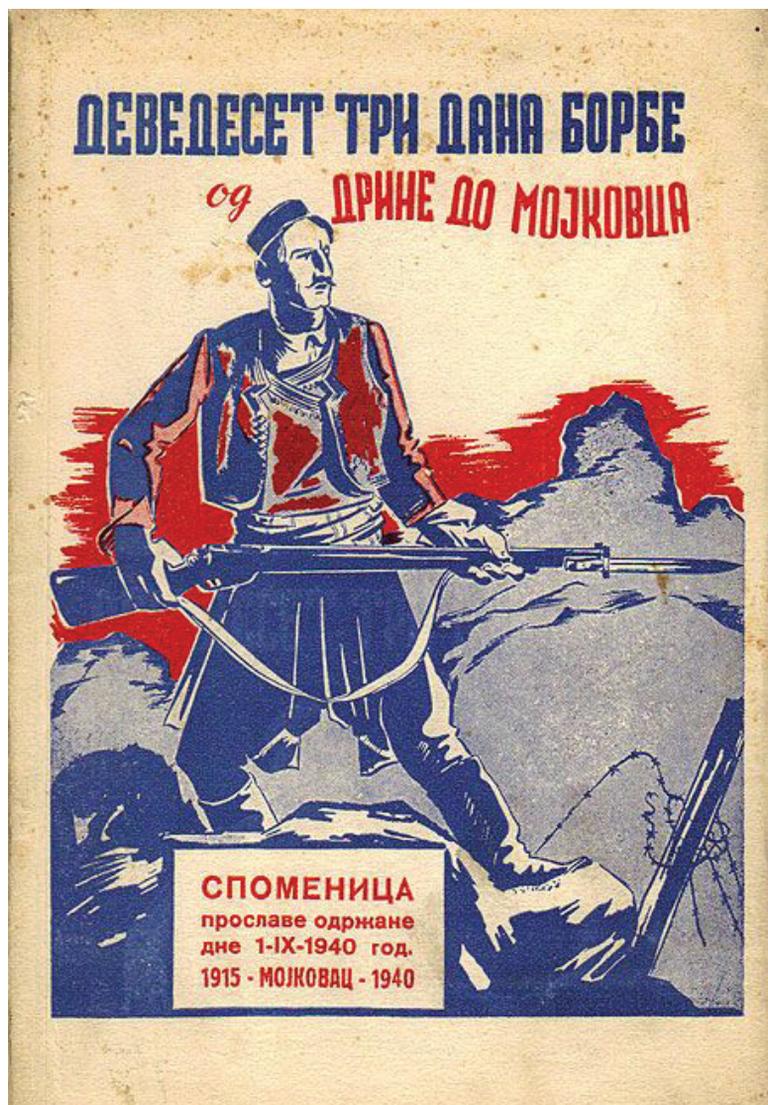


Fig. 7: *Spomenica Mojkovačka bitke*, Cover of the official publication commemorating the battle of Mojkovac from 1916 and its commemoration in 1940.

In the dominant culture of memory of the First World War, the Battle of Mojkovac is depicted as a battle in which the Montenegrins selflessly saved their “Serbian brothers.” Its memory provided an opportunity to connect the specific Montenegrin experience with the wider Serb narrative of the First World War, which included tropes of sacrifice, heroism, and traditional closeness and cooperation between Montenegro and Serbia. The first articles about the Battle of Mojkovac as an example of heroism and cooperation of the Montenegrin and Serbian armies appeared in the press as early as 1939, but there were still no mentions of an upcoming commemoration in this phase. There were also no announcements of a monument building project or fundraising appeals (*Borbe na Mojkovcu* 7. jan. 1916; *Slobodna misao*, January 6, 1939: 7). The first information about the commemoration of the Battle of Mojkovac, to be held in Cetinje on August 31 and Mojkovac on September 1, 1940, and organised by the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in cooperation with the National Defense (*Narodna obrana*) and the Association of the Natives of Kolašin in Belgrade (*Udruženje Kolašinaca u Beogradu*), was published at the beginning of August 1940. In Mojkovac, “as part of large people's festivities, the foundations of a memorial ossuary” would be sanctified at the occasion (*Proslava Mojkovačke bitke; Zetski glasnik*, August 3, 1940: 3). From the first mentions of the commemoration of the Battle of Mojkovac, the construction of a monument, or more precisely a memorial ossuary (*spomen-kosturnica*), was mentioned alongside festivities as an integral part of this project. Ossuaries had previously been built on other First World War battlefields throughout Europe, including Yugoslavia and especially Serbia. Given the fact that the date was announced less than a month before the planned commemorations, the upcoming festivities were to include only the ceremony of the foundations’ sanctification (*osveštanje temelja*) (Milošević 1940: 7).

In the weeks leading up to the commemoration, the press regularly published texts that provided certain details of the upcoming events. The Battle of Mojkovac was primarily presented as proof of Montenegrin solidarity with Serbia (*Značaj Mojkovačke proslave; Zetski glasnik*, August 31, 1940: 3), as Montenegrin heroism and selfless sacrifice for their Serbian brothers and the “common Serb cause” (*opšta srpska stvar*). In their glorifications of the battle, Montenegrin authors often cited positive assessments and praise coming from authorities beyond the Montenegrin milieu, particularly the Minister of the Army and Navy of the time, Milan Nedić, who expressed the opinion that without the Montenegrin army’s crucial contribution,

which prevented the Austrian manoeuvre aimed at encircling the Montenegrin and Serbian armies, “there would be nothing left of the Serbian army, and the Serb nation would not be what it is today” (Milošević 1940: 7).

Compared to the critical interpretations of the Montenegrin army’s role, especially prevalent in the 1920s, and the marginalisation of its contributions in the overall narrative about the formation of the unified Yugoslav homeland, in the last months of the existence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia the heroism of the Montenegrin army received complete and unambiguous rehabilitation in the public discourse surrounding the commemorations of the Battle of Mojkovac. Montenegrinhood (*crnogorstvo*) was still situated within a wider narrative of Serbdom, Yugoslavism, unification, and unity. In the ethnic sense, the Montenegrin army was depicted as “the Serb army of the Kingdom of Montenegro” (*Štampa o Mojkovačkoj bitci; Zetski glasnik*, August 31, 1940: 3) and Montenegro, traditionally, as one of the two brotherly states of one and the same Serb nation. Whenever Montenegrinhood was mentioned, it was usually safely anchored in wider Serb and Yugoslav concentric circles of identity. According to the text entitled “On the Chivalrous Spirit of the Montenegrins” (*O viteškom duhu Crnogoraca*), written by the general of the Yugoslav Army and commander of the Zeta Division Mirko Varjačić at the occasion of the 25th anniversary since the battle, “Montenegrins are racially pure Serbs, exactly the same as they were when they arrived from Bojka, their blood uncorrupted by other nations, nor foreign life and spirit. It is evident the fact that the first Serb state formed right here, in Zeta, was not accidental” (Varjačić 1940: 3–4). At the beginning of August, a committee presided by Gavro Milošević was formed in Cetinje to organise the official celebration of the birthday of King Petar II (September 6) and the anniversary of the Battle of Mojkovac (*Proslava 6. setpembra i Mojkovačka bitka; Zetski glasnik*, August 10, 1940: 3). A few days prior to the commemoration, numerous delegations from the Montenegrin hinterland began arriving in Cetinje. At Mojkovac, the surviving warriors, commanders, and their descendants were gathering spontaneously. Commemorations of the “last heroic endeavour of the still free army of Montenegro” (*Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; Zetski glasnik*, September 6, 1940: 2) were, as already noted, the last major public commemorations organised in Montenegro before the defeat, occupation, and territorial dismemberment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The speeches, proclamations, articles, and other texts related to these events provide a valuable and insufficiently researched testimony about the last phase of the discourse on the First

World War, collective identity, and narratives of recent history in interwar Montenegro and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The commemoration in Cetinje started on August 31, 1940, at around four in the afternoon in front of the Cetinje Sokol Hall (*Sokolana*). Here, alongside the orchestra of the Yugoslav Royal Navy from Tivat, members of the Sokol gathered together with representatives of various state institutions and several important guests, including Major Vukašin Vukotić and Vasilija Vrbica, the son and daughter of the late *Serdar* Janko Vukotić, an active participant in the battle. After a march from the Sokolana to the Monastery of Cetinje, Bishop Joanikije of Budimlje greeted the participants at the gates. On the way to the National Theatre, where a festive academy was taking place, the marchers stopped in front of the house where the late King Aleksandar was born for a moment of silence. At the festive academy, the elder (*starješina*) of the Cetinje Sokol Association Gavro Milošević spoke in favor of a greater homogenisation of the Yugoslavs: “We are aware that the events and circumstances in the world demand that we stand united in firm falangas and, inspired by the ethics of Kosovo heroes and heroes of the battle of Mojkovac, safeguard our spiritual values and purity from all outside influences ...” (Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; *Zetski glasnik*, September 6, 1940: 2) The Academy concluded with the performance of the patriotic songs *Onamo, 'namo!* (There, o'er there!) and *Hej, Sloveni* (Hey, Slavs). The lyrics of the former song were written by the last Montenegrin King Nikola. Signs that the Second World War was dangerously close to spilling over in Yugoslavia were mostly indirect. However, the general public, informed by the press, radio, and other sources, was well aware of many details of the general situation in Europe, which was becoming increasingly worrying. August 31, 1940, the date when the Cetinje commemoration of the Battle of Mojkovac from 1916 took place, was also the most difficult day of the entire Battle for Britain, which lasted for three months and three weeks. As a result of a massive German air offensive on that day, the Royal Air Force lost a record number of planes—39 (Eight Important Dates in the Battle of Britain 2018).

The mass public festivities in Mojkovac on September 1, 1940, exactly one year after the outbreak of the Second World War, took place near the Vojna njiva (Military Meadow), Razvršje, and other locations associated with important moments of the battle from January 1916. Weather conditions were not ideal for a public gathering for which “villagers not only have to travel on foot or horseback for hours but even for several whole days” (Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; *Zetski glasnik*, September 6, 1940: 3). It was a

cold and cloudy Sunday, with occasional rain. Despite the weather, “several thousand souls” gathered in Mojkovac. Compared with the first commemoration held on the previous day in the administrative capital of the Zeta Banovina, when the press mentioned mostly representatives of the state and army, various organisations, and organised delegations “from the hinterland,” the ceremony at Mojkovac left an impression of greater spontaneity and genuine popularity among the wider masses. Given the fact that the core of the former Kingdom of Montenegro’s Sandžak army was composed of soldiers from the vicinity, the gathering managed to attract a large number of veterans, their relatives, and descendants: “The surviving participants of the battle, broken down by bullets, exhausted by poverty and misfortunes, by visiting the places where they once confronted the far mightier enemy, remembered their countless brothers, relatives, and friends whom they had left behind on the battlefield, satisfied that, finally, the time had come when their role and the historical importance of this battle would be recognised” (Svečanost u Mojkovcu; *Slobodna misao*, September 8, 1940: 5). However, it was not just a nostalgic gathering celebrating the past: “A large number of officers from the former Montenegrin army who commanded different units on the day of the battle were now wearing the uniforms of the Yugoslav army because almost all of them were either in active service or in the reserve corps,” wrote the *Zetski glasnik* (Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; *Zetski glasnik*, September 6, 1940: 3). In texts and photographs from the commemoration, the veterans of Mojkovac were depicted as men ready to go into another war at any time if the fatherland found itself threatened once more.

The main part of the commemoration took place in a large meadow near the town: “In the upper part, a ceremonial stand was built, decorated with flags and greenery. In front of the stand, there was a large wooden cross at which the memorial liturgy was held.” The wooden cross was erected in the absence of a permanent monument. During the commemoration, wreaths were laid at the foot of the cross. The surviving flags from the Mojkovac battle were also brought to the ceremony.

Apart from these flags, numerous state flags fluttered in the hands of the young men (...) The women were mostly all dressed in black. Many mothers, sisters, and wives were crying, even today, for their loved ones. Many of them brought with them the coats of arms, medals, and other memorabilia of those fallen at Mojkovac, sewn onto small pillows. One old woman, who remained all alone because she had lost two sons at Mojkovac, recounted: “In the morning I visited

the places where my sons fell. I did not forget to light a wax candle on the grave of the Austrian officer who committed suicide after his army was defeated at Mojkovac” (Ibidem).

The day before, a number of official representatives of Mojkovac also visited the Cetinje commemoration. Guests of the September 1 commemoration again included the Ban of Zeta Banovina Božidar Krstić, Bishop Joanikije as a special envoy of Patriarch Gavrilo, General Pešić as an envoy of King Petar II (*Svečanost u Mojkovcu; Slobodna misao*, September 8. 1940: 5), Vasilija Vrbica and Vukašin Vukotić, daughter and son of the late commander-in-chief Janko Vukotić, the widow of the late general and commander of the Sandžak army Petar Martinović Valerija, and other prominent guests. A direct participant of the battle from the ranks of the Montenegrin officers, Brigadier Miloš Medenica, commander of the Kolašin brigade at Mojkovac in 1916, was supposed to address the audience in the name of the veterans, “but due to old age and obvious overexcitement, Mr. Medenica was unable to read his speech” (Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; *Zetski glasnik*, september 6, 1940: 4) His son Vaso had to read it for him. General Varjačić then read a speech written by the Minister of the Army and Navy, General Milan Nedić. Unlike certain other top Serbian officers, including Petar Pešić, whose negative assessment of the Montenegrin army’s role in the First World War generated controversial reactions in one part of the Montenegrin and Yugoslav public during the interwar period, General Nedić positively appraised its role. His speech at the Mojkovac commemoration was another proof of his respect for Montenegrin contributions and sacrifices in the First World War:²

The words of the minister, Mr. Nedić, full of praise and recognition of the Montenegrins, their patriotism and heroism, deeply moved the audience. And they were openly expressing this, because they applauded after every paragraph, and sometimes even after every sentence, and voiced their approval and gratitude for such a competent recognition of their heroism and virtues. (Mojkovačkim herojima odati je dostojno priznanje; *Zetski glasnik*, September 6, 1940: 4)

After the speeches, the Yugoslav government’s special envoy Sava Mikić “laid upon the cross a beautiful wreath in the name of the

2 As officer of the Serbian army retreating through northern Albania, Milan Nedić was actually an eyewitness of the Medua Tragedy on January 6, 1916. The first reports informing the highest Serbian command about the shipwreck and its circumstances were sent by him.

Prime Minister.” Despite unfavourable weather, the success of the mass commemoration allowed for raising the question of a permanent monument honouring the victory at Mojkovac. It was announced that donations for the memorial ossuary’s erection had already been received from several people and organisations: Minister Čubrilović donated 10,000 dinars, Ban of Zeta Krstić 20,000 dinars, Sokol Association 10,000 dinars, and the Montenegrin associations of Belgrade 3000 dinars. After the customary military march and dinner, official guests began to leave Mojkovac. The people’s masses remained, singing and dancing the national dance of *kolo* until nightfall (Ibidem).

At the beginning of February 1941, the newspaper *Zetski glasnik* recalled the successful commemorations from the previous year’s turn of August and September. It brought the news about the status of the effort to build a permanent monument in the form of a memorial ossuary in Mojkovac, as well as information on financial donations. According to the article, the commemorations had left a lasting imprint “in the hearts of all participants (...), in the hearts of patriots from all regions,” but “the warmest response came from our chivalrous army, especially the Zeta Division.” The paper then cited a letter from General Varjačić, commander of the Zeta Division, addressed to the chairman of the Committee for the Erection of the Monument at Mojkovac Gavro Milošević:

The Zeta Division, all of its officers, underofficers, corporals, and soldiers, accepted your request of support for your noble idea of erecting a monument to heroes fallen at the battle of Mojkovac with great joy and gratitude. In short: so that the deeds of the best sons of the Fatherland may inspire even the coming generations, as long as there is the sun and the moon. For this aim, the Zeta Division will donate 9,729 dinars for the monument. (Odjek Mojkovačke proslave; *Zetski glasnik*, February 1, 1941: 3)

This was also the last mention of the fundraising activities to erect a monument in Mojkovac. The April invasion of Yugoslavia by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and their regional allies Hungary and Bulgaria, which quickly brought the interwar Yugoslav kingdom to defeat, occupation, and territorial dismemberment, put an end to this project.

In his monograph on the Battle of Mojkovac from 1995, historian Aleksandar Drašković claims the following: “On all eighty Christmas holidays that have passed since the battle, the chivalrous deaths of the Montenegrins led by Janko Vukotić were commemorated in a way they deserve only on one occasion. That was in 1940, in the organisation of the Sokol Association. Before and after this, not a single word was said about these events, let alone a commemoration,

albeit a symbolical one, out of due respect to the Montenegrin warriors who had fallen in the battle at Mojkovac” (Drašković 1995: 16–7). It is indeed surprising that Drašković failed to mention the large commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Mojkovac organised by the Socialist Republic of Montenegro in 1966. As part of this state-backed memory project, a central monument commemorating the battle was finally built. It is a modest but elegant structure standing on a small hill by the main road before entering the town which is impossible to miss. The commemoration in 1966 was attended, among others, by Đuro Pucar as official envoy of the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, representatives of the highest institutions of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, and a relatively large number of surviving veterans. The most notable among them was Vasilija Vrbica, daughter of the Commander-in-Chief Janko Vukotić. She also attended the Cetinje and Mojkovac commemorations of 1940 (Rakočević 2013: 187–96). The monument from 1966 represents the central place of memory of the Battle of Mojkovac. It was restored before the centenary of the battle, celebrated at the highest state level in January 2016. The last commemoration attended by direct participants of the First World War was organised by the Republic of Montenegro in Mojkovac in January 1996 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary. Four veterans of the Battle of Mojkovac were present on the occasion, despite their advanced age.

CONCLUSION

According to sociologist Todor Kuljić, “the conventional political memorials use the past to justify the present through an explicit lesson and message. The ruling circles that erect them strive to keep the past permanently in the present and safeguard it for the future. As an undemocratic institution, conventional memorials are the means available to the powerful to impose their own values and ideology” (Kuljić 2015: 339). The intentions of the government, which felt the urgent need to homogenise the masses and increase patriotic feelings among citizens in the face of the looming Second World War, created a new space for the belated appreciation and glorification of the specifically Montenegrin contributions and sacrifices. Paradoxically, the interwar culture of memory of the First World War in Montenegro reached its greatest intensity at a time when the Second World War was already consuming large parts of Europe and rapidly approaching Yugoslavia: the largest

commemorations took place in the summer of 1940. This makes the Montenegrin case rather unique in the European context of the time.

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The Politics of Remembrance of the First World War and Monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina

AMRA ČUSTO

INTRODUCTION

The First World War was a conflict that left behind a huge number of dead, great destruction, and a world that was never the same again. It defined and shaped our recent past to a significant extent. The collective memory of this event in Bosnia-Herzegovina over the last hundred years was constantly changed and recreated in response to socio-political circumstances, adapted to the content of promoted collective identities, and complicated by multiple, mostly (tri)national views. In the period from 1918 to 1941, it was closely linked to the Yugoslav idea and the creation of the first South Slavic state.

During the war, a significant share of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, served in its military as part of Bosnian-Herzegovinian regiments—291,498, or slightly more than 16% of the total population of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Some 38,000 were killed and 51,815 wounded (Šehić 2007: 247). It should be noted that some Bosnians and Herzegovinians also served in the Serbian army volunteer units (recruited as defectors from the Austro-Hungarian army as prisoners of war).

The suffering, the difficult individual fates of men and women, the high number of prisoners of war, the struggle to survive, and the trying life behind the front all played an important role in reflecting on the memory of the war. After 1995, there were only two notable books about the memory of the members of Bosnia-Herzegovina's units and their role in the war (Schachinger 1996; Blašković 2000).

FIRST ENCOUNTER AND NEW SYMBOLS

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy caused major tectonic upheavals, and for the former *Landesangehörigen* of that empire, this meant that, in addition to their harsh wartime experiences, they were faced with completely new socio-political circumstances and numerous new difficulties. The political reality after December 1, 1918, was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SCS). There were many dilemmas, with the question of how to apply the national principle—recognised as crucial in the formation of new states after the First World War and the collapse of the great monarchies—to the assembled South Slavs soon proving to be of utmost importance.

In the aftermath of an exhausting war, with a chaotic situation on the field in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and documented cases of violence and repression by the Serbian army against the non-Serb population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with issues of consolidating the new government, it seemed that there was still goodwill for integration into the Yugoslav state at the end of 1918 (Omerović 2009: 183–214). After the Serbian army entered Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sarajevo on November 6, 1918, the daily press reported on it with enthusiasm, odes, thanks, and greetings to the Serbian army and its military leaders, creating a festive atmosphere before and after the act of unification, in reality the common life of a tri-ethnic nation - Serbs, Croats and Slovenes - had already begun. The existence of certain doubts about the new political reality, particularly the Serbian army and its attitude towards and treatment of the non-Serb population in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the Muslims, can be read in the welcoming speeches by politicians Šerif Arnautović and Nikola Mandić to the Serbian army after it entered Sarajevo on November 6. On that occasion, Arnautović said to Colonel Nedić:

On my behalf, but also on behalf of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I thank the Serbian army for its fraternal attitude, stressing that at the beginning there was uncertainty and fear among the Muslims as to how the Serbian army would treat their population, but today, the Muslims are happy to see that the Serbian army came in a brotherly manner without any intention of revenge (*Narodno jedinstvo*, November 13, 1918).

On the same occasion, Nikola Mandić expressed his gratitude to the Serbian army and his willingness to sincerely work on behalf of the Croats towards unification into an independent Yugoslav state.

With the consolidation of power, they found themselves in a new political framework, which called for the unification of peoples with different historical experiences, whose development and life unfolded in different states and empires, and eventually led to their participation on the opposing sides of the war (of the victors and of the defeated party). The life of first Yugoslavia began with the unification, the “close encounter” of South Slavic peoples, and at the same time with the construction of a culture of remembrance and an official narrative not only about the First World War but also about the more distant past of the newly formed state union. From the outset, it was clear that this process would be fraught with challenges since the issue arose as to how to build a common memory in a country with many different pasts and myths. This was the key question in understanding the importance of developing ways to create awareness of collective identity based on participation in common memory, constructed and mediated through the use of common rituals and symbols (Assmann 2005: 163).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the construction of collective official memory was particularly complex due to the existence of three dominant national groups (Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks), which in the forty years between 1878 and 1918 had already lived under two states (the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) and now found themselves in a third, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—each harbouring different narratives and memories of the traumatic past.

In order for the ideology of the Yugoslav state to be reflected in the public space and in the creation of new identities, issues related to the selection of ceremonies, national holidays, the erection of monuments and everything related to the symbolic construction of an official narrative and a desirable memory for all societies were important. The first signs of conflict in this effort, the “issue of memory” of historical events in Sarajevo, appeared very early, just one year after the

creation of the state, and concerned the choice of the date to be taken as the day of the liberation of Sarajevo. The question of whether this should be October 29, when all ties with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were broken, or November 6, when Serbian troops entered Sarajevo, was formulated in a debate. The position of the Serbian press was that the Serbian army brought freedom and liberated Sarajevo, which was in complete contradiction to what the Croatian and Bosnian press wrote about it (Mladenović 1988).

The need to shape national memory around common content while forgetting other content from the past gave rise to entirely new practices of remembrance (Gillis 2006). In Sarajevo, same as throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, this was reflected in the changing of street names, and in some cases, even names of places, in order to quickly remove from public space anything marked as foreign and unpopular. This process of overcoming old symbols was seen as an expression of a new patriotism and loyalty to the new state. Minutes of a 1919 session of the Sarajevo City Assembly describe a long discussion about new street names. A proposal was circulated to change the names of a large number of streets, all in accordance with the need to “nationalise” the city. The Karađorđević dynasty was supposed to play a homogenising role in the construction of a desirable monolithic culture of remembrance in the kingdom, so the cities of Bosnia-Herzegovina were to be symbolically linked to the dynasty, and as a result, Petar I Karađorđević, Regent Aleksandar Karađorđević and his wife Marija Karađorđević were all given their streets. The new street names reflected the new state policy of remembrance and the need to rid Sarajevo of traces of the “old feudal system” (HAS 1919). As some city representatives, including socialists, pointed out, street names connected with the heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as the older toponyms important for the identity and development of the city, were also changed. The memory of the day when the Serbian troops entered Sarajevo in 1918 was preserved by the street named November 6. Things were similar in other cities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as Banja Luka, Mostar, Tuzla, and others, which all received new street names in accordance with the new national imagery (Petar I, Petar II, Prince Pavle, Tsar Dušan, Miloš Obilić, etc.). The new names promoted the established value system, confirming that city streets and squares served as spaces for the projection of images of the past, thereby materialising collective identities (see Radović 2013).

In the period following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its values, the new state of the Kingdom of SCS found itself in transition, in the process of building a collective identity. This process was twofold: on the one hand, it meant establishing a new relationship with the past, while on the other, it represented a divergence in which the symbols and monuments of the “former” Austro-Hungarian society were no longer tolerated. The new politics of remembrance had to step up to the task of building unity and togetherness, and so the articulation of the new culture of remembrance began with the removal of everything that hindered the construction of the Yugoslav society and identity. Thus, as early as November 1918, the representatives of the People’s Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo issued an order to all authorities, offices, and institutions to remove all coats of arms, statues, pictures, and symbols reminding of the old regime (ABiH, November 1918).

This instruction demonstrates the importance of the coats of arms, flags, and monuments as symbols of civil religion with which one should identify, and which convey a political or ideological message and legitimise political and state authority (Sulejmanagić 2019). At the same time, it was deemed important for identity building in the young country, so after December 1, 1918, and the proclamation of the Kingdom of SCS, the country soon acquired its first national symbols. The flag—a tricolour with blue, white, and red horizontal stripes—and the coat of arms were symbols in which Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were to “see” their homeland, liberated and united, identify with it, and recognise their future in it based on fraternal harmony (see Jareb 2010). Enterprising individuals who saw an opportunity for commercial business in the political change and the new culture or remembrance contributed to these first creations of new symbolic and social values, and so in the early days of the state formation, advertisements appeared in Sarajevo newspapers offering for sale

pictures of Petar Mrkonjić—his majesty King Petar I, extremely convenient to remain in our homes and buildings as a dear memory of our Supreme Ruler from the time of His march for our liberation in the Bosnian Krajina (*Narodno jedinstvo*, December 18, 1918)

and all this for a price expressed in crowns, a currency of the recently vanished Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. However, much more wisdom, effort, and compromise than mere entrepreneurial spirit were needed on the thorny path of building a unique Yugoslav culture of remembrance.

The decision of the People's Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina to remove statues and symbols was only the first in the line of important decisions concerning the fate of monuments erected during the Austro-Hungarian period, and their removal proceeded very quickly. Among the removed monuments, the most famous was Spomenik umorstva (The Murder Memorial), by Hungarian sculptor Eugen Bory, dedicated to Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie and erected in 1917, exactly on the third anniversary of the assassination, with a ceremonial and religious programme, on the spot where they were killed by Gavrilo Princip's shots. Spomenik okajanja (The Atonement Monument), as it was called, consisted of three parts: a pedestal with a niche containing a smaller sculpture of the Pieta – Virgin Mary with Jesus, a medallion with the figures of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, and tall columns with their crowns represented. It survived for just over a year and was dismantled at the end of 1918.¹ At the same time, the plaque with the date of the assassination (June 28, 1914) and the text: "The heir to the throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Duchess Sophie von Hohenberg perished at this crossroads in martyrdom by the hands of a murderer" (*Sarajevski list* 162, June 26, 1917), was removed from the façade of the building facing the monument.

This monument could not survive the creation of the Kingdom of SCS and the building of a new society. In the ongoing dynamic relationship between the past and the creation of memory, the official narrative of the assassination changed completely and became an event of great national importance. The Young Bosnians (*Mladobosanci*) and the assassins were written in "golden letters" into the history of the creation of the South Slavic state. Its members were declared revolutionaries, fighters for liberation and unification, with Gavrilo Princip and other participants in the assassination portrayed as martyrs who fell for freedom. The act of assassinating Franz Ferdinand and Sophie was reinterpreted as the beginning, the announcement of freedom that was eventually won in the war. This is why their movement was portrayed as a fight against the occupier, as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was described.

1 After dismantling, parts of the monument ended up in Zemaljski muzej (Landes Museum) in Sarajevo, and some time later the medallion with the figures of Ferdinand and Sophie was stored in Umjetnička galerija BiH (Art Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina), while the Pieta – the sculpture of Virgin Mary with Jesus, was stored in the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Canton Sarajevo. The original part of the monument standing in its original place is a stone bench facing the place where the monument used to stand (Kantonalni zavod za zaštitu kulturno-historijskog i prirodnog naslijeđa Sarajevo, Evidencioni karton Spomenik Umorstva).



Fig. 1: Pietà, the original part of The Murder Memorial (photo: A. Čusto).



Fig. 2: The original place of The Murder Memorial (on the left) (photo: A. Čusto).

The memory of Young Bosnians and the assassins was inseparable from the celebrations and commemorations. The memorial plaque dedicated to Gavrilo Princip meant not only a change in the interpretation of his act, but also a change in the spatial identity and “visual language” of the historical zero point in Sarajevo, so strongly associated with the First World War. The memorial plaque was placed on February 2, 1930 by the Odbor narodne odbrane (National Defence Committee), with the inscription that the act of Gavrilo Princip heralded freedom on the Vidovdan of 1914. The unveiling of the

commemorative plaque was met with great interest by the foreign public. The solemn ceremony was attended by foreign journalists, some of whom surprised the hosts with numerous unpleasant questions about Serbia's responsibility for the war, the assassins as conspirators, their links to Serbia, etc. According to reports about the situation in Drinska Banovina, members of the local National Defence Committee tried to change the perception of the memorial plaque for Gavrilo Princip, especially the British journalist Philip Pembroke Stephens, correspondent of the *Daily Express*, who was accused of having come into contact with some members of the Croatian emigration because of his unpleasant questions (Rodinis 2009: 98-9). The hosts' remarks, however, did not have much impact on the coverage in the foreign press and were later described as provocation and incitement to hatred against the Yugoslav state (Rodinis 2009: 102).



Fig. 3: The original concrete bench of The Murder Memorial (photo: A. Čusto).

The memorial plaque erected for Gavrilo Princip in 1930 was to be just one of many that were repeatedly replaced as states and systems, collective cultures of memory, and attitudes toward the assassination changed. Young Bosnia, Gavrilo Princip, and the assassination are still subject to different interpretations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and are the cause of numerous conflicts of memory. It is important to note that, apart from citizens and guests of the National Defence Committee, none of the official government representatives attended this first memorial plaque ceremony, which could be interpreted as distancing, even if only formal, from the construction of memory using the act of assassination. It is my impression that this was motivated by the desire

to avoid any kind of incitement on the part of the international community to review Serbia's connection to Young Bosnia and its responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Whether the non-attendance of official government representatives at the mounting of the plaque in Sarajevo, and the scant coverage of this event in the local press, supports the argument that from the 1930s the Vidovdan myth reverted to its original meaning, exclusively related to the Battle of Kosovo, and that the assassins ceased to be an important element of this narrative, remains to be questioned further (Marković 2014).

However, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Young Bosnians had already been associated with the immortal heroes of Vidovdan, and the collective memory of assassination participants was continuously developed and built by numerous associations, such as Narodna odbrana (National Defence), a Serbian national association, which, despite the achieved goal of unification, even after 1918 continued to operate intensively towards further strengthening of nationalism (Newman 2018). In order to keep nationalism alive, National Defence was joined by various other organisations, especially Serbian army veterans, members of Sokol Societies), and cultural and educational societies, supported by parts of the political elite. This practice and various developed forms of cultivating the memory of war and Young Bosnians were also used in national skirmishes and reckonings, especially in the period of constant political turmoil and mutual accusations, clearly demonstrating the importance and sensitivity of collective memory. Members of the Sokol Society, great champions of state nationalism, and the Karadorđević dynasty stood out as guardians of the memory of Princip and his comrades in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Activities of Sokol Society organisations were directed at young people in order to inculcate the value of sacrifice for the motherland, the people, and Yugoslavia. They were presented to Bosnian youth as a "sacred source of moral strength, as the most sacred pilgrimage" (Rodinš 2010: 186).

Accordingly, Young Bosnians had a special place in the culture and practices of remembrance. Those who survived were given the epithet of "national workers," while the dead became lofty ideals that had fallen for freedom. This satisfied the narrative of national heroes, important in the quest for political unity, in which heroes are politicised in order to reinforce the idea on which the nation-state was founded (Musabegović 2008: 73). Therefore, as part of the celebrations of the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in Sarajevo in 1939, the fallen Young Bosnians were given a memorial chapel at the Koševo cemetery with the text *Blago tome ko dovijek živi – imao se rašta i roditi* (Blessed be who lives forever—he had reason to be born), followed by

the names: Gavriilo Princip, Nedeljko Čabrinović, Danilo Ilić, Trifko Grabež, Veljko Čurbilović, Mihajlo-Miško Jovanović, Mitar Kerović, Neđo Kerović, Jakov Milović, Marko Perin, and Bogdan Žerajić. This is a quotation from *Gorski vijenac* by Petar Petrović Njegoš, which articulated romantic national principles in a special way, through an epic narrative about national freedom promoting the cult of heroes and patriotism. As their “brothers” were all those who were punished and died in the so-called High Treason Trials, organised during the war by the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia on a symbolic level, the Young Bosnians were all those who were suspected or recognised as supporters of the idea of uniting the South Slavs and siding with Serbia, especially the Serbs. They were punished and widely persecuted.



Fig. 4: Today’s inscription of the memorial plaque of the assassination (photo: A. Čusto).

A monument dedicated to the convicts of the 1915/16 Banja Luka High Treason Trial was erected and unveiled in 1933 in the Orthodox cemetery of St. Pantaleon in Banja Luka. This was a monumental memorial with a cross and a plaque at the base bearing the inscription: *Javite Srbiji da je volim* (“Tell Serbia that I love her”), the last words of Dragoljub Kesić, a victim of the treason trial in Banja Luka. At a time when the Yugoslav idea was losing its strength, appeal, and acceptance, when it no longer meant the same thing as it did before 1918, when it

became compromised by daily political life, it was important for the creators of the official policy of remembrance in Belgrade to highlight in national history all those who once died and were associated with the idea of the state. Thus, pre-war Muslim members of Young Bosnia, Avdo Sumbul and Behdžet Muteveliđ, also known as activists of the Muslim cultural and educational society “Gajret” and advocates of the unification of South Slavs and the role of Serbia as Piedmont of the Balkans, were on the list of names written in golden letters into the Yugoslav past. As part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Gajret Society (1928), in the year of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of liberation and unification, their bones were transferred from the Romanian town of Arad and buried in the centre of Sarajevo, next to the Ali Pasha Mosque, with a mausoleum (*turbet*) later built in their honour. The return of their bones and the ceremonial reburial demonstrated the use of the dead to homogenise and symbolically unite everyone into a single nation. This is an example of an emotional funerary ritual that strengthens the dominant ideology when “the national community of the living relies on the national community of the dead” (Kuljić 2014: 62).

The choice of the *turbet* was no accident. In the Islamic tradition, it is the closest thing to a mausoleum, as the burial place for more prominent Muslims. It pointed to religious identity, but also suggested the great merits of Avdo Sumbul and Behdžet Muteveliđ, paying them special respect. Whether these merits were presented in accordance with the vision of all those who supported the movement and idea of uniting South Slavs under the leadership of Serbia, or the transformed Serbo-centric ideology of the proclaimed Yugoslav state imposed after 1918 and later in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, especially in public discourse and the culture of remembrance, remains an important unresolved question.

MEMORY AS THE SEED OF DISCORD

The new remembrance practices were centred around selected dates from the past and, in particular, the mythological pattern of Vidovdan. Efforts were made to create a narrative about Vidovdan as an event that was not only fateful but also an important link for all those who found themselves in the Kingdom of SCS. It was chosen as the largest national holiday and placed in the annual cycle of holidays to enable the “integration across dates” of the entire community (Kuljić 2006: 172).

Remembering victims, building monuments, and organising commemorations constitute, in a paradigmatic sense, a memory that forms and strengthens the community. Vidovdan was also proclaimed a day of remembrance for the fallen members of the Serbian army and the most important national holiday. Vidovdan commemorations were held throughout the country for those who died for liberation and unity, with solemn memorial services held in all churches and places of worship. Since 1929, the authorities intensified the use of the Vidovdan mythology. They tried to get all religious communities to take part in the central celebrations of this day in order to demonstrate unity (Čolović 2016: 308). In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, this meant programmes with official protocol, solemn speeches highlighting Vidovdan and the struggle of the Serbian people and volunteers from these regions for freedom and unity, with special emphasis on the long road from Kosovo to the painful freedom (Rodinis 2009: 257). Public celebrations of this date were marked by the hoisting of state flags on public institution buildings, the presence of state officials and government representatives, and religious commemorations in Orthodox and Catholic churches and Jewish temples (Sephardic and Ashkenazi). However, the shining hope of unity in the state of South Slavs was shattered inter alia by the fact that Bosniak Muslims were often omitted from these Vidovdan memorials (*Narodno jedinstvo*, June 29, 1935).

Serbian national history, national heroes, and the battles of the Serbian army took on a nation-building significance. They were interpreted through the symbolism of the Kosovo myth where the regent and later king Aleksandar Karađorđević played an active role in creating that memory (Jezernik 2018: 136). Creating such a narrative meant excluding from the collective memory all those who died on the other side of the First World War, in the Austro-Hungarian army. Their numbers were not insignificant in the South Slavic Kingdom. By excluding them from official memory, a clear message was sent that the Yugoslav state was bound to the victorious Serbian army as one of the foundations of national unity (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 142). This lack of understanding, and lack of equal empathy for all victims, meant that the memory of numerous “others” was completely marginalised. The complex legacy of war, as well as the insistence on collective memory based on the use of publicly mediated history in public discourse, on holidays, celebrations, monuments, and commemorations primarily linked to Serbian history and the Serbian army tradition, along with the choice of Vidovdan as the pivotal point of national ideology, lacked integrative potential and could not be accepted unreservedly

by all. Celebrating and creating traditions rooted in medieval Serbian history, Serbian uprisings, past Balkan wars, and the First World War in Bosnia-Herzegovina was problematic for a large number of non-Serbs, particularly Bosniaks, precisely because the attachment to the Kosovo cycle and mythology marked them as apostates, traitors to Christianity, and pointed to the conversion guilt of those Slavs who accepted Islam (see: Kazaz 2015: 25–39). Surviving soldiers from the former Austro-Hungarian army had to settle for amnesty rather than a place in collective memory, because they did not fit into the concept of remembrance of the victorious Serbian army. The memory of all those who died and fought on the side of Austro-Hungarians was not state-building. It was not suitable “material” for the Yugoslav collective identity, which created an additional gap in the memory of the war. Those who served in the Austro-Hungarian army were mostly seen as fighters against liberation and unification, and only a handful of war veterans’ associations tried to bridge the gap in the legacy of war, but without questioning the primacy of the Serbian army’s victory or the more exclusive rights or sacrifices of the Serbian military veterans (Newman 2018).

Exclusion from the collective memory, i.e. the impossibility of integration into the existing concept of the war narrative, combined with their unequal position in society in comparison to Serbian army veterans, certainly created a feeling of being left out and forgotten, resulting in the Austro-Hungarian army veterans’ need to create parallel memories about the war. Many surviving soldiers from the defeated Austro-Hungarian army, veterans with disabilities, and family members of the fallen were not given opportunities to remember and express their memory of their war comrades or closest relatives. The result was that “from a separate memory grew an increasingly strong sense of a separate identity” (Ježernik 2018: 145). Polarised memories divided the proclaimed Yugoslav nation and led to growing political tensions and disagreements over the organisation of the state.

Solidarity with those who fought on the Austro-Hungarian side, namely the officers and many ordinary soldiers who had experienced a terrible war and human suffering, could not be expressed in the public discourse and space because this would result in a cacophony of collective memory. Considering the official memory of the bearers of victory and war glory, such monuments were not erected on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina because they were seen as politically incorrect and inappropriate. Remembrance in the form of established monuments to fallen soldiers, military cemeteries, and commemoration and remembrance days introduced by the Austro-Hungarian

Monarchy had to be halted in Bosnia-Herzegovina. After the end of the war, all countries involved in the war, including the Kingdom of SCS, undertook to maintain military cemeteries. However, after 1918, the military cemeteries where soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, including locals, were buried, were mostly forgotten and neglected. One of these cemeteries was Vojničko groblje Lav (Lion's Cemetery)² in Sarajevo (Čusto, 2013).

The Lion Cemetery was established in 1916/17 as a result of the need and desire to bury the dead soldiers, the fallen, and those who died of war wounds in one place. The Lion Military Cemetery was founded at the order of the last leader of the country, Stjepan Sarkotić, and should be seen in the context of a time when, as a result of war events of unprecedented proportions, a culture of remembrance centred on the war, soldiers, and war victims emerged in the wider European area. This was a time when monuments and memorials were used to commemorate the great global conflict while also creating a heroic image of those who sacrificed their lives for the homeland, the state, with the goal of building an official image of the past and homogenising a certain community. In this sense, this cemetery should have had special significance as a place of remembrance, where commemorative ceremonies would be held to celebrate the cult of the fallen soldiers, those who gave their lives for the Dual Monarchy: "For the Emperor and the Fatherland"—the propaganda slogan used to motivate soldiers during the war. This slogan was almost the only possible unifying factor of the multinational empire, which was declining at the fronts and in the face of national aspirations.

Along with the construction of the Lion Military Cemetery, the construction of a monument to the fallen soldiers began. The sculptor Josef Urbania, from the Vienna Academy of Arts, was chosen as the author of the monument. He decided that the monument should take the form of a large sleeping lion, a symbol of strength, courage,

2 The Lion Cemetery is part of a wider cemetery complex located in the area of Koševo. It represents one of Sarajevo's older cemeteries, first established as the New Military Cemetery during the First World War, for the fallen soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army. Its later names were Soldier's Cemetery, Officer's Cemetery, and Partisan's Cemetery. During the Second World War fallen soldiers of the German army were buried in this cemetery. After the liberation in 1945, citizens of Sarajevo, members of the anti-fascist movement, killed in the final days of the Independent State of Croatia, were also buried there. This cemetery was thus a place where those who fought on opposite sides of the wars were buried next to each other. The cemetery was used until the mid-1960s. However, during the siege of Sarajevo from 1992 to 1995, the cemetery was used again due to the lack of space for burials. This is the only multi-confessional, multi-ethnic cemetery in the city that is not divided into separate plots for different religious and ethnic groups.

and resurrection in Christian symbolism. Government representatives paid great attention to the creation of the cemetery and the construction of the monument. The cemetery was visited by Field Marshal Duke Friedrich in the middle of 1916 and his visit was reported on by the daily newspapers of the time:

His Imperial and Royal Highness visited several graves and toured the works on the Hero's Monument, which, as is known, is being built by order of the Land's leader and the commanding general. The author of the monument, the sculptor Urbanić, gave the high-ranking guest, who showed great interest in the monument, all the desired clarifications. The Duke gave recognition for the beautiful appearance of the cemetery to the military cemetery's warden, Lieutenant Colonel Stuchly. (*Bosnische Post* 138, June 18, 1916)

Each grave was laid out in the same way to symbolise the equality of all fallen soldiers: a flat mound, grass, and a black wooden cross with a tin plate bearing the name of the deceased, the military formation in which he served, date of death, and his religion (*Sarajevski list* 264, XL/1917, p. 4). However, only one year after the opening of the cemetery on November 1, 1917, and the establishment of the Day of Remembrance for fallen soldiers (November 3), the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed and the Sarajevo Military Cemetery became irrelevant due to new political circumstances. The Dying Lion sculpture reached the end of the war with scaffolding and workmen, partly because the sculptor himself delayed his departure to the front (ALU 2007).

In the Yugoslav state community, the military cemetery and the Dying Lion monument did not fit in the process of developing a new state identity, where there was no place for those who had died as Austro-Hungarian soldiers in the First World War. The fact that it housed the remains of Germans, Slovaks, and Czechs, along with many local Croats, Bosniaks, Serbs, and other victims of war, did not help either. The military cemetery with the monument to the Dying Lion became a marginalised place of remembrance. The money for the decoration of the military cemetery and the construction of the monument, collected in 1917 through specially organised actions, mainly in Sarajevo and Mostar, was handed over to the state government in 1919, which meant that the importance of this cemetery was completely discarded (*Sarajevski list* 147, June 5, 1916). However, the episode involving the design of the cemetery and monument to soldiers in Sarajevo was not finished. Discussion about the military cemetery and the Dying Lion monument continued for years, providing a vivid example of how and to what extent socio-political changes in

society influence the interpretation and redefinition of places, memories, and attitudes towards the past.³ As for the Dying Lion, despite the frequent practice in our country of demolishing monuments with each new government, it fortunately remains one of the rare exceptions that has survived all the challenges of time and can still be found in the cemetery that bears its name.⁴

Already during the war years, the Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to establish military celebrations and commemorations as events or rituals that would demonstrate the “readiness for arms” of everyone in the empire and thereby homogenise the state (Vogel 2006). The First World War, as a traumatic event, became such an important point of collective and individual memory that the construction of monuments to the fallen Austro-Hungarian soldiers, and Franz Josef, very quickly reflected memorialisation processes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The peculiarity of monuments dedicated to fallen soldiers is that they were part of the specially designed monuments, the so-called *Wehrmann in Eisen* (Knights in Iron), which were also erected in other parts of the Monarchy during the war years and which, in addition to their commemorative role, had a humanitarian purpose. They were made of wood, smaller and larger, pieces of various shapes, and had metal wedges and nails hammered into their wooden bases, the sale of

3 In the newly shaped culture of memory, with a new attitude towards the Austro-Hungarian period and creation of new military traditions, today this cemetery hosts ceremonies organized to commemorate the Battle of Monte Meleta in 1916 and the participation and contribution of the Second Bosniak Regiment to this battle. In the creation of today's Bosniak military tradition, it is often forgotten that regiments from Bosnia-Herzegovina were composed of soldiers from all ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, not just Bosniaks.

4 In the discussion in the 1960s about the arrangement of the Partisan Cemetery (as the cemetery was called from 1945 to 1992) and the preservation of the Dying Lion, the arguments of those who dealt with monuments and heritage in the city were respected. “This is an age-old motif, a symbol of courage, of military service usually placed on soldiers’ cemeteries [...], which the Austrians simply took over and placed on the Sarajevo military cemetery where, by the way, local sons are buried (500–600 Muslim soldiers), those who lost their lives during the war either in Arad casemates or in various regiments or hussar companies. According to all this, there is no reason not to have an old sculpture from Koševo in the new Partisan Cemetery, which, as we can see, has international symbolism and which can therefore also be ours. [...] The special reasons that impose on us the preservation of this sculpture as a specific and artistically valuable monument lie in the fact that it belongs to a completely finished historical epoch, that it is the work of our compatriot Czech, and especially that this monument, when arranged, can be a valuable element in the new landscape architecture which we don’t have in the city yet” (Bejtić 1966) During the siege of Sarajevo in 1992–95 the Dying Lion was directly hit by shells several times. After the siege, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Canton Sarajevo undertook activities to save this monument, and in 2003, in cooperation with the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts and fellow conservators from Slovenia, the restoration and conservation of the Dying Lion was completed.



Fig. 5: Dying Lion and the monument to soldiers fallen during the occupation campaign (photo: A. Čustó).

which raised money for war orphans and widows (Baotić 2018). The nails, placed in a specific pattern, formed a picture, a figure of a soldier, or some other representation, such as a coat of arms, shield, cross, etc. Because of the use of metal nails, these monuments to soldiers were called “knights in iron.” The most famous of these monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina were erected in 1915 and 1916: the “Bosnian Warrior” in Ključ and the “Iron Knight” in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Little information has been preserved about them, with old postcards depicting these “knights” being the only remaining trace of their existence. A major research challenge was to find the exact location where this monument was placed due to the lack of documentation. By comparing the proportions parts of the building in the background on old postcards, details, and decorations, we can say with great precision that Sarajevo’s “Iron Knight” was placed on the site of today’s *Vječna vatra*

(Eternal Fire) monument in Titova Street.⁵ The “Sarajevo Knight” is known to have been authored by Czech sculptor Franz Zelezny, and it bore the inscription: “For our emperor, for our homeland, we gave our lives in angry fight, brotherly mercy, care, and effort, we give our poor children” (Huseinović, Babić 2004).

These monuments were completely different in purpose and form from those of Franz Josef, also erected during the war. Whereas the former had a humanitarian purpose, commemorating soldiers who had fallen on the various battlefields and fronts of the First World War; and were partly created in interaction with the citizen, The way in which these monuments were designed, i.e. through interaction and with participation of citizens in their creation, as well as their humanitarian mission, from today’s perspective represents a very modern principle of reflection and action in the construction of memory. The latter monuments were large figurative representations of the emperor, standing in uniform, as those erected in smaller Bosnian towns of Sanski Most (1915) and Livno (1916), in public spaces without large squares or monumental buildings, which was a clear demonstration of the symbolic presence of the Austro-Hungarian state and the Habsburg dynasty in these areas. Due to political change, the establishment of a new state at the end of 1918, and the need to develop a different politics of remembrance with different monuments and commemorations, the lifespan of these monuments, as well as those built somewhat earlier, was very short. Throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Bosanski Brod, Gračanica, Maglaj, Doboj, etc., there were monuments dedicated to Austro-Hungarian soldiers who died during the occupation of 1878.

The need to define and establish a new relationship with the past and everything connected to the failed monarchy, as well as to establish a new culture of remembrance of the First World War, was reflected in the removal of monuments. Such monuments could be found in just a few military cemeteries in Slovenia, mostly in isolated cemeteries (Jezernik 2018: 140), such as the monument representing a carved archer and a surviving Bosniak at the military cemetery in Bovec, erected on a site where some 400 soldiers recruited from Bosnia-Herzegovina rest together with others from all parts of the former Monarchy. The author of the monument is Czech sculptor Ladislav Kofranek and it is dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the 4th Bosnian Infantry Regiment who gave their lives on the Rombon Massif (Schachinger 1996: 296).

5 I thank my colleague, architect and historian, Amer Sulejmanagić for reconnoitring the location of Sarajevo’s “Iron Knight.”

Every social and political change, especially when it occurs under traumatic conditions such as wars, results and manifests itself in the construction of new monuments. The new monumental figures signal the redefinition of the past and the establishment of new values. After the end of the war and the establishment of the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), due to the fact that a significant portion of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina stood on the side of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire, this process was marked not by the intensive construction of monuments dedicated to fallen soldiers, but by the construction of so-called dynastic monuments dedicated to Karadževićs, Petar I and Aleksandar I.

One of the few monuments erected in memory of the fallen Serbian soldiers is still standing in Trebinje. It was erected as part of the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary since the end of the war in the central part of the town in 1938, at the initiative of poet Jovan Dučić, who not only came up with the idea but also with the appearance of the monument. In the same year, near the Church of St. Peter and Paul the Apostles in Doboj, a monument with a memorial ossuary of Serbian citizens who died in the camp was established in 1915, demonstrating that the commemoration of the “round” anniversary of



Fig. 6: Memorial to soldiers fallen during the First World War (photo A. Čusto).

the end of the war was followed by the erection of several memorials in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the presentation of the new state and the staging of key new symbols continued to focus on the monuments to the two kings from the ruling dynasty in an attempt to spread the message of their enormous merits for the state's creation and existence. A new symbolic order was established by replacing the Habsburgs with the Karadževićs, portrayed as liberators and unifiers who, after many centuries, had finally fulfilled the historic mission of establishing a "popular" government. Dynastic monuments erected in Bosnia-Herzegovina were no exception to the numerous monuments erected throughout Yugoslav territories. These monuments to Petar I and Aleksandar I were supposed to stimulate the birth and development of national Yugoslavism and a monolithic culture of remembrance; however, they stood on very "shaky legs" from the very early days of the state.

Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Jajce, Bugojno, Travnik, Foča, Livno, and Banja Luka are Bosnian towns with monuments to Petar I. In some cases, these monuments were erected in the same place where Franz Josef once stood (usually the central square or main street, even on the same pedestal), as in the case of Livno (Šimpraga 2015). It illustrates the pragmatism of symbolic substitution as well as the effort to convey a new message. The erection of these monuments was initiated by local authorities, advocates of Yugoslav nationalism, as well as those linked to the Serbian cause and culture, such as Mustafa Mulalić, who is believed to have initiated the erection of the monument to Petar in Livno in 1924.⁶ Although this information has not been confirmed by additional research, it is possible that Mustafa Mulalić, as a member of the Muslim pro-regime intelligentsia and someone who advocated and worked to strengthen national (Serbian) sentiments, was one of those who actively worked to erect the monument to Karadžević (Jahić 2012). The fact that Mulalić later became a deputy of the Yugoslav People's Party (Jugoslovenska narodna stranka) in the 1930s and one of the Muslims in Draža Mihailović's headquarters during the Second World War supports the assumption that Mulalić was hired to erect the monument in Livno.

The use of the Middle Ages in the construction of identity in the context of the Karadžević dynasty and Yugoslavia was seen in 1925 at celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of the coronation of King Tomislav. Although this was an event from the Croatian national

6 <https://livideo.info/zla-sudbina-spomenika-kraljevima> (visited June 24, 2019)

calendar, its content was adapted to the narrative of Yugoslav national unity. The commemoration of this jubilee in Sarajevo resulted in festive celebrations with a fabricated narrative about the unification of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes into one powerful state headed by King Aleksandar, the heir of the same blood and same people as King Tomislav (Matijević 2004: 1140). Although Tomislav holds an exceptional symbolic significance in the Croatian national gathering, in this jubilee celebration, he played a role in integrative Yugoslavism. By associating Tomislav with Aleksandar, an important link was created between the medieval and modern rulers at the head of a tri-ethnic nation, forming a continuity that was highly important in the effort to form a national ideology. The central commemoration of the anniversary of Tomislav's coronation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was held in Sarajevo in September 1925, with no expense spared to manifest the unity of Serbs and Croats, and it was supported by appropriate festive speeches and slogans, such as the one written on the Šeher-ćehaja bridge in four-metre tall letters and numbers T(omislav) 925–A(leksandar) 1925 (Matijević 2004: 1139). This message very clearly referred to the efforts of all those living in Yugoslavia to “merge into one organism, one soul,” not only through the common past but also through the present, under Karađorđević leadership.

The result of the celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of Tomislav's coronation in Livno was the erection of a monument to King Tomislav in 1926, which, like the entire commemoration of this event, should be seen in the context of the mid-1920s in the Kingdom of SCS, before the introduction of the January 6 dictatorship, when it was still possible to establish special national cultural contents and institutions, and when there was not yet such a strong and expressive insistence on integrative Yugoslavism. The obelisk is 9.25 meters high, indicating the year of the coronation. It features a medallion with a relief of King Tomislav on a horse draped in a mantle. The inscription on the monument reads: “In commemoration of the thousandth anniversary of the first Croatian king Tomislav 925–1925, built by the Croats from the village and town of Livno” (see Figures 8 and 9).

In the confusion of constantly changing collective identities, politics of memory, and their interpretation, this event offers different national points of view. The town of Duvno, where Tomislav's coronation is said to have taken place, was renamed Tomislavgrad in 1928, in later additions of content, especially in times of political and national turmoil and conflict between Croats and Serbs. It was presented as being named after Croatian King Tomislav, deliberately omitting the fact that Aleksandar Karađorđević's son was named after



Fig. 7: Monument to Croatian King Tomislav in Livno (photo: A. Čusto).



Fig. 8: Bas relief oval plaque on the monument King Tomislav in Livno (photo: A. Čusto).



Fig. 9: Inscription of the monument King Tomislav in Livno (photo: A. Čusto).

King Tomislav, meaning that Duvno changed its name at the initiative of the local population in honour of the new-born prince of the house of Karadžorđević, which at the time was supposed to serve as a

demonstration of the fraternal relationship between Serbs and Croats (Ivanković 2006). From the perspective of today's political modernity, the question of who the town was named after, Prince Tomislav Karađorđević or the medieval Croatian King Tomislav, is never asked.

The Karađorđević dynasty received monuments in the form of statues and busts of Petar and Aleksandar in numerous smaller towns and cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of the larger, more monumental ones was made in Bijeljina in 1937 by Sreten Stojanović, while others were made by Yugoslav and other sculptors such as Lojze Dolinar, Frano Kršinić, and Rudolf Valdec. However, the sculptor who was most often engaged in the construction of these monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina was Ivan Ekert (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 365). Ekert was the author of the monument to Petar I erected in the Bosnian town of Varcar Vakuf in 1924. On that occasion, Varcar Vakuf, together with the monument, was given the name of Mrkonjić Grad, after the name used by Petar in the 1875 uprising. The Bosnian uprising of 1875 was another important historical event, another zero point in the creation of the Serbian national culture of remembrance, in which the active participation of Petar I under the name of Petar Mrkonjić had a specific meaning, one that fitted into the narrative of strength and courage of the first of the Yugoslav kings in the fight against the centuries-old oppressors of the people—the “Turks”— and his dedication to the formation of a state. The monuments to Aleksandar in the centre of Tuzla and Visoko by Sreten Stojanović and Lojze Dolinar are also evidence of the connection between the people and the dynasty (Begović 2015: 2). It was also common practice to erect commemorative plaques or busts in the buildings of state institutions, especially after the 1934 assassination. As a visible sign of deep gratitude, Kolo srpskih sestara (Circle of Serbian Sisters) unveiled a memorial plaque to the Martyr King with ceremonies and speeches paying homage to the King and reminding future generations of “the great deeds of the Knight King Aleksandar I the Unifier” (*Narodno jedinstvo*, April 13, 1935).

In an effort to establish and maintain the continuity of the official memory, special attention was paid to young people, who were to be educated in the “spirit of unity of country and people, in order to follow the legacy of protecting Yugoslavia, which our chivalrous king left us on his deathbed” (HAS 1935). The involvement of young people in commemorative ceremonies or special programmes was achieved in various ways, for example, by sculpting numerous commemorative busts of Aleksandar in Sarajevo. Students from secondary schools, technical schools, and schools of arts and crafts copied the bust of Aleksandar originally made by the sculptor Iva Despić. One

bust made by students was placed in the main administration building in Sarajevo (*Narodno jedinstvo*, September 6, 1935).

In addition to the monuments, other events were organised to present the rulers as central figures and to personify the strength of the state with the goal of building a narrative about the great role of the Karađorđević dynasty in Yugoslavia. Visits by members of the royal family to some parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, celebrations of the birthdays of King Aleksandar I and later of, celebrations of the Day of Unity or of the liberation of cities in the First World War, were reported with appropriate texts and illustrated with numerous photographs in *Narodno jedinstvo*, the official newsletter of Drinska Banovina, published in Sarajevo. There was a constant emphasis on the symbolic power of Karađorđevićs in the culture of remembrance; at the same time, national and political struggles on the public scene highlighted numerous obstacles and the lack of national unity. Through youth education, cultural societies influenced the construction of collective identities and engaged their numerous branches throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina in the implementation of various remembrance practices. Active participation of young people was ensured through programmes dedicated to important dates in the national calendar, including the celebrations of the birthdays of Kings Aleksandar and Petar II, with ceremonial academies where biographies of members of the Karađorđević dynasty were read. National content was highlighted in recitals and musical programmes (*Prosvjeta* 1927; *Gajret* 1933).

Sokol Societies and their festivals were indispensable in organising events aimed at strengthening state nationalism. The burning and carrying of a torch from Sarajevo to Topola as a sign of gratitude to King Petar I was a demonstration of efforts to build loyalty and commitment to the Karađorđević dynasty.

On the 2nd of June, as a prelude to the festival, a ceremony was held to burn and carry a torch of gratitude to the Blessed King Petar the Great Liberator from Sarajevo to Topola in a relay. On the occasion of this ceremony, the entire city was decorated with national flags, and the buildings in the street where the torch of gratitude was carried were festively illuminated and decorated with carpets. In the streets through which the torch passed, huge masses of people stood in lines. (Rodinis 2010: 420)

Popular participation in these and similar programmes, which “communicated patriotism and unity of the nation” in a particular way, highlights the absence of focused major displays of dissatisfaction or opposition to such ceremonies in the public sphere in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only occasionally was it officially recorded that certain

representatives of the Catholic Church expressed their dissatisfaction with the influence of Sokol Societies on the development of Croatian youth. Certain Catholic religious teachers were accused of encouraging discussions among youth in Sarajevo schools about whether King Aleksandar was— “ours or yours”? (Rodinis 2010: 180).

And while the carrying of the torch was associated with Petar, after Aleksandar’s assassination, a special bond between the king and the people was fostered through organised pilgrimages to Oplenac, the late king’s resting place. State officials, members of various associations and societies from Bosnia-Herzegovina, mainly of Serbian origin, joined the processions that visited the crypt of the Karađorđević Foundation as a holy place.

Your grave and the graves of Your ancestors, as well as this holy place at the foot of which Karađorđe shook up the mighty empire which made the whole of Europe tremble, where he ignited the flame of vengeance for Kosovo and from where the celebrated cannon of Karađorđe thundered, announcing freedom, serve as a stimulus to preserve what was acquired through enormous sacrifices and as a source of strength for our people in the most difficult times. [...] Beneath these flags crowned with glory, which silently observe the graves of their Leaders and testify to their greatness and glorious efforts, generations will be inspired by a heroic love for freedom, people, and will learn the value of liberty, the greatness of sacrifice required by the Motherland, and the temptations destiny has intended for us. (*Narodno jedinstvo*, January 30, 1935)

The reports in this newspaper about the visits of various associations from Bosnia-Herzegovina and their pledge made in Oplenac are an emotional message, a presentation of the commemorative practice related to Aleksandar’s grave, which sent a strong symbolic message of unity framed in the national narrative about the Kosovo myth, vengeance for Kosovo, participation of Karađorđevićs in the First World War, the creation of the liberation tradition, the state, and sacrifice for the fatherland. In addition, it indicates the importance of a selected person’s death in the culture of remembrance, as well as funeral rituals in remembrance techniques used in the establishment of a community’s collective identity (Kuljić 2014: 59).

One of the last great ideas for the construction of a monumental memorial to Petar I was related to Sarajevo. The debate about it lasted a long time and was closely connected to the design of the central part of the city square. In 1934, the square was named Petar I Karađorđević Square, and the same year, a call was issued for its design and the construction of a monument (Čusto 2011: 229–238). The call aroused great interest among artists and architects in Yugoslavia. Twenty-seven

works were submitted, and the Commission selected the work by architect Josip Pičman and sculptor Frano Kršinić (Mutnjaković 1981: XIX-XX). However, the realisation of this idea was slowed down due to a lack of funds, and so, in order not to lag behind smaller cities, where the official commemoration policy was partly implemented through the erection of a monument to King Petar, representatives of the City Assembly decided to obtain funds for this initiative through a large loan in 1935 (HAS 1935).

The idea to build a Sokol House in Sarajevo (by architects Lavo-slav Pavlin and Milivoje Radovanović) in honour of Aleksandar went hand in hand with the initiative to erect the monument. The building was built in 1935 and became a place where young members of the Sokol Society were educated in the spirit of the ideology of the Yugoslav state under Karađorđević. Buildings of the Sokol School were erected in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as were monuments to Karađorđevićs. They were places where cadets were taught about national patriotism, one in which Petar and Aleksandar had a central place.

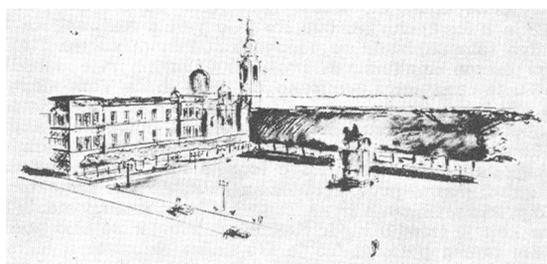


Fig. 10: A sketch with the design of the square and the monument to Petar I (Andrija Mutnjaković (ed.), 'Josip Pičman 1904-1936', *Čovjek i prostor* 29 (1981), Vol. 4-5, No. 337-338, XIX.).

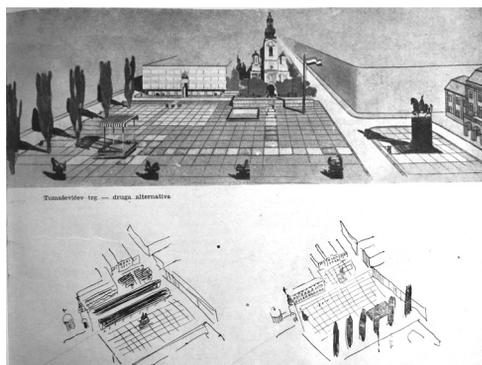


Fig. 11: Alternative design of the square and the monument to Petar I.

The monument to Petar had a different fate than the Sokol House in Sarajevo, which was successfully constructed. In late 1940 and early 1941, parts of the equestrian statue were delivered to Sarajevo, and the construction of the pedestal and the installation of the monument began. But with the outbreak of the Second World War, the removal of monuments to Karađorđević's from public places in Sarajevo and other places in Bosnia-Herzegovina began. The demolition of these monuments in 1941 testifies not only to the fact that wars and major political changes are highly challenging for monuments but also to the region's frequent memory metamorphoses. As part of the creation of new cultures of memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina, some of these monuments to Petar I were restored in the 1990s. The monument in Bijeljina was restored in 1993; the one in Mrkonjić Grad was rebuilt in 1990, demolished in 1995, and again rebuilt in 1996.

CONCLUSION

After the establishment of the state in 1918, the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina was just beginning to learn about the regions and life of other South Slavic peoples. Except for the pre-election activities of political parties, the population mostly remained on the fringes of contemporary social developments. Together with their urban compatriots and others who found themselves in the new Kingdom of SCS, later Yugoslavia, these members of different ethnic groups had different religious identities and individual and collective memories, making their relationship with the Yugoslav idea quite complex and riddled with many different views, relations, variations, and formulas. The imagined idea of an integrative Yugoslavism was implemented through the construction of a collective culture of memory and identity based on a dominant narrative constructed around the significance of the Serbian army, the Battle of Kosovo, demonstrations of loyalty to the Karađorđević dynasty, erection of monuments in their honour, the commemoration of Vidovdan memorials, the Day of Liberation, and so on, in an attempt to create a common national feeling and symbolism across the entire Yugoslav territory. In this effort, motivated by the need to strengthen the centralized state, there was little sensitivity to the different layers of identity, diverse memories, and the complex legacy of war in all those gathered under one state. Despite this, and despite the constant political turmoil in the country, there seems to have been no serious opposition in Bosnia-Herzegovina's public discourse,

and the dominant tendencies in the politics of memory were followed in a state that existed for just over two decades.

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The Forgotten Heritage of the First World War in Croatia¹

LJILJANA DOBROVŠAK

INTRODUCTION

Until 2014, not much was known about the memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia, except that there was an ossuary in the Central Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb and a national monument to fallen soldiers. Encouraged by the international centenary of the First World War, some Croatian historians started to research this previously understudied topic. From 2014 onwards, the first works on the First World War monument heritage were published based on the researched locations in Croatia – places where various kinds of monuments dedicated to soldiers fallen in the First World War

1 This paper is based on the historical research conducted in the framework of the national research project IP-2019-04-5897: “The First World War in the Culture of Memory. Forgotten Heritage” financed by the Croatian Science Foundation.

were erected (Huzjan 2014: 161–88; Kukić 2015: 123–25; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2017a: 53–66; 2017b: 439–61; 2019b: 239–169; 2020: 399–26; Huzjan 2018: 179–222; Dragoni, Mlikota 2019: 179–94; Huzjan 2019: 437–53; Hameršak 2020: 375–98, Vukičević 2020). Other publications² resulted from the project “Zagreb, Croatian First World War Memorial Heritage,” which was implemented by the 1914–1918 Association in 2018 and financed by the Croatian Ministry of Culture (today Ministry of Culture and Media). However, the end result of this project was an elaborated and mapped memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia. Even though they were not used in this paper, it is important to note that there are books and articles published by scholars on Croatian subjects investigating the First World War memorial heritage of Croatian citizens–soldiers killed and buried in today’s Ukraine, Poland, and Italy (Paščenko 2016; Skoupy 2015: 73–89; Tominac 2016; Paščenko 2018).

Therefore, the analysis of the First World War monument heritage in Croatia in this paper does not describe Croatian First World War cultural memory. Nowadays there are no commemorations organised on dedicated sites of memory for fallen First World War soldiers in Croatia, because such places do not exist. The state authorities in Croatia organised two events to commemorate the centenary of the First World War in 2014 and 2018,³ but did not render it a permanent commemorative practice. This commemorative practice has nonetheless been maintained by the Croatian veterans’ associations and the 1914–1918 Association starting in 2018 (Dobrovšak 2021: 56–61).

SITES OF MEMORY AND HISTORY

Sites of memory were first introduced by French historian Pierre Nora.⁴ One of his most renowned works was the collection of

2 Collected data was used in published articles. Source of data about First World War monuments was found in newspapers, as well as in numerous proceedings and exhibition catalogues published on the centenary of the First World War (see a bibliography made by Herman Kaurić 2020: 347–92).

3 Events were organised with the participation of Croatian state institutions along with embassy representatives of the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Canada, and some other countries to commemorate the victims of the First World War at the central monument in the Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb on Armistice Day (November 11).

4 He published the article *Mémoire collective* in the early 1970s.

essays published in seven volumes about *collective memory* and *sites of memory* titled *Les lieux de mémoire* (Winter, Sivan 1999:1). Even though he does not clearly define it, Nora uses the term *sites of memory* to explain institutionalised forms of *collective memory* rather than sites of memory (Szpociński 2016:246). His works sparked a historical debate about *les lieux de mémoire* or *a place of our memory* (Nora 1989: 7). Nora makes a distinction between *memory* as a concept that exists in an almost mythical sense in the minds of common people, and “history” which is a “story” written by a scholar in a professional sense (Nora 1989:8). For Nora, *les lieux de mémoire* is a place “where memory crystallises and secrets” occur “at a particular historical moment” (Nora 1989:7). Such historical moment represents a turning point – a conscious “break with the past” that “is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn” apart (Nora 1989:7). Memory is torn apart “in such a way as to pose” a problem for “the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists” (Nora 1989:7). Consequently, *lieux de mémoire*–sites of memory–are no longer *milieux de mémoire*–“memory backgrounds” (Nora 1989:7). Since memory is different from history, it exists in cultural sites or “lieux” that hold a specific significance for national identity (Nora 1989: 8). Memory is blind to all but the group it binds, which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs argues, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific, collective, plural, and yet individual (Nora 1989: 9). According to Nora, such sites of memory “are fundamental remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory” (Nora 1989: 9). Furthermore, he states that sites of memory originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, so people deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organise celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally (Nora 1989: 11–2). Thus “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep” away sites of memory (Nora 1989: 12). Accordingly, for Nora, sites of memory “are sites in three senses of the world–material, symbolic, and functional,” and they ‘are created by a play of memory and history, an interaction of two factors that result in their reciprocal overdetermination.’ Without the intention to remember, claims Nora, sites of memory would be indistinguishable from sites of history (Nora 1989: 18–9).

This initial framework established⁵ by Nora was later advanced by numerous scholars,⁶ most notably by American historian Jay Winter. Jay Winter as a First World War historian has greatly advanced contemporary understanding of sites of memory (Winter, Sivan 1999; Winter 2006; 2008; 2010; 2014). According to Winter, *sites of memory* are places where groups of people engage in public activity through which they express “a collective shared knowledge [...], of the past, on which a group’s sense of unity and individuality is based” (Winter 2010: 312; 2008: 61). He claims that groups that go to such sites inherit earlier meanings attached to the event they participate in while adding new meanings to it. The group’s activity is crucial for the memory and preservation of the commemorative sites. When such groups disperse or disappear, sites of memory lose their initial force and may fade away entirely. Thus, Winter defines the term *sites of memory* more narrowly to mean physical sites where commemorative acts take place.⁷ Namely, “states do not remember; individuals do, in association with other people. When such people lose interest, or time, or for any other reason cease to act, when they move away, or die, then the collective dissolves, and so do collective acts of remembrance” (Winter 2006: 4). He claims that agents of remembrance work in the borderlands linking families, civil society, and the state, so during and after the war, individuals, as well as groups, come together to do the work of remembrance (Winter, Sivan 1999: 40). How the group/individual/state remembrance was done in Croatia and to what extent it is possible to map sites of memory as a reminiscence of the First World War past will be evident from the chapter on war categorisation and the chapters about cemeteries, memorials, and monuments established during and after the war.

WAR MEMORIAL CATEGORISATION

So far, the initial categorisation of the Croatian First World War memorial heritage was made by Ljiljana Dobrovšak as a result of the aforementioned research project “Zagreb, Croatian First World War Memorial Heritage” (2020). Dobrovšak (2020: 409) categorises Croatian

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- 5 An analytical framework to study sites of memory, memorial culture, and collective memory.
 - 6 To name few: Halbwachs 1999; Connerton 2009; Assmann 1995; Winter, Sivan 1999: 6–39; Szpociński 2016: 245–54.
 - 7 The 20th century is marked by these sites since most of them signify the loss of life in war (Winter 2008: 61; 2010: 312).

First World War memorial heritage as follows:

- war cemeteries;
- public monuments;
- war memorials, such as crucifixes, plaques, altars and votive chapels, paintings and frescoes, cenotaphs; and
- family tombs.

Relying on Dragan Damjanović's (2013: 589) classification, public monuments are categorised in this paper into three subcategories: 1) monuments dominated by sculpture, 2) sculptural-architectural monuments, and 3) architectural monuments.

Namely, monuments to fallen soldiers of the First World War on Croatian territory were exclusively architectural in nature, dominated by various columns, pillars, crosses, pyramids, and obelisks. The only exception in this respect is the monument located on the osuary at Zagreb's Mirogoj Cemetery, which belongs to the group of monuments dominated by sculpture. However, monuments to fallen soldiers in Croatia during the First World War were largely erected in local cemeteries (military, civil, and religious). Only a few were located on the main town squares or villages, in the city parks and/or close to parish churches. The interwar period introduced some changes. Monuments to fallen soldiers in Croatia were then mostly located in front of parish churches, or there was a dedicated spot with a memorial plaque fixed on the inner wall of the church. Again, only a few monuments were erected in the city squares or city parks, and rarely in local or war cemeteries.

In general, First World War memorials in Croatia were erected by fellow soldiers, families of fallen soldiers, civilian and humanitarian associations, and rarely by town authorities or municipalities. For the greater part, it is known who initiated their construction, under what circumstances, and under whose authorship. However, there is still no data for some memorials.

First World War memorials in Croatia often took the shape of pyramids or obelisks. Some of them displayed the names of fallen soldiers in alphabetical order, and some had only the year of death (1914–1918). Other memorials were built as pavilions that stood alone or contained a sculpture (a Home Guardsman) usually made from wood.⁸ Even though one finds examples of memorials in the shape of a cannon shell, a great number of them are crucifixes with dedicated

8 Often modelled copying German war monuments called *Kriegerdenkmal*.

inscriptions to the First World War victims. In the place called Punat on the Island of Krk, for example, one finds a statue of an angel built in honour of the First World War victims. There is also a rare example of a figural memorial depicting a warrior of the First World War in a place called Kopačevo (in the region Baranja), and another one called *Pieta* erected above the ossuary in Mirogoj (Dobrovšak 2020: 409–10). However, the exact number of First World War memorials in Croatian cemeteries is still unknown. Croatian cemeteries still hide military sections, while those dedicated to fallen First World War soldiers remain unexplored. Document from the year 1921⁹ reports 580 settlements/ places with cemeteries on the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia¹⁰ where soldiers who died during the war were buried. The same document reports 23,533 “victims of war” buried in those cemeteries. Victims of war were of different nationalities—“Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Russians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Austrian Germans, Italians, French, Bulgarians, and Albanians,” which means that they belonged to different armies (the Austro-Hungarian army and the Allies’ armies). So far, the research has mapped out war cemeteries in the following Croatian settlements: Slavonski Brod, Osijek, Glina, Karlovac, Otočac, Petrinja, Sisak, Vinkovci, Nova Gradiška, and Kraljevica. With the exception of Kraljevica, all those places were part of the former military border with war cemeteries established before the First World War. These military cemeteries only expanded during the war. Cities and smaller towns such as Zagreb, Varaždin, Koprivnica, Bjelovar, Vukovar, Ilok, and others had several separate burial fields within the central, mostly Roman Catholic, cemetery. Those fields made up a military section (warrior section) where soldiers who died in hospitals from wounds or various diseases contracted on the battlefields were buried. Almost all places (districts) in Eastern Srem (Zemun, Šid, Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica, Irig, Sremski Karlovci, and Stara Pazova) had war cemeteries. In some of those places, there were several cemeteries where fallen soldiers were buried according to their religion (Orthodox-Roman Catholic-Jewish cemeteries). Those cemeteries had the largest number of fallen Austro-Hungarian soldiers, followed by Serbian soldiers and those of the Allied forces (AJ-69, Ministarstvo vera, Box. 114). Cemeteries with buried soldiers from both sides are found in all of these places due to the proximity of the battlefield on the Srem border with the Kingdom of Serbia. Not much is known about both

9 Report of the Provincial Government in Zagreb to the Ministry of Religion in Belgrade.
10 This is a territory covering entire Srijem, and excluding Istria, Dalmatia, Međimurje, and Baranja.



Fig. 1: Photo of the military cemetery in Bjelovar published in *Ilustrovani list*, Nr. 6., February 10, 1917, p.123.

cemeteries and monuments. The fragmented information found in documents is insufficient. It is, however, evident that war cemeteries and monuments were neglected and poorly maintained in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes /Yugoslavia. Whatever remained was greatly damaged, removed, or destroyed after 1945.¹¹ Namely, German, Ustashe, and Home Guards soldiers of the Second World War were buried in those military cemeteries. So, in the aftermath of the war, communists cleared out entire sections where the “enemies” of the state were buried while destroying First World War graves and monuments in the process (Geiger, Šola, Krznarić 2022). In places where First World War military cemeteries existed (Osijek, Vukovar, Slavon-ski Brod, Vinkovci, etc.), new buildings and entire settlements were built on top of it. As a result, the memory and sites of memory related to the First World War were gradually erased—both physically and mentally—from residents’ minds and city topography.

MEMORIALS HERITAGE CREATED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The idea related to memorials honouring war heroes was realised during the First World War. The Imperial and Royal Office for promoting crafts in Vienna (*Kunstverlag Schröll und Kopm*) published a catalogue entitled *Soldatengräber und Kriegsdenkmale* already in 1915. It was created in cooperation with 25 distinguished Austrian artists. Among

11 This was the case with the obelisk in the military section Varaždin city cemetery (Huzjan 2014: 166–67).

other things, this catalogue contains blueprints of memorials built with different materials, for individual and collective graves, with specific solutions for rural areas and cities, and for lowlands and hilly regions (*Soldatengräber und Kriegsdenkmale* 1915). During the same period, in 1916, the Austrian and German governments launched a travelling exhibition called *Kriegergrab und Kriegerdenkmal*. The exhibition displayed artistically designed graves on the battlefields, behind the front lines, and in military cemeteries in the homeland, as well as performances of minor homages and medals of honour for courage (Jezernik 2014: 332). This exhibition was covered by the Croatian press. The article “In Honour of Our Heroes” published in the Croatian newspaper *Ilustrovani list* states that every soldier should have “an honourable (...) grave, that is, a warrior’s headstone” (Anon. 1916e: 543–44). However, the year 1916 saw a public debate in military circles over memorials dedicated to fallen soldiers/heroes. Their solution was to raise classical memorials—a memorial post or plaque for each soldier on his native soil. There were also proposals to erect collective monuments in the centre of each municipality or village, with ornaments to preserve the memory of each fallen soldier from a particular place (Anon. 1916a:3; Herman Kaurić 2007: 195–96). However, public-civilian circles also considered such proposals, but they were against individual grave memorials since they lacked the financial means to construct them (Anon. 1916h: 3). Therefore, they came up with a different idea, redirecting their actions to support children—orphans of fallen soldiers—and raising funds through charity (Anon. 1916h: 3). However, most of the proposals were never seen through during the war, even though the official Land Cemetery and Grave Care Committee for the Territory of Croatia and Slavonia¹² was established in Croatia and Slavonia in May 1916 to manage the memorials’ construction (crosses and collective memorials); the committee ceased to exist in early 1917 before it even began with actual work. Namely, their sole function was to handle its correspondence with state authorities until the end of 1918 (Herman Kaurić: 2007: 196; Anon. 1916f: 3MKM-PKB-OVK). Thereby, the committee’s idea to construct a memorial dedicated to an unknown soldier, which was developed in cooperation with the secretary and Croatian architect Viktor Kovačić, was also never realised (Galović 2015: 82–93; Kiš 2014).

It is important to note that the Military Command office in Zagreb had an independent Department of Warrior Graves responsible

12 This committee was presided by Count Teodor Pejačević.

for the construction and maintenance of over 580 graves throughout Croatia and Slavonia (Herman Kaurić 2007: 196). Among many ideas on how to develop a military cemetery and how it should look, only the one in Karlovac's suburb of Dubovac (made according to H. Bollé's plans) was properly shaped as a military cemetery (Damjanović 2013, 469–73). Today, only the *Glorieta* and several headstones attest to its existence. The *Glorieta* project was financed by the Red Cross branch in Karlovac. The *Glorieta* monument was conceived as a massive arcade wall with the chapel of St. Georg. It was planned to install marble plaques with carved names of Karlovac citizens who were killed during the war in the niches. However, due to insufficiently collected financial means in changed political circumstances, this project was left unfinished and the plaques with names of fallen soldiers ended up in the parish church of the Most Holy Trinity in Karlovac (Damjanović 2013: 469–73; Herman Kaurić 2014: 9; Štakorec 2018: 13–6).

Although it is still unclear as to what extent Croatian authors followed plans from Austrian and German magazines to establish war memorials during the First World War,¹³ it is important to note that a number of the memorial plaques/markers did survive the test of time. Namely, they were placed individually in cities, towns, and villages to commemorate the soldiers who fell on the battlefields of the First World War. The following is a list of identified local cemeteries with monuments to fallen soldiers constructed during the First World War:

- the pyramid at the cemetery of St. James in Ogulin (1915)
- obelisk at the city cemetery of the Holy Spirit in Koprivnica (1916)
- *Glorieta* at the war cemetery in Karlovac - Dubovac (1916), and
- memorial plaque on the wall outside the cemetery in the village of Klarići near Drivenik (1917).

Several memorials were also placed in the following public spaces:

- a war memorial on the town square in front of the Franciscan Church in Varaždin (1915)
- a monument to Franz Josef I on the promenade in Novi Vinodolski (1916)
- a pavilion with a wooden soldier in the city park in Sisak (1916)
- a wooden sailor in the square in Sušak (1916)

13 This is still under researched scholarly subject in Croatian historiography.

- an obelisk in Hober Park in Korčula (1917)
- a monument to fallen Dalmatian soldiers at the Veprinac shrine near Makarska (1917)
- two war monuments were erected in Otočac: one in the form of a pyramid with a relief of Franz Josef I in the city park (1916) and the other in the city cemetery of St. Rock in Otočac (1917/1918)—both monuments were erected in honour of the fallen soldiers of Count Jelačić's Infantry Regiment No. 79 (Otočac).

Monuments erected as part of military hospitals or military complexes are identified in the following places:

- the king's monument at the Ivanovčani military camp near Bjelovar (1916)
- the king's monument at the home for military convalescents in Osijek (1916),
- and the obelisk at the military camp in Orahovica (1917).



Fig. 2: Ogulin, local cemetery of St. Jakov. Monument to fallen soldiers from the First World War who died in the hospital in Ogulin from illnesses or wounds received on the battlefields. The monument was erected at the local cemetery of St. Jakov in Ogulin at the end of 1915 according to the design of Stanko Bičanić (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 4.1.2019).

Even though one could not classify above mentioned memorials under the general category of classical monuments,¹⁴ they nonetheless, due to the inscriptions on them, all belong to the memorial heritage of the First World War (Anon 1916aa: 9; 1916i: 867; 1917a: 403–4; 1916j: 892; 1916k: 1009–10; 1915: 3; 1917b: 2; 1916g: 627; 1916b: 4; 1916c: 1; 1916d: 1; 1917c: 196; Urlić 2007: 115–17; Bjelovar 2014: 61–2; Čakširan, Valent 2018: 59–60; Barčot 2015: 247–50; Dobrovšak 2020: 410–12).¹⁵

MEMORIAL HERITAGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN CROATIA ERECTED IN THE KINGDOM OF SERBS, CROATS, AND SLOVENES / KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

Even though it was previously believed that the newly created political circumstances in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia were an obstacle to erecting memorials to soldiers who fell fighting on the Austro-Hungarian side, this is only partially true. Namely, certain memorials were removed from public spaces in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, because they were memorials dedicated either to the Emperor and King Franz Josef I or to the Austro-Hungarian state and Austro-Hungarian army. In addition, a part of the memorial heritage constructed in numerous settlements with the goal of collecting material assistance for fallen soldiers and their families was destroyed. As a result, numerous memorial lindens, shields, coats of arms, falcons, posts, statues, boats, and similar were removed from public spaces in towns and cities (Dobrovšak 2020: 405–6). One example of this destruction is the memorial boat on the Nova Obala in Zadar, which was made for hammering in nails and was not yet finished when it was destroyed during the city's unrest in November 1918 (Anon. 1918b: 662; *Veliki rat* 2014: 21; Škiljan 2014: 162).

War memorials continued to be erected in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), a country that united the “victors” (former citizens of Serbia

14 Because some of them fall into the category of crucifixes and memorial limes.

15 In addition to commemorating soldiers who fell in the First World War, most of these memorials had attributes related to Emperor and King Franz Josef I, and were thus mostly removed or destroyed later in 1918. Among those that survived, albeit in bad shape today, are those in Ogulin, Orahovica, Novi Vinodolski, and the Otočac town cemetery, while those in Korčula and Karlovac have been partially preserved (Dobrovšak 2020: 412).

and Montenegro) and the “vanquished” (former citizens of Austria-Hungary), though not with the same enthusiasm (Jezernik 2014: 335; 2018). Thus, memorials in Serbia in honour of fallen Serbian soldiers were raised with support from the state and veteran’s organisations, while those in other parts of the Kingdom rarely received such support (Šarenac 2014a; 2014b: 153–12; Lajbenšperger 2015b: 330–36; Todorović 1976). According to research, approximately 150 memorials to fallen “Slovenian heroes” were erected in Slovenia by the summer of 1926, and by 1935 there was no settlement in Slovenia without some form of marker (Jezernik 2018: 129–61; Hazler 2021: 41–86). In Croatia, this number was far lower.

It should be mentioned here that, following King Petar’s death, King Aleksandar I Karađorđević attempted to impose himself as the main political factor—his influence became obvious among the ranks of all major Serbian parties, with the Ministry of War reporting directly to the Crown. Even though Austro-Hungarian officers could have asked to join the Kingdom’s army, they were treated completely differently from Serbian officers. In Slovenia, which was never considered a part of Greater Serbia, the military authorities were much more restrained, and this was reflected in the greater number of memorials raised to Slovenians fallen in the First World War (Banac 1984: 141–48).

If we limit our view to attitudes towards Croatian officers in the Kingdom’s army, it comes as no surprise that only a few memorials were erected in Croatia by 1925. In addition, Croatia celebrated the millenary of the crowning of King Tomislav and the founding of the Croatian kingdom in 1925, so most efforts to raise memorials in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina instead focused on the millenary jubilee (Jareb 2017: 109–76, 191–207; Matković 1998: 271–80; Kolar-Dimitrijević 1998: 281–306).

There were also other, far more mundane reasons for the lack of efforts to raise memorials to those who fell fighting on the side of Austria-Hungary. Initiatives to raise memorials or put up memorial plaques were led by small groups of individuals, associations, and sometimes even lone individuals. City governments often failed to reach agreements regarding the raising of memorials, they lacked sufficient funds, the calls lasted too long, or there were bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining licenses. Smaller towns and villages usually lacked the funds for memorials, so they produced memorial plaques, printed photo panels, or raised crucifixes. In the settlements where no memorials or plaques were set up, family members inscribed the names of soldiers buried far from their homeland onto family tombs. Photos of fallen soldiers were also added to some tombs (Dobrovšak

2020, 407–8). In addition to this, the difficulties in raising larger memorials and plaques were further complicated by the provision that no memorial or memorial plaque could be placed anywhere in the country without the approval of the arts section of the Ministry of Education in Belgrade. As a result, in 1933, the Society of Brethren of the Croatian Dragon was forced to remove a high relief depicting King Tomislav that they had set up in Ozalj because they had done so without permission (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1998: 294). For this reason, memorials, memorial plaques, and crucifixes were mostly placed in cemeteries, around or inside parish churches. Most of these memorials survived until today but are for the most part neglected, damaged, and the local population does not know why they were raised.

The installation of memorials to fallen soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army began immediately after the end of the war in 1918. Thus, in 1918, a monument in the shape of a cannon shell was erected at the local cemetery in Dol on Hvar. The Croatian coat of arms was engraved on the top of the grenade, with the names of the fallen soldiers from Dol engraved in the middle. At the local cemetery in Pakrac (1920?), thanks to veteran L. Šnedorf, a monument in the shape of a grenade was erected, around which three plaques with a list of locals who died were installed. Since more than 400 Austro-Hungarian and foreign soldiers were buried in the military part of the cemetery in Varaždin, the city authorities decided to erect some kind of monument as a sign of memory for the buried soldiers. In the beginning, they planted a linden tree because they could not agree on the monument's appearance, but at the end of 1930, they erected a common monument for all the soldiers who died in the First World War. Finally, a monument was erected in the form of an obelisk with the symbols of a sword, a helmet, and a cross. After the Second World War, the new authorities removed the markers from individual military graves at the First World War military cemetery, and the monument was taken down and thrown into a landfill in the 1960s. Although there remains a field within the local cemetery in Varaždin that was a cemetery for those who fell in the First World War, the monument no longer exists. That it is a military cemetery is confirmed only by a large linden tree planted in the 1930s and a memorial plaque that reads "In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. City of Varaždin, 2018" (*Ljepota prolaznosti* 2007: 42–4; Huzjan 2014: 161–88; Težak 2014: 23; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62 Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

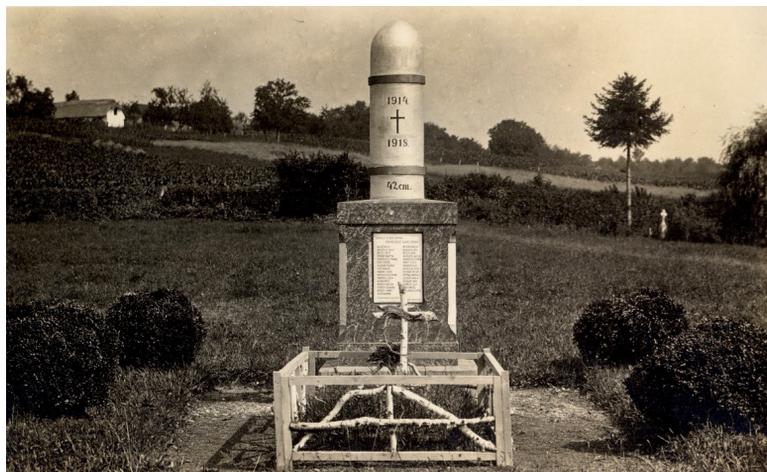


Fig. 3: Pakrac, local cemetery. The monument to fellow citizens who died in the First World War was erected at the Roman Catholic city cemetery in Pakrac. The monument was erected to his war comrades by Lujko Šnedorf (1882-1959) from Pakrac, probably in 1920. (Unknown author, photo from the archive by S. Njegovan Starek).

In Kalinovac, a monument in the form of an obelisk was erected in front of the parish church of St. Luke. The names of fallen residents were engraved on it, probably in 1919. In the courtyard of the Roman Catholic parish, the church of St. Luke in Orolik, a monument was erected around 1920 that looks like a burial chapel. Inside the chapel, there was a plaque with engraved names of the fallen residents. In the courtyard of the parish church of St. Barbara in Jakšić, a monument was erected in 1925, which, along with an inscription commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the Kingdom of Croatia, had a list of soldiers from the parish who died in the war. Similar action was also carried out in Samobor, where in 1934 the parishioners placed a statue of Mary in front of the parish church of St. Anastasia with the inscription “in memory of the victims of the First World War and in memory of 1000 years of the Croatian kingdom.” In front of the parish church of St. Anne in Slakovci near Novi Jankovci, the parishioners erected a memorial chapel in 1926 with a memorial plaque with engraved names of the locals. Next to the church in Gotalovo, a monument to the fallen locals was erected in 1927. A monument in the form of a crucifix with a memorial plaque containing the names of the fallen residents was erected at the main intersection in Ivanovčani, a suburb of Bjelovar (1922). A similar monument in the form of a crucifix was erected on the main road in Veliko Trojstvo near Bjelovar (1923). The crucifix was erected in the autumn of 1924 in the town of Šemovci (between Virje and Đurđevac) as a sign of memory

for the martyred locals by local resident S. Kolarević (Anon. 1922: 3–4; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

Several monuments were placed in parks and city squares. In 1925, a square-shaped stone monument was erected in the central park in Pleternica, inside which a marble slab with the carved names of the martyred residents was installed. Likewise, on the town square in Novigrad Podravski, the residents erected a monument in 1926 in the form of an obelisk with carved names of the fallen residents as well as the names of donors. In 1927, the inhabitants of the Podravina village of Gola erected a pillar-shaped monument in the centre of the village with the inscription “Fallen in the World War 1914–1918.” There are four plaques on the pillar with the names of the victims. In the town of Vrbanj on the island of Hvar, the parishioners erected a stone monument with the names of the fallen villagers in a forest near the chapel of St. Osib in 1928. One of the most important monuments to those who fell in the war was erected in the form of an obelisk as part of the city promenade in Čakovec in 1929. The city municipality erected it in 1929, but due to a conflict with the state authorities because not only with the names of the fallen soldiers but also those who survived the horrors of war were engraved on the monument, it was covered with tarpaulin until 1932 when it was ceremonially presented to the public. After the ceremony, it was found that monument was damaged because some individuals erased the names of the surviving locals with a knife. The monument was demolished after 1945, and the plaques with the names were placed in the city museum in Čakovec. At the initiative of Matica Hrvatska from Čakovec, the monument was re-installed in 1994 not far from the place where it had been erected in 1929 (Anon 1932: 3; Anon 1934: 3; Pavličević 2009:174–77; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Bunjac 2015: 215; Cik 2017; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

Memorial plaques with the names of the fallen soldiers were placed in the Franciscan monastery of Saints Philip and James in Vukovar in 1928, in the parish church of St. Anthony of Padua in Našice (1929), in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Karlovac (1930), and the parish church of St. Martin in Varaždinske Toplice (1933). Two plaques to the fallen in the First World War were placed in the bell tower of the parish church of St. John the Baptist in Koprivnički Ivanac. The plaques were installed by parish priest F. Brdarić, but it is unknown when exactly. Memorial plaques with the names of fallen and missing parishioners were mainly placed by parishioners and relatives from their towns, while in Varaždinske Toplice, plaques were placed

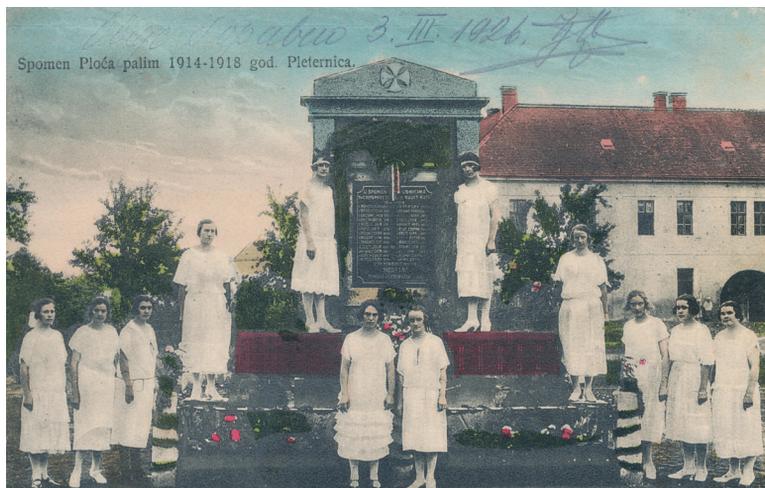


Fig. 4: Pleternica, memorial plaque for the fallen (soldiers) 1914-1918, from the private collection of B. Jezernik.



Fig. 5: Našice, A memorial plaque with a list of fallen citizens in WWI of Našice was placed in 1929 in the parish church of St. Anthony of Padua in Našice (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.6.2022).

by the Croatian cultural society “Napredak” (Kranjčev 2015: 57–69; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

The example of the monument in Daruvar is interesting, because it is one of the rare monuments in Croatia that was not erected to the fallen in the Austro-Hungarian army, but by the fallen in the Serbian army and volunteers. It was erected by a Sub-Committee of the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors from Daruvar, supposedly

in 1930 in the park of the spa resort in Daruvar, and the plaque read “Fallen fighters for the freedom and unification of our people.” It was damaged during the Bannate of Croatia and removed during the Independent State of Croatia (Jakčin Ivančić 2002: 92).

For some monuments, neither the circumstances nor the year when they were erected are known, such as the votive chapel in Ciglenica near Popovača, the pyramid at the local cemetery in Kijevo, the monument to fallen soldiers at the local cemetery in Belišće, the crucifix on the promenade towards Kastav, and the monument at the local cemetery Viškovo near Rijeka. The monument placed on the ossuary of soldiers fallen in the First World War at the Kozala Cemetery in Rijeka is also valuable, but there is not much information about it either (Kovačić 2008: 120; Talijani 2012: 38; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

All of these memorials were dedicated to all victims regardless of their nationality or religion. However, there are examples to the contrary. These include the memorials erected to fallen Germans in Jarmina (1922), Breznica Našička (1925), and Krndija (1926), to Hungarians in Kopačevo (?), Novi Bezdán (1935), and Lug (?), and Jews in Slavonski Brod (1919?), Zagreb (1930), Koprivnica (1934), and Križevci (1935) (Dobrovšak 2017b: 439–61; Dobrovšak 2020: 413). Here we can include memorials to fallen soldiers of the Allied armies who died in civilian and military hospitals in Croatia. There are several of these, mostly in city cemeteries. For example, the Zagreb city cemetery contains two such memorials, one to fallen French soldiers and the other to Italians (Kukić 2015: 123–25). The circumstances



Fig. 6: Kopačevo, Baranja, Monument to fallen Hungarian soldiers during the First World War from the village of Kopačevo. The monument is in Ribarska street next to the local church. The year the monument was erected is not known (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.05.2020).



Fig. 7: Jarmina, Monument to the fallen residents of German nationality from Jarmina. The monument was erected in 1922 in the courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Wendelin (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.6.2021).

under which these were erected remain unknown. Memorials and ossuaries for fallen Italians were built at local cemeteries in Zadar (1937 to 1939), Pula, and Rijeka (*Sacri* 2005: 103–7). A memorial plaque to Serbian soldiers was put up at the Split waterfront, on the sidewall of today's St Peter's Quay.

MONUMENTAL MEMORIALS

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the most significant effort to commemorate the soldiers who fell in the First World War was linked to the raising of the Memorial to the Unknown Hero on Avala Hill and another memorial in Mirogoj, Zagreb's main cemetery. The first memorial was built between 1934 and 1938 by famous Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović and was supposed to be dedicated to all victims of the First World War, but the years inscribed in it (1912–1918) show that it also dedicated to victims of the Balkan Wars (Ignjatović 2006: 229; 2010: 624–51). The second memorial was the one in Zagreb, erected in the Mirogoj Cemetery. Around 3,700 soldiers were buried there during the war and in the first months of 1919, including those who died in numerous civilian and military hospitals and Red Cross hospitals in Zagreb. According to the cemetery statute of 1878, the 3rd class graves, in which most of the soldiers were buried, had to be dug up after 15 years, with the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors,

Zagreb Sub-Committee taking charge of the effort. The initiative to raise a collective tomb, exhume, and transfer the mortal remains of soldiers buried in Mirogoj was launched by the Zagreb City Government in 1927. The construction of the ossuary was financed wholly through the Mirogoj Foundation, owned and administered by the city authorities. However, nothing was done until 1931 due to the administrative inertia of the city and state apparatus. The ossuary, whose construction was launched in 1931 but prolonged for a whole decade due to a lack of funding and poor organisation, is the work of Zagreb architect Ante Grgić, while the *Pieta* monument was made by Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj, who later became very famous painters and sculptors. The lower part of the ossuary was completed in 1934, the same year when the exhumation was performed. The ossuary is divided into several chambers and is a secondary tomb of the fallen soldiers. It contains the remains of around 3,300 soldiers of various national, religious, and military affiliations, including over 1,000 Croats, 450 Hungarians, 330 Serbian prisoners-of-war, over 150 soldiers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, 110 from Austria, and a smaller number of Slovenes, Montenegrins, and others. The tomb was built in 1939. Due to a lack of funds, the city budget did not consider the upper part of the tomb, i.e., erecting a memorial, until 1938. Following a new call for the memorial in 1938, after numerous financial and judicial dilemmas, the memorial *Pieta* by sculptors Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj was selected, and finally put up in March 1940, when the tomb was officially presented to the public (Kukić 2015: 123–25).

Here we should also mention the construction of the Gučevo memorial ossuary where Austro-Hungarian and Serbian soldiers who died during the Battle of Gučevo on the Drina in 1914 were buried. Austrians were the first that started to build a monument on that site in 1917, but they did not finish it until the end of the war. In 1926, the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors in Belgrade decided to finish the monument and make it look more Serbian. This was done by placing on it the Serbian coats of arms, the eagle, and other symbols. Gojko Tadić implemented the project, while the sculptures are the works of Milorad Jovanović. Most of the money for the monument and the ossuary was granted by the state, while a minor part was contributed by the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors and other donors. It was rearranged between 1927 and 1929 and opened on the Transfiguration feast (August 19) in 1930. In front of the monument, there is an ossuary with more than 3,500 remains of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers. Most of them were first buried in mountain Gučevo, while a minor part was buried in the nearby

valley (Lajbenšperger 2015: 507–14). Although this is not the only ossuary in Serbia where the remains of Austro-Hungarian and Serbian soldiers rest together, it is significant because among those buried are the remains of the 52nd Zagreb regiment, brought from the park in Bukovička Banja near Arandjelovac.

Immediately after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, the culture of memory regarding the First World War and those who perished in it gained a prominent place on the Croatian public scene. The Croatian regime began to create a cult of the Croatian warrior, and as a result, drew from the heritage of the First World War (Gabelica 2022: 241–67; Anon.1941: 6–7; Delić-Dubički 1942: 9) and began to commemorate its victims (Anon 1941: 8; 1941b: 9). However, as the war went on, the First World War heritage began to fade, and the cult of the Croatian warrior, hero, and martyr of the Second World War arose; commemoration of fallen warriors from the First World War was halted in 1942. Several memorials to the First World War victims were erected during the Independent State of Croatia. Two in the town cemetery of Nova Gradiška (1942) and Zastrazišće on the island of Hvar (1941) survived the war, while a third, in Drnje (1942), was demolished by the Partisans in 1945 because they associated it with the Ustasha regime. It is unknown who was responsible for raising the memorials on Hvar and in Drnje, while the inscription on the memorial in Nova Gradiška attributes it to the Association of Decorated Warrior Croats of 1914–1918, founded after the Independent State of Croatia was established (Dobrovšak 2020: 413–14; Gabelica 2022; Archive of the author).

No further memorials were raised after the Second World War; in fact, some of them were transformed into memorials to fallen People's Liberation Struggle fighters (Dobrovšak 2020, 414; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević, 2015: 41–62). This situation persisted until recently, when initiatives within the frame of the First World War centenary commemorations appeared in some settlements, including Zagreb, intending to put up plaques in memory of soldiers who perished in the conflict. Over the last several years, old memorials were restored and new ones erected. The memorial in Čakovec that was removed in 1945 was restored and returned in 1994 but placed in a new location. The memorial at the Mirogoj Cemetery was restored in 2014. The Croatian Officers' Choir of the Istria Municipality set up a plaque to Croatian sailors and soldiers in the naval cemetery in Pula in 2015. Collective memorials to victims of multiple wars were put up in some settlements, such as Prelog, Presečno near Varaždin (2014), and Donja Voća near Varaždin,



Fig. 8: Donja Voća, local cemetery. Monument to the missing and dead soldiers and residents of the municipality of Donja Voća and the parish of Martijanac who died in the wars fought during the 20th century. The monument was erected in 2009 and is located at the entrance to the local cemetery Donja Voća (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 27.9.2018) .

while new memorial plaques to First World War soldiers were put up in Karlovac (2013), Pula (2014), Zagreb (2015), and Dugo Selo (2015) (Dobrovšak, 2020, 414–15; Archive of the author).

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia does exist. However, due to historical circumstances and states that did not commemorate the fallen First World War soldiers, these sites of memory disappeared from collective memory. Although the official authorities in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/ Yugoslavia did not prohibit the raising of memorials to First World War victims who had fought on the “enemy side,” they did not support it either, and so memorials were not built in adequate numbers, unlike in Slovenia and Serbia. One of the reasons for not commemorating those who fell in the war is related to the fact that most towns and cities did not have sufficient funds for building such memorials after the First World War. Furthermore, the Yugoslav state encouraged the erection of memorials dedicated to individuals or events that had contributed to its unitary ideology, such as those dedicated to King Petar

I and Aleksandar as well as those honouring King Tomislav during the millenary of the Croatian kingdom. Despite all of these aggravating circumstances, memorials and memorial plaques to all Croatian citizens-soldiers who fell serving in the Austro-Hungarian army were put up during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, mostly next to churches and in local cemeteries. These efforts were mostly initiated by various associations such as Croatian Women (but not veterans' associations), local authorities, or the families of fallen soldiers, and only rarely by city administrations and state institutions. Furthermore, Austro-Hungarian First World War cemeteries were not removed and were sometimes maintained. Neglect and destruction of graves, military cemeteries, and memorials from the First World War were commonplace after 1945 and the Second World War, when some of the memorials were transformed into memorials dedicated to fallen fighters of the People's Liberation Struggle. Memorials were ruined simply due to the passage of time, as wooden crosses rotted away, while families forgot about them or moved to other regions, leaving nobody to care about them. Some iron crosses and plaques survived, but time has completely erased the inscriptions on them.

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Public Memorials and Monuments from the First World War Period in Zagreb: Lost Signs of the Great War

MARKO VUKIČEVIĆ

INTRODUCTION

Research into the monuments erected in the public spaces of Zagreb in the period from 1914 to 1918 in contemporary Croatian historiography began in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The first research on this topic was conducted by Vijoleta Herman Kaurić in her doctoral thesis in 2007 (Herman Kaurić 2007). In 2014, the same author published a text about a monument typical of the First World War period in the territory of Austria-Hungary, the Memorial Linden Tree (Herman Kaurić 2014). The following year, in the exhibition catalogue *Odjeci s bojišnice (Echoes from the Battlefield)*, a text about the military part of the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb was published by Boris Kukić (Kukić 2015a). A large number of papers were published in 2020. In that year, a conference volume was released in which Lj. Dobrovšak published a paper on the monuments to Franz Josef I erected in Croatia (Dobrovšak 2020b),

and B. Kukić published a paper on the planning of the monument to Franz Josef I in Zagreb (Kukić 2020). Furthermore, in the same year, the conference volume *Konac Velikog rata (The End of the Great War)* was released, in which Lj. Dobrovšak presented a paper on military cemeteries (Dobrovšak 2020a), and Filip Hameršak published an article on the legal framework for the upkeep of military cemeteries from the First World War period (Hameršak 2020). In the same year, a monograph by M. Vukičević was published, in which, among other topics, the author researched the Zagreb Memorial Linden Tree (Vukičević 2020).

Research for this paper was conducted on unpublished archival sources, published sources, contemporaneous press, and relevant literature. It should be noted that the local self-administration, specifically the Zagreb City Government and the Archdiocese of Zagreb, produced what little archival material on the erected and planned monuments in Zagreb there was. Certain data can be found in published sources, for example, *Izveštaj gradskog poglavarstva (Zagreb City Government Report) (Zagreb 1929)*, and the majority of information can be found in the contemporaneous press, the newspapers *Jutarnji list* and *Narodne novine*, as well as the magazines *Dom i svijet*, *Ilustrovani list*, and *Ilustrovane novosti*.

During this research, general issues regarding the styles, types, and typology of monuments arose and were addressed by art historians (Damjanović 2013; Alujević 2013: 39-50). Based on their design, D. Damjanović divides public monuments into architectural, sculptural-architectural, and “monuments dominated by sculpture” (Damjanović 2013: 589), while those placed with the purpose of a tombstone are called “tombstone plastic” (Premierl 1987: 57). Stylistically, the monuments erected in Zagreb during the First World War are typical of the era: they belong to realism¹ or they contain antique motifs of mourning figures common to Croatian modernism (Alujević 2013: 39).

MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS ERECTED IN ZAGREB

Commemorative war memorials were the most commonly erected memorials in Austria-Hungary during the First World War (Kronenberg 2021: 78-295).² The aforementioned process affected the Croa-

1 For example, the eagle sculpture by K. Sterner placed in 1915 at the Mirogoj cemetery, Field 48, Class II/I, grave no. 30, which will be discussed later in the paper.

2 On the mentioned pages, the author provides a list of war monuments erected in cities of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

tian lands and Zagreb (Dobrovšak 2020a: 404–6) as their political, economic, and cultural centre. During the First World War, dedicated monuments with a wooden base into which nails were hammered were erected on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, thus on the territory of Croatian lands and Germany. Such monuments are called *Nagelfigur/Nagelobjekt* (Kronenberg 2021: 34) in German and have been researched in Austrian and German historiography (see more: Kronenberg 2021; Schneider 1999: 32–62). In Austrian historiography, a type of monument or sculpture whose wooden base is studded with nails is called *Nagelfigur* (Kronenberg 2021: 34) or *Nagelobjekt* (Kronenberg 2021: 54). During World War, the concept of such a monument spread “epidemicallly” from the Austrian part of the Monarchy across the entire territory of Austria-Hungary and Germany (Kronenberg 2021: 5).

In Croatian historiography, Herman Kaurić (Herman Kaurić 2007: 300–7; 2014: 44) and Marko Vukičević (2020: 172–4) wrote about the Memorial Linden Tree in Zagreb. The Zagreb Memorial Linden Tree, erected on Ban Jelačić Square (Zagreb’s central Square) at the beginning of May 1915, can be viewed from several angles; primarily as a charity event, or as a “dedicated” war monument. Furthermore, it can be viewed as a sculpture and, from a modern standpoint, as a form of artistic expression as the citizens unconsciously shaped it by hammering nails into the trunk over a long period. As a result, the final appearance of the structure was never determined, and the surface of the trunk’s final appearance of was created as a sequence of constant changes.

In the city of Zagreb, a certain number of monuments and memorials were placed in public spaces and barracks. From 1914 to 1918, the largest number of monuments, or rather tombstones, were erected in the central city cemetery, Mirogoj.

TOMBSTONES AND SCULPTURES ERECTED IN THE MILITARY PART OF MIROGOJ CEMETERY FROM 1914 AND DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

During the second half of August 1914, the first wounded soldiers were sent to Zagreb for recovery in military, auxiliary military, and civilian hospitals (see Herman Kaurić 2007: 128–45; Kukić 2015b: 114–22; Kukić 2018: 719–22). Even then, it was noticed that a certain number of these soldiers would die within the city area, and so the idea of forming a military part of the cemetery Mirogoj emerged. That

idea was presented to Mayor Janko Holjac (Source 1) who accepted it (Source 2). With this decision, a military part of the cemetery was formed in Mirogoj, which the wartime press called the “Field of Fallen Heroes” (*Jutarnji list*, October 30, 1914: 5). According to the categorisation of grave sites, soldiers buried during World the First at Mirogoj were laid in 3rd class graves (Kukić 2015a: 123).

Given that the central city cemetery, Mirogoj, has been under the sole ownership and jurisdiction of the city government since its foundation (Kosić 1974: 16), all decisions important for the functioning of the cemetery were made by city government institutions, namely the City Council (Milković 2020: 236) and the mayor (*Jutarnji list*, October 30, 1914: 5). The decisions had to be made in accordance with the basic regulation, the statute (Milković 2020: 235). The City Council accepted the new cemetery statute in 1914 (*III. Zapisnik* 1914, 17). According to the statute, regarding the use of 3rd class graves, the administration of Mirogoj ceded it for a period of 10 or 15 years. Each grave was marked with a number and a wooden cross. However, it was also later permitted to place tombstones made of more durable materials, stone or metal (Source 3). It should be mentioned that along with the fallen members of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces prisoners of war, members of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies and *comitadjis* were also buried in the military part of Mirogoj (*Jutarnji list*, March 3, 1915: 5).

The great concern expressed by the city government for the arrangement of soldiers’ graves was especially evident on All Saints’ Day. On the first war holiday, after the agreement of the city government and the cemetery administration, all soldiers’ graves were decorated with chrysanthemums, wreaths, and candles (*Jutarnji list*, October 28, 1914: 6). At the same time, Mayor Holjac ordered the city authorities to place a central cross on the “Field of Fallen Heroes” (*Jutarnji list*, October 30, 1914: 5). (fig. 1) The wooden cross was called a “mourning attraction” (*Ilustrovani list*, November 7, 1914: 1064) and, beginning on All Saints’ Day in 1914, it became the central place in Zagreb for honouring and commemorating those who died in the war. Citizens laid flowers, wreaths, and candles (*Ilustrovani list*, November 7, 1914: 1064), while the delegations of the land, city, military, and church authorities acknowledged the central cross in the military part of Mirogoj as the official site of commemoration. Throughout the war, delegations laid wreaths there, accompanied by military music (*Jutarnji list*, October 30, 1915: 5; November 3, 1915: 4; November 1, 1916: 5).

Today, it is not known whether the cross was intended as a permanent place for holding commemorations and expressions of respect to those who died in the war, or whether it was supposed to serve that



Fig. 1: “Zajedničko groblje preminulih ranjenika iz sadašnjeg rata na središnjem skupnom groblju na Mirogoju u Zagrebu. Okićeni grobovi na dan Svih Svetih” [“Collective cemetery of deceased wounded from the current war at the central cemetery on Mirogoj in Zagreb. Decorated graves on All Saints Day”], *Dom i svijet*, December 1, 1914, 448.

purpose for a while and then be replaced by a permanent monument made of non-perishable material.

According to the statute, each grave, shaped like a mound, was marked with a wooden religious symbol (Kukić 2015a: 123), on which the name of the deceased person was written in oil paint (*Jutarnji list*, November 16, 1914: 5), and later engraved on an oval-shaped metal plate (Kukić 2015a: 123). As previously mentioned, the statute allowed for the arrangement of the grave area and the placement of tombstones made of more durable materials (Source 4). According to F. Šimetin Šegvić in Zagreb, in the culture of death of the second half of the 19th century, “an old motif with a changed content attracted [...] even more [...] art and culture” (Šimetin Šegvić 2015: 304), and the arrangement of an unknown number of soldiers’ graves can be observed through this lens today. Namely, better-off families of soldiers were able to buy tombstones and replace the traditional, and one might say generic, wooden markers with individualised tombstone sculptures and decorations. A photo published in *Ilustrovani list* in 1917 testifies to this today. (fig. 2)

Of the three sculptures in Mirogoj shown in a photograph from 1917 (*Ilustrovani list*, September 1, 1917, 724), today there are two

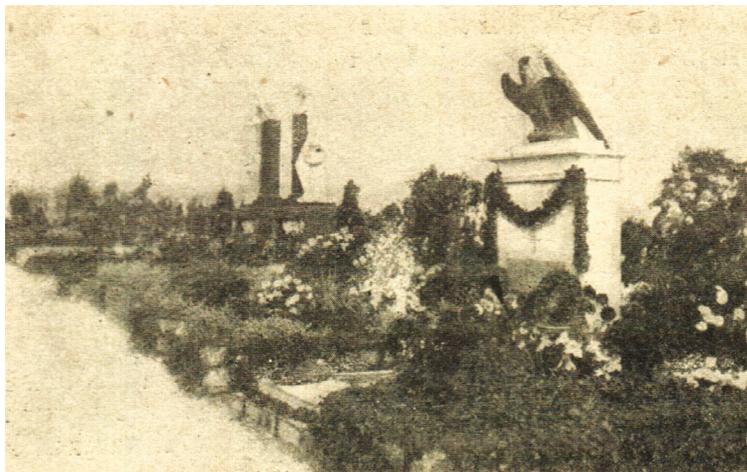


Fig. 2: “Vojničko groblje na Mirogoju u Zagrebu” [“Military cemetery on Mirogoj in Zagreb”], *Ilustrovani list*, September 1, 1917, 724.

in field no. 48. The sculpture of a mourning female figure, an antique motif typical for Croatian modern art (Alujević 2013: 40–1), leaning on a pillar with one hand and holding a wreath in the other is a representative piece. It is made of cast stone and is considered to be the work of an unknown author (Source 5), (fig. 3). An issue of *Ilustrovani list* from 1915 includes a photo and an accompanying text identifying the author as stonemason Miroslav König from Zagreb (*Ilustrovani list*, December 25, 1915: 1227). That sculpture had a counterpart on the right side that was removed, as can be seen in fig. 2.

The second is a sculpture of an open-winged eagle by K. [Karl?] Sterner, made in 1915 (fig. 4).³ The eagle motif was often used in Austria and had different interpretations; it symbolised royal power (Diem 1995: 45–6), or it could be viewed as a symbol of resurrection (Grgić 1979: 440).

The “Field of Fallen Heroes” was a part of the cemetery and, according to the statute, it belonged to the city municipality. However, in 1917, there was a change of ownership. The command of XIII Zagreb Corps submitted a request to the City Council in June 1917 to “forever” acquire ownership over the military part of Mirogoj, which the City Council accepted (*I. Zapisnik* 1918: 10–1).

After the war, as agreed upon by the city authorities and the Commission for Education and Religion for Croatia and Slavonia,

³ The signature of K. Sterner and the year of production are engraved on the back left part of the sculpture (author’s observation).



Fig. 3: Miroslav König, Mournful Female Figure, tombstone erected to Milan Glavaški, c. 1915, Mirogoj, field no. 48, class II/I, grave no. 26. Photo: M. Vukičević.



Fig. 4: K. Sterner, Eagle, 1915., tombstone erected to Max Wenke, Mirogoj, field no. 48, class II/I, grave no. 30. Photo: M. Vukičević.

the ownership of the military part of Mirogoj was returned to the city administration in 1921. According to the agreement, the city was supposed to maintain a total of 3,399 military graves (*Zagreb* 1929: 22). In the post-war period, on All Saints' Day, the "Croatian Woman" society arranged military graves on All Souls' Day (Kukić 2015a: 123). At the same time, "until the state builds the planned worthy mausoleum," the city administration continued the tradition of holding

commemorations for those who died in the war by laying wreaths at the wooden cross (*Zagreb* 1929: 26). The protocol, the commemoration of the dead, established as a tradition during the war, was preserved during the 1920s and 1930s. The difference is visible in the fact that care for the military part of Mirogoj was “divided” between several entities: the city administration and citizens’ associations, which most likely did not act in accordance with a common agreement and instead oriented their initiatives towards the Feast of All Saints and All Souls’ Day. Thus, even after 1918, the central cross retained its purpose as a place of commemoration, as determined during the war, and the “Field of Fallen Heroes” retained its appearance over the same period.

According to the regulation adopted in 1920 and the law adopted in 1922 by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the state was responsible for the maintainance of military cemeteries. Therefore, in order to facilitate the maintainance of military cemeteries all soldiers buried in “smaller” cemeteries had to be exhumed and transported to ossuaries (Hameršak 2020: 383–86). Based on legal provisions and due to the fact that the 15-year period for the use of 3rd class graves expired, the exhumation of the remains and the construction of the ossuary on Mirogoj was organised by the city government already in 1927 (Dobrovšak 2020a: 408). However, exhumations of military graves did not begin before 1934, and the remains were transferred to a common ossuary, where the *Pietà* monument by sculptors Vanja Radauš and Joža Turkalj was placed in 1940 (Kukić 2015a: 123–24), which demonstrates that reverence for the dead continued even more than 20 years after the end of the war. In the Jewish part of the cemetery, field no. 4, there is an obelisk erected in 1930 by *Chevra kadisha* (Kukić 2015a: 124). It is the only place where the original appearance of the First World War military section of Mirogoj cemetery has been preserved to a large extent.

MEMORIAL LINDEN TREE

The first wooden, and iron, monument of this kind erected was *Wehrmann in Eisen*, a three-metre-tall sculpture of a knight, the work of Prof. Josef Müllner and his students. It was ceremonially unveiled on March 6, 1915, at Schwarzenbergplatz in Vienna (Kronenberg 2021: 269), which marked the beginning of the installation of similar monuments throughout the Dual Monarchy (Kronenberg 2021: 5). The wooden monument, where donations were collected through the sales of nails that were then hammered into it, was a “symbol of mutual

obligation” and “at the same time a symbolic unity of the civilians at home with troops on the front” (Schneider 1999: 34). During the First World War, the wooden bases of monuments or sculptures were built in a variety of forms, including shields, knights, crosses, coats of arms (Kronenberg 2021: 34–296).

Members of the Zagreb Women’s War Relief Committee came up with the idea of erecting a “Memorial Column” in Zagreb after they heard about the erection of a similar monument in Vienna. According to the original plan from February 1915, the monument was supposed to be placed near the Vocational School, where the auxiliary military hospital was located. The linden trunk was supposed to be used to collect funds for the widows and children of fallen soldiers (Herman Kaurić 2007: 300–1; Vukičević 2020; 172–74), but it also had a secondary purpose:

A memorial to the fateful war year 1914/1915, where the sons of the devoted Croatian people spilled blood for the king and home. Where there are now Red Cross hospitals and reserve hospitals, in that place of immense pain and heroic sacrifice, let the iron sign be raised to eternal memory [sic!] (...) let the trunk of our Croatian linden tree be studded with nails ... (*Jutarnji list*, February 21, 1915: 4)

The initiative, with minor adjustments to the original idea, was eventually carried out under the auspices of *Ban* Ivan Škrlec Lomnički. The commemorative pavilion and the Memorial Linden Tree trunk were put up under the leadership of Gustav Baldauf. The tree was donated by a member of the Zagreb committee, Mrs Marija Bučar, while the nails for the charity event were donated by Franjo Sollar’s company (Herman Kaurić 2007: 301).

Attaching great importance to the Memorial Linden Tree as a charity symbol can be seen from the notification of *Ban* Škrlec to the Mayor of Zagreb, Holjac, about the ceremonial presentation, or “consecration,” of the Memorial Linden Tree, with instructions to inform city officials and employees (Source 6). The mayor, accordingly, sent to all 50 city councillors and 100 city officials a letter about the presentation of the Memorial Linden Tree “in the presence of worthies and dignitaries” and invited them to attend dressed in top hats (Source 7). In addition to enlarging the event, the presence of a large number of well-known and distinguished persons from the political and social scene was supposed to encourage as many citizens as possible to purchase nails.

The Memorial Linden Tree was officially presented on May 2, 1915. The ceremony was attended by members of the Zagreb Women’s War Relief Committee, *Ban* Škrlec and representatives of the royal

land government, and members of the Veterans' Society. The ceremony was enhanced by the music of the 25th Zagreb Home Guard Regiment and the singing associations *Kolo*, *Sloboda*, and *Sloga*. The Memorial Linden Tree Pavilion was painted white and decorated according to the pattern typical of humanitarian actions from that period, with the Croatian "national colours" (Herman Kaurić 2010: 66), i.e. red-white-blue tricolours (Herman Kaurić 2007a: 301–2), and photos show that the upper part of the facade was decorated with a Croatian chequy motif (*Ilustrovani list*, May 8, 1915: 435; *Ilustrovani list*, May 15, 1915: 462). The unveiling ceremonies of monuments and memorials during the First World War "were solemn and dignified" and attended by distinguished persons from "political, religious, cultural, and social circles" (Dobrovšak 2020b: 245), which can be seen in the unveiling ceremony of the Zagreb Memorial Linden Tree. In the Austrian part of the Monarchy, the unveiling ceremony of dedicated wooden monuments was mandatory (Kronenberg 2021: 36–7), which we also see in the description of the unveiling ceremony of the Zagreb Memorial Linden Tree.

In the second half of 1915, public interest in the charity event, and hence in the Memorial Linden Tree as an object, began to decline. As a result, the area surrounding the pavilion was neglected, and the last time the Memorial Linden Tree with its landscaped and decorated environment were mentioned was during the visit of Archduke Leopold Salvator to Zagreb in October and November 1916 (Herman Kaurić 2007: 305–7). In July 1918, as a result of accumulated garbage in a flower pot placed next to the pavilion, a fire broke out, engulfing the facade and interior of the building; however, the flames were prevented from further spreading thanks to the quick reaction of a citizen. Other citizens simply observed the event (*Jutarnji list*, July 12, 1918: 5), which shows the extent to which the Memorial Linden Tree had lost its meaning. Despite the intention of creating a "sign for eternal remembrance" (*Jutarnji list*, February 21, 1915: 4), by the end of 1918 the Memorial Linden Tree had completely lost all the intended and created symbolism, as confirmed by journalist and writer Josip Horvat's record. Horvat sarcastically wrote that in 1918, "No one except dogs notices the Memorial Linden Tree," noting that the pavilion on the central square and the barracks in Ciglanina were "the only construction additions to Zagreb during the war years" (Horvat 1984: 121). The Memorial Linden Tree Pavilion was "suddenly" removed from Ban Jelačić Square at the beginning of December 1918 (Vukičević 2022: 174).

ERECTED AND PLANNED MONUMENTS AND BUSTS OF FRANZ JOSEF I DURING THE WAR

The monument, sculpture, and two busts of Emperor and King Franz Josef I were erected in Zagreb in August 1916. The ruler's sculpture was erected at the Ciglana, a large complex of barracks built during the First World War, where the department of the Orthopaedic Institute for physical rehabilitation and education of disabled soldiers was located (Herman Kaurić 2007: 176–80; Špišić 1917: 7), while the two busts were erected within the circle of the Home Guard artillery barracks. The mentioned monuments were placed inside a space that was inaccessible to the public. At the end of 1916, the ruler died, and the next year an initiative was launched to erect his monument in Zagreb.

Inside the Ciglana complex, “in the middle of the barracks,” a monument was unveiled, a statue of Emperor and King Franz Josef I. The life-size sculpture was erected at the initiative of the school's director, Dr Božidar Špišić, Count Miroslav Kulmer, and Captain V. Heinzl “in memory of the establishment of the orthopaedic hospital and schools for the disabled” (*Narodne novine*, August 12, 1916: 3). The monument was officially unveiled on August 15, 1916. The ceremony was attended by commanders of the 13th Zagreb Corps, 6th Home Guard District, representatives of the royal land government and parliament, the city government, the Archdiocese of Zagreb, and numerous dignitaries from public life. The ceremony began with a music performance by the Imperial and Royal 53rd Zagreb Infantry Regiment and, after Count Kulmer's speech, Ban Škrlec unveiled the monument (*Narodne novine*, August 16, 1916: 4). On the same day, an exhibition of works created by disabled soldiers attending the school was opened, which could later be viewed by citizens (*Narodne novine*, August 12, 1916: 3). Citizens were excluded from the monument unveiling ceremony, but the announcement of the ceremony in the contemporaneous daily press was intended to encourage them to visit the monument later, after the exhibition.

The area surrounding the monument was decorated with flowers. The initials of the emperor and the king, the Croatian coat of arms, and motifs of decorations for bravery with the years 1914–1916 were made using floral decorations (*Narodne novine*, August 12, 1916: 3).

A “life-sized” monument to Franz Josef I “in a robe” “was made of artificial stone” (*Narodne novine*, August 16, 1916: 4) (fig. 5) [...] by the graduate of our art school, sculptor Mr Josip Turkalj, who is

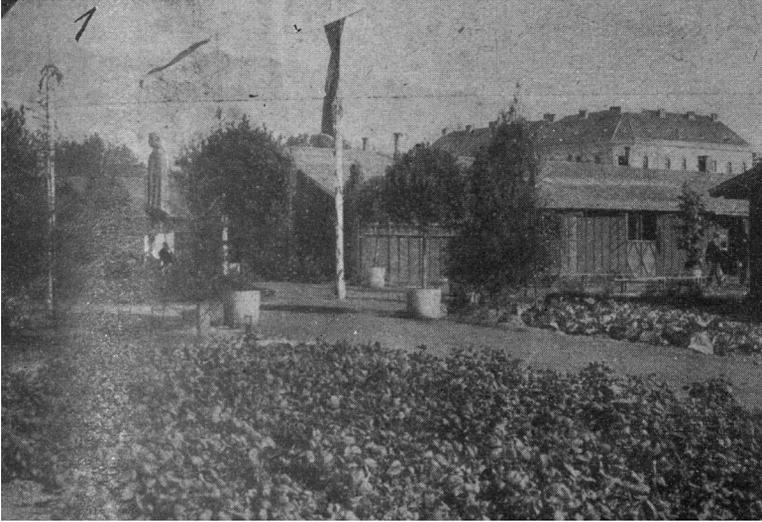


Fig. 5: “Otkriće kraljevog spomenika u ortopedičkoj bolnici: 1. Nasadi pred barakama sa otkrivenim spomenikom Njeg. Veličanstva [...]” [“Unveiling of the king’s monument in the orthopedic hospital: 1. Plantations in front of the barracks with the unveiled monument of His Majesty. [...]”], *Ilustrovani list*, August 26, 1916: 819.

now employed as a soldier in an orthopaedic workshop for the production of plaster models” (*Narodne novine*, August 12, 1916: 3). The sculpture of Franz Josef I was the first public sculpture made by Josip (Joz) Turkalj during the war and, so far, it has not been included in his oeuvre.

Apart from the articles published in *Narodne novine* and one photo published in *Ilustrovani list*, there is no more information about the sculpture after 1916. Interestingly, the statue was not mentioned in B. Špišić’s monograph *Kako pomažemo našim invalidima* (*How We Help Our Invalids*) published in 1917. The exact year the monument was removed from Ciglana after the war is also unknown, though it can be assumed around 1918.

In 1916, after the death of the emperor and the king, the Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*) launched an initiative to erect a monument to Franz Josef I, which proposed to erect a large number of monuments to the deceased ruler in the cities of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia, including Zagreb (Kukić 2020: 278–79).

According to an earlier project by architect Viktor Kovačić, the Zagreb monument was supposed to be placed on what is now King Tomislav Square (Kukić 2020: 278). The legal basis for erecting the monument was voted on in the Croatian Parliament at the end of January 1917, and in February of the same year, Emperor and King Charles

IV signed the law (Kukić 2020: 281–82). After the law entered into force, Ban Škrlec formed a National Committee for the erection of a monument to the late King Franz Josef I. Pursuant to the law, Ban Škrlec informed the lower instance, the Zagreb city government and, in May 1917, the mayor formed the City Committee for the Erection of a Monument to the Late King Franz Josef I (Kukić 2020: 286–91). Organisationally, in order to collect funds faster, the area of the city of Zagreb was divided “into 12 collection districts,” where the female members of the Committee began collecting voluntary contributions during June 1917 (Kukić 2020: 295–98). After the end of the war in 1918, as expected, the collection of funds for the monument was halted, and by the decision of the City Council in June 1919, all the money collected until then was redirected to other purposes (Kukić 2020: 299–302). The creation and installation of the monument were planned in memory of the ruler and, therefore, apart from the wartime context, it should not be interpreted exclusively as a war monument.

In mid-1915, the command of the 6th Home Guard District established an auxiliary military hospital (*Ilustrovani list*, June 5, 1915: 530–31), inside the Home Guard artillery barracks on Selska Road (Vukičević 2020: 63). On August 20, 1916, the monument, a bust of Emperor and King Franz Josef I, was unveiled on the grounds of the auxiliary military hospital. It was dedicated to the 42nd Home Guard “Devil’s” Division. The bust was carved by Sergeant Emil (Mirko) Neumann, who was being treated in the Home Guard’s recovery department (Kukić 2020: 284–85). At the opening ceremony, the commander of the 6th Home Guard District, Colonel General Žunac, stated “that he receives the monument under the protection of the district command” (*Ilustrovani list*, no. August 26, 1916: 818). At the opening ceremony, civil, military, and church dignitaries were present, and the act of opening was enhanced by the music of the 25th Home Guard Regiment (*Ilustrovani list*, August 26, 1916: 818).

The area where the bust of the ruler was placed was decorated as a garden, as evidenced by the photo published in *Ilustrovani list* on August 26, 1916. The bust of Franz Josef I was located on a polygonal earthen elevation in the middle of the garden, with carved stone pillars placed at the corners (fig. 6). A circular path was built around the elevation (*Ilustrovani list*, August 26, 1916: 818).

In the second half of August of the same year, 1916, a second bust of Franz Josef I was erected within the same barracks (Kukić 2020: 285). It is interesting that, at the same time, two identical monuments to the ruler were placed in the same area of the Home Guard artillery barracks.

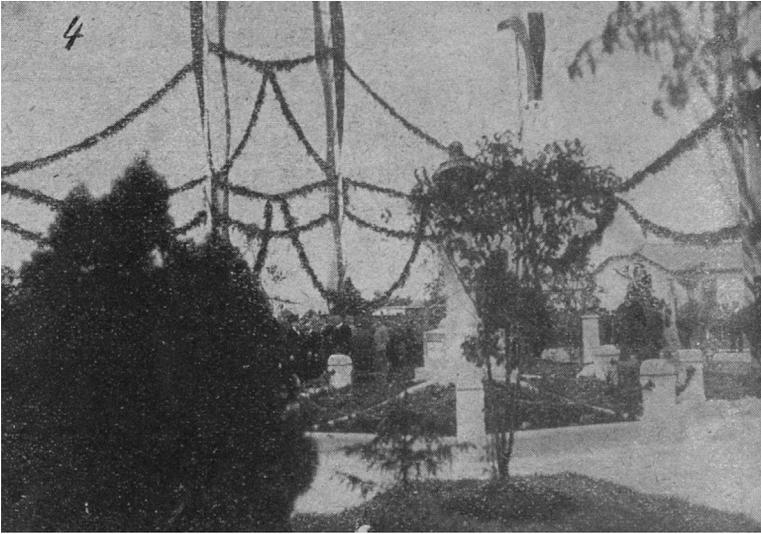


Fig. 6: “Otkriće kraljevog spomenika u Domobranskom oporavnom odjelu. [...] 4. Razgledanje spomenika poslije otkrića” [“Unveiling of the king’s monument in the Home Guard recovery department. [...] 4. Viewing the monument after the unveiling”], *Ilustrovani list*, August 26, 1916: 818.

The author of the bust is unknown today, and it can be assumed that he was either one of the soldiers, a mason or sculptor by profession, or perhaps the second bust was (also) sculpted by Emil Neumann.

BUSTS OF MILITARY LEADERS

Along with the “first” bust of Franz Josef I, unveiled at a ceremony on August 20, 1916, busts of Crown Prince Charles, Archduke Friedrich, and Generals Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf and Svetozar Borojević de Bojna were also unveiled. They were also carved by Sergeant Emil (Mirko) Neumann (Kukić 2020: 284–85).

As shown in (fig. 6), the bust of Franz Josef I was the central bust, while busts of military leaders were placed along the outer side of the path in a regular arrangement, with their faces turned towards the central bust (*Ilustrovani list*, August 26, 1916: 818).

MONUMENT TO FALLEN SOLDIERS OF THE 31ST FELDJÄGER BATTALION (31ST LIGHT INFANTRY BATTALION, ZAGREB)

The monument erected in memory of the members of the 31st Light Infantry Battalion who died in the battle near Uscie Jeznickie in 1915

was shaped like a pyramid with a spread-winged eagle on top. The author of the monument is unknown today. It was also erected in Home Guard artillery barracks, at the same time when the “second” bust of Franz Josef I was erected. Four marble slabs with carved names of soldiers and officers who died in the battle were placed on the surfaces of the pyramid. The base of the pyramid was lined with “shell casings,” spent shells of artillery ammunition (*Jutarnji list*, no. 1585, August 18, 1916, 5). Parts of ordnance, unexploded shells, or shell casings, were used during the First World War as motifs and decoration for the creation of individual war monuments (*Ilustrovani list*, August 12, 1916: 786), and it can be said that the author of the Zagreb monument was inspired by “new” details.

The ceremonial unveiling of the bust and the pyramidal monument was announced in the press for the second half of August (*Jutarnji list*, August 18, 1916: 5), but it was postponed (Kukić 2020: 285). Nevertheless, the description of the monument and environment (*Jutarnji list*, August 18, 1916: 5) states that the monuments were erected before the article was printed.

Citizens were again excluded from the unveiling ceremony which had the characteristics of military protocol. Nevertheless, from the publishing of articles and photos from the ceremony and the news about the announced unveilings, it was obvious that the citizens of Zagreb, the civilians, needed to be made aware that these monuments had been erected. Considering that the area where the second bust and the monument to the fallen members of the 31st Light Infantry Battalion were placed is called a “park” (*Jutarnji list*, August 18, 1916: 5), there is a possibility that this area was connected with a lawn with busts of rulers and military leaders, thus creating a unique park.

BUST OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL JULIO BESTALL IN THE HOME GUARD BARRACKS (IN ILICA)

Lieutenant Colonel Julio (Gyula) Bestall was an officer in the headquarters of the 25th Home Guard Regiment (*Verlustliste* 1914: 4) and a teacher at the officers’ school of the 6th Home Guard District before the war (*A magyar királyi* 1914: 438). He died on the Southern Front on September 15, 1914, and his remains were transferred to Zagreb, where he was buried on October 5 of the same year (*Ilustrovani list*, October 10, 1914: 968). In 1917, a photo taken on June 17 in the yard of the Home Guard barracks in Ilica was published on the

cover of *Ilustrovani list*. It shows Colonel General Luka Šnjarić, Lieutenant Colonel Slavko Stanzer, Lieutenant Baltin, and Captain Očak “in front of the unfinished monument of Lieutenant Colonel Bestall.” In the photo, it can be seen that work on the monument had been completed to the level of installing the stone base and pedestal and that the bust had not yet been placed (*Ilustrovani list*, June 23, 1917: 521). This photo and the accompanying text are the only information about Bestall’s monument, and it can only be presumed that the bust was placed there later, and then removed after the war.

The exact period of the removal of monuments placed in barracks is not known. A year after the war ended, in 1919, authorities, royal land government made an official decision to remove the Habsburg dynasty’s insignia (Kukić 2020: 302–3). Given that the armed forces of the new state(s) continued to use the barracks in the Selska Road and Ilica after the war, the busts and monuments erected there were most likely removed in the fall of 1918 or at the beginning of 1919.

PLANNED MONUMENTS AND VOTIVE CHURCH IN ZAGREB

Initiatives for the installation of memorial plaques and construction of a votive church for fallen soldiers, members of Croatian units, were launched as early as the first months of the war and lasted, with varying degrees of success, until the autumn of 1918. Initiatives for individual memorials did not receive support from higher authorities (land, city, military, or church). Therefore, due to the lack of any support, the initiatives for some memorials did not go beyond the proponents’ presentation of the idea to a higher instance.

MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR FALLEN SOLDIERS OF THE IMPERIAL AND ROYAL 53RD INFANTRY REGIMENT

Already during the first year of the war, the command of the Imperial and Royal 53rd Zagreb Infantry Regiment appealed to the Archdiocesan Cathedral of Zagreb to grant the regiment a wall in the newly built church of St Blaise, to place a memorial plaque (Source 8). The Archdiocese did not respond to the regimental command’s request, and one can only speculate as to the reasons for their refusal. Namely, the church of St Blaise was not in function at that time, and the military

command wanted to requisition it to house a military hospital. For this reason, the Archdiocese accelerated the process of converting the sacred object into a parish church (Vrabec 2019: 49), and the failure to respond to the request of the Zagreb military command can be interpreted as a reaction caused by fears of requisitioning the building.

MONUMENTS TO FALLEN SOLDIERS PLANNED TO BE ERECTED IN MIROGOJ

During 1916 and 1917, there were two initiatives to erect a monument to fallen soldiers in Mirogoj. The first proposal was initiated in late 1916 and early 1917, involved Iso Kršnjavi and Radivoj Hafner, and aimed to erect a “monumentally conceived memorial to fallen heroes” (Gabelica 2022: 403). One part of the monument was supposed to feature reliefs of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Duchess Sofia von Hohenberg, the work of Viennese sculptor Hans Schwathe, which was bought by Radivoj Hafner (Gabelica 2022: 403). This is the only available information about the monument, and the further fate of the proposal is unknown.

SOLDIERS' VOTIVE CHURCH (WAR MEMORIAL CHURCH) IN THE ZAGREB SUBURB OF HORVATI

Unlike the dismissed idea of placing a memorial plaque in the parish church of St Blaise, the initiative to build a war memorial church in the Zagreb suburb of Horvati received indirect support from the Archdiocesan Cathedra, and it took root both in the public and in military circles during the war. The collection of funds for the construction of a church in the then-Zagreb suburb of Horvati began in 1911, when Archbishop Juraj Posilović made a donation to the church-building committee (Source 9).

The committee continued to collect funds until August 1914, when the chairman of the committee, Dr Ignacije Repar, appealed to the Archdiocesan Cathedra for “help” so that the collection of contributions “does not grind to a halt” (Source 10). However, the Archdiocesan Cathedra then determined that, in a state of war, the church “is not absolutely necessary” (Source 11), and so the president of the committee was instructed to stop collecting donations (Source 12). However, Ignacije Repar defied the ban. Starting in November 1914,

he started collecting contributions “for our dear soldiers [...] intercession [...] for the covenant church of all Croats” (*Jutarnji list*, November 8, 1914: 6). As a result of the above, it follows that Ignacije Repar, despite the ban, and intending to continue the campaign to collect donations for the construction of the church, transformed the sacred object’s purpose from a chapel to a soldiers’ votive church. The initiative to build a war memorial church for Croatian soldiers during the war years gained momentum. In 1916, the press reported that officers had joined the Committee for the construction of the church, and the Croatian church has been called the “Queen of Victory” church ever since (*Ilustrovani list*, June 5, 1916: 533). Contributions for the construction were sent from the front even by soldiers of the Islamic faith (*Jutarnji list*, February 5, 1916: 4), and the place where the church was built, marked by a crucifix, became a site of military pilgrimages. At the end of military training, just before being sent to the front, the soldiers made a pilgrimage to the Zagreb suburb of Horvati (*Ilustrovani list*, June 5, 1916: 533).

The seriousness of the initiative is also confirmed by the conceptual design of the church, created in 1917 by architect Dionis Sunko. This unknown project of Sunko’s is evidenced today by a postcard, apparently sold with the aim of collecting contributions (Source 13). On the upper part of the obverse, in the foreground of the postcard, the front of the church in perspective is printed: the entrance, the bell tower, and the side. In the lower, smaller part of the postcard, the ground plan is printed, with the inscriptions “Foundation for the War Memorial Church of Croatian Soldiers” and “Holy Immaculate Conception of the Queen of Peace in Croatia,” and the signature of Dionis Sunko with the year 1917. Sunko designed the church as a basilica, three-aisled with a single-aisle transept and apse. A dome was designed at the intersection of the transept and the central nave, and the belfry rested on the right nave of the church. An open lobby with arcades was planned. The lower part of the facade was to be covered with bossed stone (Source 14). Stylistically, the project of the memorial church fully corresponds to the sacral architecture of the time, and the dome hints that it was inspired by the then-newest parish church in Zagreb, St Blaise, a project by Viktor Kovačić.

It can be said that, despite the initial ban, the Archdiocese of Zagreb gave tacit approval for the mentioned initiative. Documents from 1918, confirmation from the chairman of the committee sent to the Archdiocesan Cathedra in April that the funds raised through donations were deposited in bank accounts (Source 15), and a donation of 5,000 crowns sent to the committee by the Archdiocesan Cathedra

in October (Source 16), confirm that the administration of the Archdiocese of Zagreb changed its opinion about the construction of a church in the Horvati suburb during the war, and that it was informed of the project of building a soldiers' votive church. The chairman of the board, Ignacije Repar, collected a total of 150,000 crowns in donations (Kožul and Razum, 2012: 35). Therefore, it can be asserted that, in a way, the Archdiocese of Zagreb thought long-term. Namely, after its construction, the war memorial church would have become a permanent memorial to all fallen soldiers from the territory of Croatian lands during the First World War.

After 1918, the initiative to build a war memorial church was halted. It was only in 1929 that the city government's construction department issued a building permit for the Salesian parish church and the Youth Centre in Horvati (Source 17), which testifies to yet another change in the function of the sacred object. The Salesian church was built in 1934.

CONCLUSION

Monuments and memorials erected in the city of Zagreb during the First World War show that the land, city, military, and church authorities paid tribute to and commemorated the fallen soldiers from the outset of the war. The installation of monuments in Zagreb's public spaces began already during the first months of the war. In October 1914, according to the order of Zagreb's Mayor Janko Holjac, a central wooden cross was placed in the military part of Mirogoj, the "Field of Fallen Heroes," which became the central place of commemorations in the city on the occasion of All Saints' Day. Moreover, following the regulations on the "Field of Fallen Heroes," by 1918 the cemetery management had installed 3,399 wooden markers for soldiers who died while recovering in Zagreb. The listed tombstones were traditional in shape. Some wooden crosses were replaced by families of deceased soldiers with individualised gravestones, and there are two such monuments in Mirogoj today.

The majority of the monuments were erected in 1916: the statue of Franz Josef I at Ciglana, busts of rulers and military leaders, and a monument to fallen members of the 31st Light Infantry Battalion. The installation of the mentioned monuments was initiated by charitable societies and armed forces, while the state, city, and church authorities participated in the unveiling ceremonies. Certain monuments, the

already mentioned busts of rulers and statues, are not war monuments; however, due to the motifs and decorations placed on and around the monuments (dedications to troops, decorations for bravery, emphasising the war years), they were placed in the context of war and, as such, took on war symbolism. Of particular note is the Memorial Linden Tree, a type of monument adopted from the Austrian part of the Monarchy, which primarily had a charitable significance, but over time also took on the symbolism of a war memorial, as a reminder of the conflict. The style, shape and symbolism of the monuments erected in Zagreb are typical of the period, and new motifs were adopted from wartime monuments erected on the front. The authors of the erected monuments are the later renowned Croatian sculptor Josip (Joža) Turkalj, who established himself in the interwar period, and the now forgotten sculptor Emil (Mirko) Neumann.

Initiatives were launched to erect a monument to Franz Josef I and to build a military church in the Zagreb suburb of Horvati. The project of the war memorial church indicates a kind of long-term planning for the commemoration of those who died in the First World War.

After the war and the political disintegration of Austria-Hungary in the fall of 1918 and the creation of the new state most of the monuments erected in the First World War period were removed, and initiatives to erect war monuments were halted. The exact time when most of the wartime monuments in Zagreb were removed is unknown today, so these monuments can be said to be lost signs of the First World War.

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The Battle for Commemorating the First World War Centenary in Croatia¹

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Important anniversaries, such as the first World World War Centenary, should be moments of reflection for countries and their peoples because they offer an opportunity for the reflection of existing narratives about a past event, through which their meanings to individual or collective identities, as well as their importance to political and social relations in these societies, are confirmed or changed (McCartney & Morgan-Owen 2017: 235). Of course, this presumes that these narratives exist, which is rather questionable in Croatia's case. The commemoration of the first World War Centenary (2014–2018) was the most important social event in the last decade in the developed countries

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of Western Europe, especially Britain and France, and in Canada and Australia. In contrast to these victorious countries, the countries defeated in the war (primarily Germany and Austria) had a significantly more modest and different approach to the commemoration. The emphasis was on all war victims, soldiers and civilians, regardless of which side of the war they had fought on. Since Croatia, as a former part of Austria-Hungary Monarchy, found itself in a new state union with the Kingdom of Serbia after the war, veterans were ill-advised to mention their participation in the war on the wrong side. After the end of the Second World War one victor's narrative replaced another and made the mentioning of formerly existing monarchies completely unacceptable. All these facts influenced attitudes towards the First World War, which was over time almost completely forgotten in Croatia over time. A researchers of this period of history in Croatia sometimes get the impression that the country has not yet heard of Jay Winter's saying, 'Memory is always about the future.' (Winter 2017: 239).

Anniversaries of important historical events are ideal opportunities for historians to open new topics or research new areas within existing ones, including offering completely new perspectives on the recent or distant past, and calling attention to their influence on today's public stage. Different views of the same event present a lesser problem to them because the pluralism of thought and perspectives is an integral part of history as a discipline (in contrast to certain other humanities and social sciences). Unlike historians, Croatian politicians are significantly more careful in commemorating events linked to wars (except the Homeland War), despite the fact that wars had a decisive influence on the history of humanity in general, and the 20th century in particular (Winter & Sivan 1999: 19–29; Winter 2006: 17–20). Or, perhaps, precisely because of this.

Preparations for the Centenary commemorations, first of the outbreak, then of the end of the war and the signing of the peace treaties, and finally the commemoration itself occupied the public stages of developed countries through the first decade of the 21st century.

In developed countries, preparations started years before the official beginning, with the United Kingdom and its former dominions taking a leading role, using the distinctive Poppy of Remembrance as its symbol, which all public persons, including the royal family, bore on their lapels at public appearances during the commemoration years. Although the practice of selling the poppy symbol and wearing it during the week preceding 11 November was introduced only in the 1920s, in order to raise funding for assisting disabled war veterans who were being cared for by the Royal British Legion, a charity that still

offers various forms of support to former soldiers and their families, in time the support was broadened to include veterans of other wars, including contemporary ones, which caused some controversy in the British public during the Centenary commemoration. The poppy also served as the symbol of the art installation near The Tower of London, entitled *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, in which an army of volunteers 'planted' almost 900,000 ceramic poppy flowers around the Tower during summer 2014, i.e. approximately one poppy for each British imperial soldier who fell during the First World War. Numerous art activities, funded by public money, were held throughout the UK, and the BBC broadcast around 2,500 hours of related programmes on its TV and radio channels and internet platforms; some considered this excessive (Noakes 2019; Mullen 2015; Winter 2014: 168–170; McCartney & Morgan-Owen 2017: 289–303).

In Germany and the countries of former Austria-Hungary Monarchy, preparations began only after they had already gained momentum among the former western Entente countries, and the necessity of the commemoration of such an important event became evident despite all controversies. Each of the formerly defeated countries approached the commemoration differently, because the burden of guilt still lay with Germany (Mombauer 2017: 276–288; Brennan 2015: 139–170). Historiographical debates about who was culpable for the war again came to the forefront in 2013, after Christopher Clark's book *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* was published, but this time they leaked into the sphere of politics and caused heated disputes. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the German federal government was hesitant to voice its plans for the central national commemoration, leaving the provincial governments to organise commemorations on the local level, which resulted in numerous exhibitions and conferences. Each province commemorated the First World War on its own, specific, local level, completely unquestionable and fairly unproblematic. Still, the Centenary in Germany prompted two online projects important for the European and world history of that era: *Europeana* and the First World War encyclopedia as well as the project of digitising archival materials kept in the German federal archives (*Bundesarchiv*) in Koblenz (Mombauer 2017: 279–284).

I believe that the importance of the Centenary to each individual country is proportional to the budget it approved for that purpose. Thus, the UK set aside 50 million pounds, Australia around 552 million Australian dollars, Germany around 3.5 million euros, and France around 20 million euros for its 800 or so projects (Winter 2014: 167; Mombauer 2017: 279).

Russia and Ukraine (formerly part of the Russian Empire) had a specific relationship towards the Centenary commemoration because of the revolutionary events that removed Russia from the winning side near the end of the war and were followed by civil war and the victory of communism, which drastically influenced the relationship towards the tsarist heritage and thus the First World War. Since the communist authorities considered that war ‘imperialist’, it needed to be suppressed from collective memory, and it soon became a ‘forgotten war’, regardless of the fact that almost 15.5 million people had participated in it, and almost 2 million died from wounds or disease. Military and POW cemeteries formed throughout the country during the war were soon completely abandoned, and local enthusiasts began rediscovering them only in the late 1980s. They were assisted in these revitalisation efforts by local and church authorities, so that new memorials were erected and some old ones were restored. The central authorities joined only in summer 2012, when Vladimir Putin publicly stated that Russia would join the First World War Centenary commemoration, and he strengthened this statement by sending an official address to the Russian Federal Assembly. In the following years, a cult of heroes and martyrs who had fallen for their homeland during the First World War was systematically built and generously financed, with the goal of strengthening the nation-state and central government. The Ukrainians, on the other hand, lacked the funds to commemorate the Centenary in the desired manner, but they nonetheless held numerous smaller events centred on the individual, also highlighting examples of national resistance towards Russian conquerors during the war and after it (Bazhenova 2021: 368–383).

Similarly, the First World War was forgotten in Croatia, which, soon after the ceasefire was signed, entered a new state union with the Kingdom of Serbia, a country on the winning side. This was followed by several schizophrenic decades for veterans of the war that hailed from the former countries of the Monarchy, during which they were ill-advised to mention their participation in the war, especially in the campaign against Serbia, while the victories of the Serbian army were glorified and the crimes of the Austro-Hungarian occupational authorities were highlighted (Manojlović Pintar 2014: 134–142).

It was no better after the Second World War, when the state policy of the ‘brotherhood and unity of the peoples and ethnicities of Yugoslavia’ determined a selection of acceptable topics that were supposed to contribute to the creation of a new social order. Although the First World War was potentially a very problematic topic, it could not be circumvented due to its great importance for the following

periods, so an acceptable narrative was created using strictly filtered data. The teaching of the most basic facts regarding the root and proximate causes and flow of the First World War on all the fronts, and not only the Western one (as is the case in some European countries), was a component part of the history curriculums in primary and secondary schools during the whole socialist period and afterwards. Most of today's politicians in Croatia learned about this period from secondary school textbooks dating from the late 1980s, printed in several editions, and whose text about the period was written by Croatian historians Dragutin Pavličević and Nikša Stančić. In a series of very short texts, one can find brief but correct information on the flow of the war, including the occupation of Serbia and the retreat of the Serbian army through Albania, but without any mention of Croats within the Austro-Hungarian military forces (Bilandžić et al. 1987: 101–126). The Croatian component of the army was added after Croatia achieved independence, but, despite a partial change in the narrative towards Austria-Hungary, the emphasis remained on the political history, mostly the activities of the Yugoslav Committee and the creation of a new state union after the collapse of Monarchy.

Other components of the war shyly broke through to the public during the 2000s, when two issues of *Hrvatska revija*, the journal of the Matica Hrvatska, dedicated to the First World War were published on the 90th anniversary of the beginning of the war, which was explicitly stated in the editorials (*Hrvatska revija* 2004: 15). This was followed by the exhibition *Dadoh zlato za željezo – Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu (I Gave Gold for Iron: Croatia in World War I)* in the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb, which lasted for an exceptionally long time by Croatian standards (from 14 December 2006 to 28 October 2007), and a comprehensive catalogue was published under the same name in 2011, containing a list of everything related to the First World War that is kept in the collections of the mentioned museum. At the same time, an exhibition about Svetozar Borojević was staged in the Croatian State Archives on his 150th birth anniversary, and an international colloquium was held in his birthplace, Mečenčani; the research presented there was published as conference proceedings under the same name in 2011. Since two conferences were held on the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War in late 2008, the first in the Matica Hrvatska on 29 and 30 October and the second in the Croatian Institute of History on 4 and 5 December (both resulted in conference proceedings, published in 2012 and 2010), it appeared that the preconditions for a successful the First World War Centenary

commemoration in Croatia were slowly being fulfilled (Herman Kaurić 2020: 347–392).

As time went by, news about the plans of other countries for the First World War Centenary commemoration began to arrive in Croatia, but there was no institutional response. One of the first calls for participation in an international project arrived to the Croatian Institute of History via the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport in early September 2012. It was sent by a Canadian non-profit organisation calling for participation in the video projection entitled *The World Remembers*, which was forwarded to Croatia via the Croatian Embassy in Canada. Attached to the invitation was a description of a complex project that was to be conducted during the Centenary (2014–2018), and its most publicly visible component was supposed to be a display of the names of fallen soldiers on public buildings chosen by the hosting country. Participation needed to be confirmed by 31 November 2012, with the Canadians pledging to provide logistic and technical support, though each country was to bear the costs of the project's implementation on its own territory (Udruga 1914–1918, Document No. 1). It later turned out that this project had been realised on a significantly lower scale than expected precisely due to a lack of funding in the participating countries, though some of them, such as Slovenia, incorporated their fallen into the online version of the project (Svoljšak 2018).

However, even if there had been a will for cooperation, Croatia would have had a significantly greater problem than that because it did not have a registry of fallen soldiers and nobody showed any willingness to create one. The situation has not changed to this day, except that Croatia now has access to the digitised version of the list of dead and wounded soldiers made during the war (the so-called *Verlustliste*), which contains the names and dates of all the losses of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces until the penultimate year of the war. It can be found on a separate page dedicated to the First World War at the portal of the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb (HDA, Popis). I must stress that this list is unofficial and incomplete despite having been made by the Ministry of War (*Kriegsministerium*), with many incorrect entries and various kinds of errors, so many users are surprised when they cannot find their ancestor (Herman Kaurić 2022: 180–189). However, for all its drawbacks, it is currently the only one we have.

In conversation with the heads of other public institutions, it became apparent that they too had been asked to participate in similar Centenary commemoration projects by other ministries. In time, it also became increasingly apparent that no institution in

Croatia was planning to participate in a foreign project (with the exception of *Europeana*) or conduct something similar on the territory of Croatia.

This was a signal for the few First Croatian World War researchers scattered among various institutions to gather in a joint initiative dubbed The Initiative Committee for Commemorating the First World War Centenary, established in November 2012 at the Croatian Institute of History in Zagreb. They attempted to point out the importance of the First World War and the need to commemorate the Centenary by sending letters to all relevant institutions: the president of Croatia; the prime minister; the Parliament speaker; the ministries of culture, defence, foreign affairs, and science; the Croatian History Museum; the Croatian State Archives; the Zagreb city government; etc. They contacted anyone they believed would be willing to help and those whom they believed needed to participate in this, but most offers were turned down, with the explanation that the institution in question does not consider itself responsible and that they should contact a different one. The greatest controversy was due to the fact that the beginning of a world war was to be commemorated, which was a completely new concept in Croatia, where very different anniversaries were the norm.

Aversion to political/war topics is not a specificity of Croatia, but is significantly more pronounced there than in developed democracies that experienced two world wars in the 20th century. Namely, Croatia experienced three bloody wars, of which only the latest was not a global conflict, but was nonetheless relatively recent and is deeply embedded in the consciousness of most Croatian citizens. This defensive war for the independence and territorial integrity of the country was fought from 1991 to 1995, and is usually called the Homeland War in Croatia itself, though no consensus on the name or its many consequences, some of which are still being felt, has been reached. Since all the First World War researchers agree that remembrance of ‘their’ war has been completely overshadowed by the experience of the Second World War (Winter 2010: 321; Beaumont 2015: 530), it is easy, through simple analogy and the addition of another war, to understand the reasons behind the mentioned reactions of Croatian state institutions when the need to commemorate the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War—if possible on the highest state level—was pointed out to them in early 2013.

A step forward was taken in mid-April 2013, when the Croatian Government adopted the Decision on the Founding of the Commission for Coordinating the First World War Centenary Commemoration,

with the goal of drawing up and monitoring a Centenary commemoration programme, 'which particularly includes: the creation of a digital list of the fallen, the marking of places where Croatian soldiers fell and their cemeteries outside the borders of the Republic of Croatia, the organising of modern historiographical and political-science discussions about the significance of the First World War, and the making of an analysis of cultural, museological, and literary segments on the topic of the First World War.' Funding for the Commission's work was supposed to be secured 'from the national budget of the Republic of Croatia at the position of the Ministry of Culture', and Committee members were not given the right to any allowance or compensation. The Committee consisted of 13 representatives of 12 different institutions, led by the president of the Committee, the then minister of culture, Andrea Zlatar Violić. All the members' names were given in full in the Decision,² together with their full academic titles and names of their parent institutions (Ministarstvo kulture (2013c). Three members of this Commission were members of the Initiative Committee, but state structures did not allow them to officially represent this informal group of citizens; instead, they represented only their parent institutions, which were only indirectly linked to their initiative. This example demonstrates how far Croatia is from a developed democracy, in which it is normal for such associations to form the link between family memories and the state administration, with the goal of working together on preserving the culture of memory (Winter & Sivan 1999: 29).

The very next day, the portal Obris³ generally welcomed the Government's decision, but also pointed out the brevity of time for such a voluminous amount of work, highlighting the creation of a list of the fallen as a priority. The author of the text considered the lack of a representative of the History Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb problematic (without suggesting anyone in particular), while Filip Hameršak was described as the 'weakest link of the newly-formed body' without any explanation (Knežević 2013). The reasons for this are unclear, especially since the Commission included people with lower professional and academic

2 The other members were: Ivan Grujić (Ministry of Veterans), Mario Werhas (Ministry of Defence), Davor Vidiš (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs), Anamarija Kirinić (Ministry of Science, Education and Sport), Petar Barišić (Central State Office for Croats Abroad), Petar Strčić (Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Jozo Ivanović and Ivan Filipović (Croatian State Archives), Jelena Borošak Marijanović (Croatian History Museum), Mladen Klemenčić (The Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography), Vijoleta Herman Kaurić (Croatian Institute of History), and Filip Hameršak (Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Chair of Croatian History of Law and State).

3 The portal name is an abbreviation of 'defence and security' in Croatian.

qualifications than him, not to mention his knowledge about the topic. If the institution he was employed at was seen as problematic, one should bear in mind that no institution in Croatia is focused on researching the First World War.

The Commission met a total of five times: the first time with the goal of drawing up a programme draft for the Centenary commemoration (27 June 2013), the second for the creation of a preliminary list of programmes/projects and a projection of costs (24 July), the third in order to review and evaluate the proposed projects (7 April 2014), the fourth to get acquainted with the formal commemoration ceremony proposal (24 April), and the fifth to establish the commemoration programme (14 May) (Udruga 1914–1918, Document No. 2 – 5). At one point, a logo for the Centenary commemoration appeared (see Figure 1), but its creation was not discussed at the Commission meetings and its members had no access to any concept designs.

Unless the archive and my memory deceive me, the Commission did not meet after that, though it was never formally abolished. Furthermore, at the 87th session of the Croatian Government, held on 29 March 2018, the Decision on the Amendment of the Decision on the Founding of the Commission for Coordinating the First World War Centenary Commemoration was adopted, which Prime Minister Andrej Plenković commented as appropriate for ‘a very important anniversary’. The decision came into force on the day it was adopted, and was prompted by ‘passage of time since the founding and appointment of the members [...] in order to secure the functioning and implementation of the decisions and duties of the Commission’ regarding the commemoration of the end of the First World War, as stated in the statement of reasons. Most of the names of the representatives of institutions were different,⁴ but the greatest change was that the still active minister of culture, Nina Obuljen Koržinek, was listed as president (Vlada RH 2018a, Vlada RH 2018b). It is interesting that the members were neither informed about their appointment, nor did they ever meet, and the decision was not published in *Narodne novine* (the *Official Gazette*). The original list of members is

⁴ The members are: Zvonimir Frka-Petešić (Croatian Prime Minister’s Office), Stjepan Sučić (Ministry of Croatian Veterans), Marijo Reljanović (Ministry of Defence), Ljiljana Pancirov (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs), Andreja Radović (Ministry of Science and Education), Ivan Zeba (Central State Office for Croats Abroad), Petar Strčić (Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Andreja Smetko (Croatian History Museum), Mladen Klemenčić (The Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography), Vijoleta Herman Kaurić (Croatian Institute of History), Jozo Ivanović (Croatian State Archives), Mirela Krešić (Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Chair of Croatian History of Law and State).

still found on the official website of the Ministry of Culture, but this amended one is not. Despite all attempts, we did not find the official version of the document, but only the proposal, which is still available on the Government's webpage.

By the time the Commission had had its first meeting in the Ministry of Culture, the Initiative Committee for the First World War Centenary Commemoration had drawn up an Action Plan for the commemoration, entitled 'Croatia and the First World War 1914–1918 / 2014–2018', which encompassed a programme of public, cultural, and scholarly activities through all four years of the Centenary commemoration (Herman Kaurić 2013). Sometime later, they also created a proposal for a commemoration at Mirogoj, Zagreb's main cemetery, and forwarded both proposals to the Commission and other institutions. However, their proposals proved too ambitious for the then-existing level of consciousness about the need for a commemoration and the readiness of the institutions to cooperate.

Commission members often sent substitutes, as a rule completely uninformed, and it appeared that nobody present had any authority to do anything, and that everything needed to be addressed to some higher authority. Soon, only one thing became clear: there would be no separate budget for the Centenary commemoration, so that anything that was planned had to be done within the existing budgets of the ministries involved in the Commission's work, with particular emphasis on the budget of the Ministry of Culture. The only thing that the Ministry of Culture could do in such a short timespan was to prompt museums and galleries to register projects about the First World War within existing competitions that are traditionally published every year, with the indication that said projects are linked to the Centenary commemoration, which was done on 2 August (Udruga 1914–1918, Document No. 6). Since the application deadline was 15 September 2013 (Ministarstvo kulture 2013b), I presume that the documentation was sent only by those who already had their projects prepared or who had improvised them with exceptional skill.

This is how the original list of 115, mostly one-year, programmes related to the Centenary commemoration was created. It grew to 132 projects by March 2015, and included multi-year computerisation and digitisation programmes. One of these was the mentioned website, 'World War I 1914–1918: A View from the Archives', made by the Croatian State Archives. Traditional book fairs in Leipzig and the *Sa(n)jam knjige* book fair in Pula were highlighted as the spearhead events, together with a substantial number of physical and virtual exhibitions, lectures, concerts, book translations, and other cultural events

(Ministarstvo kulture 2013a). The focus of the registered programmes in the museum-gallery field was on war events in the broader or narrower local community, with little on the national level. Essentially, an attempt was made to brand everything that had been planned for that

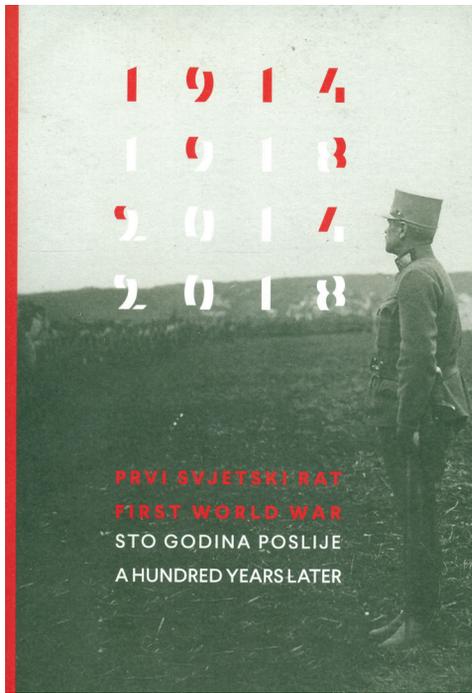


Fig. 1: Cover of the commemorative booklet for the Centenary (photo: V. Herman Kaurić).

year as relevant to the Centenary commemoration and place it on the official list, which was later printed in the form of a booklet given out at the official commemoration held in the Croatian State Archives (see Figure 1).

The decision of the Ministry immediately caused controversy regarding the fairness of the 2014 competition, and questions arose about how much Committee members were influencing the selection of the programmes/projects, and especially the distribution of funding. The Ministry's regular method of functioning proved an excellent basis for speculation because the publicly available list of projects/programmes about the First World War does not contain any data about the amount of allocated funds, and this is despite the fact that this information is available on the list of all approved programmes for that year according to field of activity, individually by institution, and by programme.

However, the official numbers are different from those in analyses of individual programmes, likely partly because it is not exactly defined which entry refers to what. Visible data shows that, as part of its archival and museum-gallery activities, the Ministry of Culture spent just over 720,000 kunas, i.e. just under 100,000 euros, on the First World War Centenary (Ministarstvo kulture 2014b: 2–24; *Ministarstvo kulture 2014a*: 2–6). Although most of these activities were exhibitions, this does not mean that the figure includes the publishing of exhibition catalogues, because publishing activities could have been funded via other, more specific, competitions. In addition, the figure does not include various other programmes, such as book translations or setting up digital platforms, whose funding is currently impossible to determine, and some of which were certainly significantly financially more demanding than those we have found. However, this was only a drop in the ocean when compared to the total number of projects approved for 2014, which stood at 3,864 from 17 programme fields, financed by 206.6 million kunas (Galić 2014: 2). Although the public did not perceive it as such, the funding for the Centenary commemoration was low, especially when compared to said programme fields or the total budget of the Ministry of Culture (*Ministarstvo kulture 2015*: 37).

As regards the commemoration, the prevalent opinion at first was that the international conference organised by the EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) and funded by the Ministry of Culture, *Commemorating 1914: Exploring the War's Legacy*, held in Zagreb on 5–6 May 2014, would be enough (*Ministarstvo kulture 2014e*; *Ministarstvo kulture 2014f*; HINA/MK 2014). Even though 23 lectures by top scholars from 10 countries, including Croatia,⁵ were held then, the absolute star of the conference was Christopher Clark with his introductory lecture, 'The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914'. On that occasion, the translation of the identically-named book into Croatian was arranged and was published several years later (Clark, 2018), by which time the pomp around the First World War had died down considerably. Public interest was substantial, which is not surprising since his book had brewed up a storm among historians throughout the world, and especially in Serbia (Ponoš 2014a; Šarenac 2013: 267–280; Vukotić 2013; Bjelajac 2014). Disagreements about the events that had led to the war spread

5 The participants were from Croatia (6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Belgium (3), Austria (3), France (4), Italy (2), Germany (1), Greece (1), Portugal (1), and Switzerland (1).

to the sphere of politics, and comparisons were drawn between the events in Europe then and those that had taken place a century ago (Jakovina 2014: 60). Therefore, the central European commemoration of the Centenary, even though it had been planned to be in Sarajevo a few years ahead, saw some significant changes. One of the most obvious for historians was the split in the great ‘conciliation conference’, which was supposed to gather experts from 26 countries in Europe and further abroad. The Serbian side boycotted the organisation at the last moment, after it had been announced that Christopher Clark and like-minded individuals would attend (Winter 2017: 242–243; Brennan 2015: 147). But this event is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, for some reason, in late April, talks started about a commemoration ceremony and central observance of the Centenary in Croatia, including a laying of wreaths near the grand *Pietà* of Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj at the central Zagreb cemetery, Mirogoj.

Although the base of the monument bears the inscription PALIM HRVATSKIM VOJNICIMA U PRVOM SVJETSKOM RATU (‘TO THE FALLEN CROATIAN SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR I’), on the eve of the Centenary, thanks to the research of Boris Kukić, it was established that this is not true because the memorial ossuary contains the remains of 3,300 participants of the war, only approximately one-third of whom were Croats (Rašović 2014). It turned out that the inaccurate inscription was put up in 1994 by the association *Hrvatski domobran* (Croatian Home Guard), without consulting the relevant authorities and without permission—or, at least, there is no record of this—which surprised the institutions (Kukić 2015: 124). The information that some 450 Hungarians had been laid to rest in the ossuary caught the attention of the Hungarian military attaché, so the Ministry of Culture and the Republic of Croatia found themselves in a delicate position, faced with a problem that they could not ignore. Instead of launching an urgent procedure to remove the inscription, the Ministry ordered a brief study from Kukić, an abstract of which was then printed in Croatian and English on a panel set at the foot of the ossuary, a sort of info-plaque, until a way to resolve the problem is found (see Figure 2). This temporary solution has remained in place to this day, except that, after seven years, it is in an embarrassing state. The inscription is cracked and difficult to read, and the plaque broken after it fell over several times in strong winds, though at least someone has secured it so as to prevent this from happening again (see Figure 3).

The Ministry of Culture chose the international conference *Prvi svjetski rat i avangardna umjetnost: dekonstrukcija – konstrukcija* (The First World War and Avant-Garde Art: Deconstruction



Fig. 2: The info-plaque next to the memorial ossuary in Mirogoj, June 2014 (photo: B. Kukić).



Fig. 3: The info-plaque in Mirogoj, 3 August 2021 (photo: S. Kaurić).

– Construction) as the cornerstone of the Centenary commemoration. It was held in the Museum of Contemporary Art on 28 and 29 June and organised by the Institute for the Research of the Avant-Garde and the Marinko Sudac Collection, under the high sponsorship of the Ministry. The Centenary commemoration supposedly began with an opening ceremony of the accompanying exhibition on the evening of 26 June, and ended the next evening with a cocktail party marking the beginning of the conference (Ministarstvo kulture 2014d; MK/HINA 2014). The conference was attended by 24 theorists of contemporary art from six countries,⁶ but I did not manage to find any material regarding the events, except for the official communication published in the press, not even in the Museum of Contemporary Art

6 The participants were from Croatia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Germany, Montenegro, Serbia, and the USA.

(Franceschi, 2014; Moj Zagreb 2014; Glas Istre, 2014) (see Figures 4 & 5) The Ministry of Culture generously supported both events, setting aside 90,000 kunas for the needs of the conference and the exhibition (Ministarstvo kulture 2014c: 10).

The central national commemoration of the First World War Centenary took place between these two bizarre events, in the Great



Fig. 4: Poster for the exhibition *First World War and Avant-Garde Art: Deconstruction – Construction* (SOURCE: <https://www.avantgarde-museum.com/hr/museum/projects/prvi-svjetski-rat-i-avangardna-umjetnost-dekonstrukcija-konstrukcija/>).



Fig. 5: A view of the exhibition (SOURCE: <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/vijesti-8/izlozba-i-diskusijama-zapocelo-obilježavanje-stogodisnjice-prvoga-svjetskoga-rata/10768>).

Reading Room of the Croatian State Archives. Coincidentally, the same motif is found on the poster for the exhibition of the avant-garde and the cover of the booklet bearing the Centenary commemoration programme, whose copyright is held by none other than the Croatian State Archives.

At 9 o'clock in the morning on 27 June 2014, a common wreath was laid down beside the memorial ossuary by Zlatko Gareljčić, defence advisor and representative of the Croatian president Ivo Josipović; Goran Beus Richembergh, representative of the Croatian Parliament speaker; Predrag Matić, veterans' minister and representative of the Croatian prime minister Zoran Milanović; and Berislav Šipuš, deputy minister of culture. It is interesting that the event announcement did not mention a representative of the Parliament, even though one obviously attended, so one can assume that he or she joined the ceremony later (Ministarstvo kulture 2014d; Ministarstvo branitelja 2014). However, the inscription on the wreath's ribbon claimed that it was brought by three central Croatian institutions, without the Ministry of Culture, which was perhaps omitted simply due to lack of space, or due to a misunderstanding. The wreath was laid down 'in remembrance of



Fig. 6: The wreath laid down next to the fallen warriors' memorial in Mirogoj on 27 June 2014. (photo: V. Herman Kaurić).

the victims of the First World War' (see Figure 6). The dreary impression of the entire commemoration was highlighted by the two empty stands that had been set up by employees of the City Cemeteries, who had likely thought that there would be three delegations with three wreaths. (see Figure 6a)

This was followed by ceremonial speeches in the Croatian State Archives at 10 o'clock, accompanied by an artistic programme

conducted by the Croatian Radiotelevision Choir led by Maestro Tonči Bilić. Despite the late invitation, a considerable number of representatives of certain institutions gathered there, especially considering a large part of the higher diplomatic and political milieu, including Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, had already left to participate at the central Centenary commemoration in Sarajevo. I must, however, stress that the commemoration was attended by Croatian president Ivo Josipović, who had promised to do so at the preparation meeting with members of the Initiative Committee, and only left for Sarajevo afterwards (see Figure 7). In addition, speeches were held by the prime minister's representative, Predrag Matić; the Parliament speaker's representative, Goran Beus Richembergh; Andrea Zlatar Violić as the president of the Commission for Coordinating the First World War Centenary Commemoration; and Vlatka Lemić, director of the Croatian State Archives, the host (Puhovski & Filipović, 2014). ///

In his speech, President Josipović recalled his grandfather, a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army who had fought on the Isonzo and, unlike many others, returned home safely from the war. He also highlighted the complexity of the perceptions of the war in Croatia because some Croats had volunteered to serve in the Serbian army as well. In this context, he said: 'It is difficult to forget wars. Wars, unfortunately, do not seem to die and their consequences are felt through generations. But it is our duty, the duty of all those involved in politics, in society, to not allow new wars to begin. And for us who sit in various institutions, not only in Croatia, but in all countries throughout the



Fig. 7: Croatian president Ivo Josipović at the central Centenary commemoration (SOURCE: <https://branitelj.gov.hr/vijesti/ministar-matic-na-obiljezavanju-stogodisnjice-pocetka-prvog-svjetskog-rata/100>).

world, there is no duty more important than preventing another war among us.' (Zebić, 2014).

At 12 o'clock, a solemn mass for all those who fell in the First World War began in St Mark's Church in Zagreb's Upper Town, led by Military Ordinary Juraj Jezerinac in concelebration with the head of the Office for Cultural Property of the Archdiocese of Zagreb, Juraj Kolarić, and the local parish priest, Franjo Prstec. The mass was attended by representatives of the Croatian president and Parliament speaker, the Ministry of Culture and the Commission for Coordinating the First World War Centenary Commemoration, the Zagreb City Veterans' Office, and the Austrian ambassador, Andrea Ikić-Böhm. Apart from those mentioned, the mass was attended by a very small number of curious individuals and interested public figures.

Bishop Jezerinac finished his inspired homily with the words: 'We have gathered here in mutual love, without ideological, religious, national, or political flavour, for we know that all are equal in death. Each victim, regardless of which side they fought on, regardless of faith or nationality, or any other affiliation, deserves our respect, for we all are children of our heavenly Father. To separate them after death is not good. All need to be shown equal respect. This is why the whole world is gathering these days in a joint prayer for the repose of their souls. When we remember the First World War centenary today, let these regrettable events prompt us to think about what we are to do if a similar event afflicts us in the future. May the world never again see war as a way of life. Let this anniversary prompt us to deeper thinking about our lives and bring us to our God Christ, who is our only and true source of peace.' (IKA 2014).

Not a word was written about the commemoration in the most widely distributed Croatian newspapers like those days, and only a few mentioned the Centenary in Croatia at all. The *Večernji list* published, within a mosaic devoted to the war, a small article with excerpts from the speeches held in the Croatian State Archives was published under the title 'Ivo Josipović: Wars are Shadows that Always Follow Us' (*Večernji list* 2014: 12-13).

In Contrast, *Novi List* columnist Tihomir Ponoš pointed out the illogicality of the selected anniversary date because a successful assassination attempt on the Austro-Hungarian heir apparent and his wife was carried out on 28 June in Sarajevo, which was a pretext for the war, but the war itself began in early August. Ponoš claimed that 'this is how things go when there is no tradition regarding something, and there is little in the way of a tradition of commemorating and researching the First World War in Croatia' (Ponoš 2014b: 10). We could agree

with this, though not with the part that claims that nobody knows what to do and when to do it. Because knowing what to do is one thing, but actually implementing it on the state level is something that requires much more than just good will and knowledge, which the Centenary commemoration has clearly proven.

Many citizens only realised the importance of the Centenary in the following years, when numerous projects conducted by local institutions and enthusiasts were presented to the public. Prompted by what they saw, a considerable number of people began to research their family histories and find participants of the war among their ancestors. The Initiative Committee continued to appeal to the Ministry of Culture, striving to prompt a commemoration of the opening of the Isonzo Front in 2015, which was seen as a very important event in the other countries that had participated on that front, but not in Croatia



Fig. 8: The laying of wreaths during the installation of the memorial plaque to fallen Hungarians (SOURCE: <https://www.braniteljski-portal.com/na-mirogoju-otkrivena-spomen-ploca-madarskim-vojniscima-poginulim-u-prvom-svjetskom-ratu>).



Fig. 9: Memorial plaque to fallen Hungarian soldiers (photo: S. Kaurić).

(2015, September 11th). The Ministry completely ignored the appeal, with the verbal explanation that they were working on removing bureaucratic obstacles that had arisen from the decisions of the previous Government, because there had been a change of government and in the leaderships of all institutions, including the Ministry of Culture. In the end, the Committee members gave up and devoted themselves to their projects, which they realised thanks to private connections and acquaintances, and their personal funds.

In the meantime, the Hungarian military attaché managed to secure all the permits necessary for putting up a memorial plaque to fallen Hungarians next to the *Pietà* (see Figure 8), which had at first seemed impossible. The plaque was ceremoniously unveiled on 3 April 2018, with full military honours, attended by members of Croatian and Hungarian honorary battalions, defence ministers Damir Krstičević and István Simicskó, and numerous dignitaries (M.M., 2018; MŠ 2018). (see Figure 9) On that occasion, the Hungarian defence minister said, 'He who does not respect his ancestors and heroes, he is also not fit to respect the culture of others' (MŠ 2018). This example clearly shows that when there is a will, there is a way, and what such events should look like, as the mentioned commemoration looked genuinely solemn and dignified.

The new Hungarian defence minister, Tibor Benkő, arrived to Croatia for a two-day visit in October 2018 and, already on the first day, laid a wreath next to the Hungarian memorial plaque for their fallen soldiers and the central monument to all warriors. This time it was less ceremonious, but the Croatian defence minister, Damir Krstičević, attended again and laid wreaths on both spots (MORH 2018).

The First World War commemoration in Croatia was mostly prompted by the activities of foreign institutions or countries, and the same applied to the commemoration of the end of the First World War, which, in western countries, is traditionally held at 11 o'clock on 11 November, the date when the armistice on the Western Front was signed.

On that day in 2018, Josip Kučić, the rector of the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints Stephen and Ladislaus in Zagreb, held a solemn mass to mark the end of the war, and in his sermon, he emphasised reverence towards all the victims of the war. He stressed that building peace requires an unconditionally strong will to respect other people and nations and their dignity. The mass was attended by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković; Parliament Speaker Željko Reiner; Mate Granić, representative of the Croatian president; ambassadors and military attachés of numerous countries including the

USA and Canada; representatives of religious communities; and numerous other invitees. British ambassador Andrew Dalgleish bore on his lapel the apparently indispensable red poppy flower (GS 2018).

Foreign officials mostly emphasised the need for cooperation in preserving the peace, which should never be taken for granted and requires constant work. They especially highlighted the fact that former enemies are now allies, meaning above all France and Germany, and that it is possible to reconcile through earnest work. In contrast to this, in addition to expressing reverence towards all victims, Prime Minister Plenković stated that the war had changed the map of Europe and the future of the world (GS 2018; DD/H 2018; HRT 2018). I do not know, and perhaps I err, but I have the impression that Croatian politicians were only present because Europe and the rest of the world were commemorating the end of the war, so something of the sort had to be done in Croatia as well. At the same time, the central commemoration of the end of the First World War took place in France, and was attended by Croatian president Kolinda Grabar Kitarović (HINA/GS, 2018).

In addition to Mirogoj, wreaths were laid at the former military cemetery in Varaždin, where 424 soldiers were buried. Apart from the representatives of the highest state institutions (President, Parliament, Government), representatives of the ministries of defence, culture, and the veterans, representatives of Varaždin County, Homeland War veterans from the Puma association, and other citizens all paid their respects to the fallen (e-Varaždin 2018). (see Figure 10) A wreath was also laid next to the memorial plaque put up in 2014 on the so-called Rudolf's Barracks in Zagreb, in honour of Croatian soldiers fallen on



Fig. 10: Commemoration of the end of World War I in Varaždin (SOURCE: <https://evarazdin.hr/preporucamo/stricak-svaki-rat-je-nesto-najstrasnije-sto-se-ljudskom-rodu-moze-dogoditi-373670/>).

battlefields throughout Europe from 1914 to 1918. The exhibition *1918: A Pivotal Year in Croatia* was held in the Croatian History Museum, and resulted in a catalogue of the same name (Smetko 2018), while a new reprint of Ivo Pilar's book *The South Slavic Question and World War I* was launched in the Croatian State Archives, in honour of the centenary of the annexation of Međimurje to Croatia (GS, 2018).

At the end, I must mention a lasting memorial to the end of the First World War, a coin of 92.5 percent pure silver with a nominal value of 150 kunas, issued by the Croatian National Bank and designed



Fig. 11: Silver commemorative coin issued on the Centenary of the end of World War I (SOURCE:<https://www.hnb.hr/-/100-obljetnice-zavrsetka-prvoga-svjetskog-rata-1918-2018->).

by the Croatian Monetary Institute Ltd. The coin, of which no more than 2,000 were minted, became available for purchase on 31 October 2018, and the total production cost was limited to 300,000 kunas. The silver coin is 37 mm in diameter, weighs 24 g, and was designed by sculptor Ana Divković. It can be purchased for 407.5 kunas (HNB 2018a; HNB 2021: 1).

The commemorative coin's obverse depicts the representatives of the belligerent sides in the First World War, witnesses and signatories of the armistice that ended the war, in front of the railway carriage in Compiègne in which it was signed. The inscription '1918–2018' is found on the left side of the depiction, and the inscriptions 'COMPIÈGNE' and '11. 11. 1918.' on the right side. Above the depiction of the signatories and witnesses of the armistice and the railway carriage, a semicircular inscription '100. OBLJETNICA' ('100th ANNIVERSARY') is written along the top edge of the coin, and is continued in a semicircle below the depiction, along the bottom edge with the words 'ZAVRŠETKA PRVOGA SVJETSKOG RATA' ('OF THE END OF WORLD WAR I'). The coin's reverse bears a depiction of

the battleship *Viribus Unitis* in its centre, shown anchored in the port of Pula on 31 October 1918, when Austria-Hungary handed the ship and its entire remaining fleet over to the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, so the ship is flying a Croatian flag. Above the depiction of the battleship stands the inscription 'REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA' ('REPUBLIC OF CROATIA'), while the Croatian coat of arms is depicted on the upper-right part of the coin. The coin's denomination, '150', is shown below the depiction of the battleship, along with the name of the monetary unit: 'KUNA' ('KUNAS') (HNB, 2018b).

CONCLUSION

In 2014, developed countries honoured their citizens who had participated in the war, soldiers and civilians, in various ways, expressing sorrow for the victims and gratitude to all. Reverence was also shown for the enemy side, constantly highlighting the fact that war is a great evil for all, regardless of on whose side our ancestors fought. From the Croatian perspective, the attempts of other countries seemed very meaningful and unanimous, which is not entirely true, but the scant news that reached Croatia left a different impression and fed the frustrations of the Initiative Committee. Croatia eventually organised its own commemoration ceremonies on the centenaries of the beginning and end of the First World War, however reluctantly and only after European institutions and civil society organisations had started their own projects, which 'leaked into' Croatia due to geostrategic conditions. Were it not for this, I am fairly certain that Croatia would have met the Centenary in silence, save for a few lonely voices here and there. And even then, state institutions relied too heavily on the symbolism of the western Entente (the coin is the best example of this), which is mostly the result of not having enough time for such a complex task, but also of the fact that there is no such symbolism that stems from the collective memory of the war in Croatia.

In hindsight, it was a difficult trench war with state institutions on all levels, in which the greatest obstacle was the lack of understanding of the importance of the First World War for Croatia today. For me personally, the most distressing part was the stance of the head of an important museum institution, who saw no reason to prepare for the First World War Centenary because they had already covered the topic extensively a few years ago and had nothing new to add. In contrast, other institutions did organise one or more events during the Centenary, but

these were not part of state commemorations and are thus not mentioned in this paper.

Some things have changed substantially since the anniversary years, but the basic problem regarding the senior institutions is, frustratingly, the same: who even cares about the First World War and why is it important? In hindsight, it appears that the First World War commemoration in Croatia should be considered ancient history, because an unfortunate set of circumstances has made the war seem even further off, even more ancient, in the consciousness of ordinary people than was the case in 2014, or even 2018, when there was considerable discussion of the Centenary in the Croatian public arena. Since then, central Croatia, including its capital city, Zagreb, suffered two major earthquakes, both in 2020, a global pandemic, and a series of lesser, local natural disasters, and this has made discussions of some old war seem pointless, at least for the time being.

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Slovenian Remembrance Landscape in a Centennial Perspective

PETRA SVOLJŠAK

“The war of 1914–1918 belongs to no one, not even to historians,” read the introduction of Jay Winter’s and Antoine Prost’s English edition of *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Winter, Prost 2005: 1). The Great War gained its “grand” title already in 1915, while the German *Weltkrieg* is of even older origin, as it was used before 1914 to designate great wars between European superpowers; however, the Eurocentric aspect prevailed after 1914. Before 1914, the expression *great war* was used to describe wars between European superpowers or wars of global historical meaning, but not in the sense of world wars (Janz 2014). During the war, the expression *European war* was also used, while the designation *great* implied the massive scale of the conflict – the first such conflict since the Napoleonic Wars and only comparable to the current designation of a *100-year flood*. However, the denomination had also moral

implications, especially for the Triple Entente that was fighting against the evil German militarism, analogous to the Biblical battle between good and evil at Armageddon. Sometimes, it was also called the *great war for civilisation* (Lang 2014). The centenary of the First World War, however, brought an addition to the terminology, with *the Great War* becoming *the greater war*. This was due to the “realisation,” particularly by Western European First World War historiography that recognised it as the most relevant of its kind, that the military conflict in some parts of Europe began as early as 1912 and did not end until 1923, with larger chronological and geographical dimensions (see e. g. Fogarty 2015: 97-112).

The sheer volume of works produced on this topic is impressive. If Jay Winter and Antoine Prost noted 50,000 titles in the catalogue of the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine* in Paris in 2005, highlighting the impressive number of monographs published from the mid-1980s to the end of the 1990s (e.g. 1100 books in French, including more than 100 in 1998), the centenary has certainly multiplied these figures many times over. For comparison, let us examine the situation in Slovenia. Based on the entries in COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) encompassing the works of all Slovenian libraries, there were 2952 bibliographic units published on the topic of the Second World War from 1918 to 2014, of which 1120 were published in the last ten years, and 1757 from 1994 to 2014, among them 447 monographs (scientific, popular, guides, catalogues, theses, etc.) and 1052 units dedicated to the Isonzo Front. According to COBISS, 1456 (537 dedicated to the Isonzo Front) bibliographic units have been published in Slovenian during the last eight years.

The history of works about the First World War is primarily a history of the various topics that have been at the forefront of research at a particular time and place, but it is certainly telling that the further we move away from the event, the greater the interest it attracts, not least, but certainly also, because of the centenary of its beginning, its continuation, and its end. In the development of any form of historiography and public memory, there are undeniable fluctuations, ebbs, and flows; in the Slovenian case, however, we cannot use such literal terms, because it presupposes a continuous development over several decades, which has only been present here for the last forty years.

On the other hand, we can observe that Slovenian remembrance of the First World War oscillated between triumph and oblivion during the first half of the century. Oblivion also accompanied Slovenian historical remembrance of the Austro-Hungarian war experience at

a time when the First World War was a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's shared Yugoslav history, which was marked by military and political efforts for the unification of South Slavs. Nevertheless, the period between the two wars was considerably more productive in the field of First World War journalism, with many recollections of the military years, captivity, and wartime uprisings, and surprisingly few of the Isonzo Front.

With the creation of Kingdom SHS, an ethnocentric model was introduced into historical remembrance, and the struggle for control over memory of the past also became a struggle for political dominance in the newly emerged South Slavic state. The fact that Serbs (the former Kingdom of Serbia) possessed a great amount of political capital after the war as victors, helping to dissolve the Habsburg Monarchy and liberating South Slavs in order to unite with them in a common state, was also vital in the formation of state-building memory.

Particularly in the first post-war years, Slovenian collective memory of the First World War was shaped by the memory of the year 1914, when so-called military absolutism was introduced in the Austrian part of the monarchy and political persecution was widespread. The year 1914 also gave rise to various reactions and interpretations in the Slovenian public and partly also in historiography, making Slovenian historian Janko Pleterški's introductory thought in his 1971 reference work, *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Jugoslavijo* (Slovenians' First Decision for Yugoslavia), still crucially relevant:

Even more than after its outbreak, the genuine attitude of Slovenians towards the war was revealed during the days of the acute crisis triggered by the assassination in Sarajevo. The danger of war was looming at that time, and the Austrian authorities had not yet set in motion the preparatory mechanism of military absolutism. (Pleterški 1971: 9)

Turbulent times and processes leading up to the First World War undoubtedly profoundly shaped the historical memory of the Habsburg/Austrian period in Slovenian history, but the memory was tainted by events of the First World War during the war and also in the following decades. The perception of Austria as the prison of the peoples, albeit this term has never been used in historiography to describe it, was the result of strongly biased commemorative literature about the formation of the Yugoslav state between 1918 and 1941. Ivan Lah, a member of the rebirth movement ("Preporod") consisting of revolutionary youth aiming to dissolve Austria-Hungary and unify with other South Slavs, wrote: "This evening, as I boarded our train in Zemun, I heard someone speak Hungarian and felt as if I were in prison" (Lah 1925: 45).

On the other hand, the relationship of Slovenians with their former homelands (the Habsburg Monarchy, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, socialist Yugoslavia) has ebbed and flowed, which had an impact on the collective memory of past events. As Slovenian historian Peter Vodopivec has noted, the image of Slovenia's three former homelands in school textbooks, historiography, and even more so, public memory has been decidedly grim (Vodopivec 2014). In recent decades, the image of the Dual Monarchy has improved, and school textbooks have also highlighted the fact that, despite the pressure of Germanisation, Slovenians developed into a modern nation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, it has been acknowledged that the majority of Slovenian-speaking inhabitants in Slovenian lands were sincerely loyal to the Habsburg crown and saw the monarchy as their homeland. Aspirations for an independent state thus prevailed only during times of extreme internal crisis, when accepting compromises was no longer an option (Pleteriški 1971: 9).

Concerning national or patriotic feelings and the formation of collective memory, it should also be noted that loyalties, allegiances, and identities were intertwined at three levels: ethnically Slovenian, crownland loyalty (Carniola, Carinthia, Styria, Austrian Littoral), and dynastic Habsburg, meaning above all loyalty to the dynasty and the emperor, who as a political icon united the nations and was therefore worthy of the complete trust of his citizens.

At a conceptual level, processes and events in the new state were interpreted as the history of the united Yugoslav nation and were in harmony with the politically declared trinity of the peoples of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Many of the "unification" myths were based on experiences of the First World War, which, however, were very heterogeneous and created an almost schizophrenic situation between the winners (Serbia) and the losers (ex-Austro-Hungarian Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs), which naturally put the commemoration processes in a difficult position, as commemorating victory and defeat at the same time was, of course, impossible.

One of the main sources of state-building mythology was the volunteer movement, which represented only a small number of Slovenians, as only around 4,000 Slovenians joined the movement. For instance, only in the first battles on the Serbian front in 1914, around 12,000 volunteers joined the Serbian army, but only 24 were Slovenians, thus making the volunteers' contribution to the liberation of South Slaves in Austria-Hungary symbolic at best (Svoljšak and Antoličič 2018: 126). This was also reflected in the new Yugoslav reality, where

the understanding of the role of Slovenian volunteers was also purely symbolic and relegated to the periphery of commemoration processes, and where all initiatives came from the representatives of the volunteers themselves. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the majority of texts on the First World War written in the interwar period were dedicated to the volunteer movement (Svoljšak 1993: 272-75). This was also reflected in school textbooks, as the volunteer movement compared its multinational character with the Yugoslav and non-Serbian character of the new Yugoslav state.



Fig. 1: The frontpage of the memorial book “Dobrovoljci kladivarji Jugoslavije 1912 – 1918” (Ljubljana 1936).

However, there were double standards even within the volunteer movement, and state-building public memory was certainly discriminatory towards a certain part of volunteers, namely Yugoslav volunteers within the Italian army. On the other hand, the memories of this movement, organised by First Lieutenant Ljudevit Pivko, constitute a specific and important part of Slovenian remembrance of the First World War (Pivko 1923¹, 1991²). In September 1917, Lieutenant-Commander Pivko and the majority of his regiment defected to the Italian side. Convinced that this was the only way to fight against Austria-Hungary, they opened a front to the Italians against the enemy at Carzano. However, the Italian army captured them as prisoners of war. Imprisoned, Pivko organised a volunteer detachment among the captured Slavic and South Slavic officers and fought with them on various parts of the Italian front. Pivko’s position after the

war was a reflection of the political situation at the time and the situation of an ex-Slovenian officer of the former Austro-Hungarian army. During political struggles in Yugoslav Slovenia in the 1920s, there were accusations, on the one hand, that Pivko was a traitor, and on the other, that he had deliberately ignored the Yugoslav Committee, which was in charge of Yugoslav unification. Pivko strongly refuted the accusations, noting, in particular, the inhibiting/negative role of the Yugoslav Committee in organising Yugoslav volunteers in Italy, since they only accepted volunteering in the Serbian army and under oath to King Petar. It is also worth mentioning Lovro Kuhar, also known as Prežihov Voranc, the writer of the first Slovenian war novel, who aspired to join the ranks of the Yugoslav volunteer division throughout his captivity in Italy, but his wish remained unfulfilled. The establishment of the Yugoslav division was hindered by the Italian government because of its territorial gains in the London Memorandum of 1915, and it did not allow Slovenian and Croatian prisoners of war to join the division. The Italians, however, reportedly sent some eager “volunteers” to the front in Tyrol, where they dug trenches, including Kuhar. In September 1918, he was finally “enlisted” by the Yugoslav division, but he could not live out his wish for active participation in the struggle against Austria-Hungary due to the war coming to an end.

An important Yugoslav myth, which has also been comprehensively internalised by Slovenian (volunteer) authors, was the ordeal of the Serbian Great Retreat through Albania to the coast. This became a constitutive myth in Yugoslav nation-building and led to narrative hyper-production, which also incorporated biblical symbolism and was used by Slovenian writers of memoirs remembering the Albanian Golgotha. In their narratives, Slovenian writers sometimes glorified the heroism and sacrifice of the Serbian people, while also assessing the Slovenian people during the war as unprepared for freedom, because slavery was so profoundly rooted in their hearts and minds (Jeras 1938: 22).

The post-war position of Slovenian war veterans and former members of the disbanded Austro-Hungarian army also have had a considerable impact on Slovenian public memory of the First World War (Svoljšak 2006: 277-88; Newman 2018). The war veterans were tasked with preserving the memory of their fallen comrades, but they also encountered a difficult social situation, partly stemming from the existing legislation that privileged the volunteers and, of course, Serbian and Montenegrin war veterans. The Veterans' Association *Bojevniki* (Warriors) was only founded in 1931. It was a non-partisan and non-political organisation with a fundamental guiding

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the coronation of the image of Mary, Help of Christians (1907) in Brezje, in preparation for the ceremony on August 28 and 29, 1937, the idea was conceived of redeveloping the area in front of the church to create a large park, where monuments to deserving men and women and Mary's worshippers would be erected. The tomb of an unknown Slovenian soldier was to be erected in memory of all Slovenian soldiers buried in all of the places where the war raged, while a fountain with a statue of Mary Help of Christians was to stand in the monastery garden as a symbol of her love and mercy. The monument was hailed as a symbol of peace, reconciliation, and comradeship, and the idea of the unknown Slovenian soldier's tomb, into which the remains of the soldier would be transported, was unique and highly symbolic, with each Slovenian parish contributing soil from its own cemetery in special urns as a symbol of community and the shared sacrifices of all Slovenians.

The Veterans' Association strove to ensure that Slovenian war victims were also commemorated in a fitting and lasting way at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Ljubljana. During the war, soldiers of various nationalities and religions were buried at this cemetery, including prisoners of war who died in the military hospital in Ljubljana, mostly Italians. Evangelical, Jewish, and Muslim soldiers were buried in a separate Evangelical Saint Christopher cemetery, which was closed in the 1950s. For a long time, the Association unsuccessfully addressed requests and applications to competent institutions to build the cemetery, and in 1932, the Ljubljana municipality finally accepted the initiative of the Veterans' Association to open a military cemetery at the Holy Cross Cemetery. The task was entrusted to architect Jože Plečnik, who drew up a plan for the cemetery. As early as 1923, the remains of the Judenburg rebellions were transported to the Holy Cross Cemetery and ceremoniously buried under the watchful eye of the *Kranjski Janez* statue, the work of Slovenian sculptors Svitoslav Peruzzi and Lojze Dolinar (1916). Architect Plečnik envisioned erecting a mighty monument in the shape of three pyramids on the same site, to serve as a central landmark for the entire cemetery. However, the plan was never carried out; instead, in 1939, in accordance with the plans of architect Edo Ravnikar, Plečnik's pupil, a military charnel house surrounded by a burial ground park was built and consecrated in December of the same year. There, a total of 5,238 victims of the First World War were buried, including the Judenburg victims, Slovenian fighters who had fallen in Carinthia, a member of the Preporod Ivan Endlicher, prisoners of war, and soldiers who had been buried in the Evangelical cemetery.



Fig. 3: A drawing of the Plečnik's idea of the monument on the Holy Cross cemetery, published in *Bojevnik*, II (3), June 25, 1932.

In addition, the veterans devoted themselves to finding solutions to the everyday struggles of their members, above all their difficult economic situation, as the majority of them were peasantry and working-class, and disability benefits were one of the most pressing among the surviving veterans of the First World War.

According to the 1922 census, there were around 85,290 disabled veterans of the First World War in the Kingdom of SCS. The national structure indicated that there were 33,666 Serbian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin disabled veterans, of which 13,500 were Serbs from the former Austro-Hungarian empire, 20,166 soldiers were from the former kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, 21,308 were Croats, 11,467 were Slovenian, while the rest were members of other nations, mostly Germans (2,657) and Hungarians (2,527) (Kresal 1998: 229).

In any case, the Slovenian share was very large, representing as much as 15.4 per cent of all disabled veterans, even though the Slovenian regions constituted only 8.5 per cent of the Yugoslav population. According to the census, the most impacted was the age group between 30 and 40, while 28 per cent were older and 10 per cent were younger, indicating that those most affected were soldiers between the ages of 23 and 37. Providing for the material needs of such a large share of the population was thus extremely difficult and required a systemic approach (Kresal 1999: 307). In the Slovenian regions of the Kingdom of SCS, a fifth of Slovenian families was lastingly affected by the war, according to some data. There were supposedly 31,039 widows supporting 49,182 dependent family members, while other data indicates a lower number of war widows, namely, 27,000 (Kresal 1999: 307).

However, a definite and uniform solution for disabled veterans on a state level was not established until 1925, when the Disabilities Act of 17 November 1925 went into effect. Until then, disabled veterans and families of fallen or missing soldiers exercised their right to disability benefits in accordance with the old legislation of the states they were a part of before the First World War, i.e. Serbian, Hungarian, and Austrian legislation (December 27, 1875). From 1918 to 1925, the regulation of the National Government of the Kingdom of SHS

of 20 November 1918 also applied, but only to Yugoslav Slovenia. The Regulation on Temporary Emergency Relief Assistance to People with Disabilities and Families of Fallen Soldiers of 14 May 1920, amended on March 15, 1921, and published as the Temporary Emergency Relief Assistance to People with Disabilities and Families of Fallen and Missing Soldiers as well as Other Civil Victims of the War Act of 28 December 1921, applied to the whole Kingdom.

Nevertheless, the differences regarding the value of temporary disability pensions and other rights derived from the abovementioned legislation endured. The 1920 and 1921 regulations defined as disabled veterans those soldiers who, according to the laws of the former kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and Austria-Hungary respectively, had performed military duty or service as conscripts, volunteers for the reunification of Yugoslavia, and who, through no fault of their own, were wounded or had their health impaired to such an extent that they were declared unfit for military service by the competent military authorities and their capacity to engage in gainful activity was reduced by 20 per cent. Prisoners of war who “met” the conditions for disabled veterans were also included.



Fig. 4: The statue of Kranjski Janez at the Žale cemetery (photo P. Svoljšak).

The regulation also defined the status of civilians disabled in the war, stipulating that persons who, due to military operations and through no fault of their own, sustained the same injuries as disabled veterans were eligible to acquire this status. Similarly, the eligibility conditions for disability benefits for war widows, internees, families of

dead or killed internees and detainees, and dependent family members were meticulously set out. According to F. Kresal, the economic situation of Slovenian disabled veterans was dire, as almost 67 per cent were not homeowners, while 23 per cent lived below the subsistence level. Disabled veterans were eligible for numerous privileges and disability benefits, which were also available to family members of fallen, dead, or missing soldiers; however, that represented only 5 per cent of the assets required for a family of four to support itself. That only goes to show that “disability benefits were only a state recognition and not a meaningful assistance for the support of families of fallen soldiers or provision of a decent life for disabled veterans, which they, of course, should have” (Kresal 1998: 311).

The fact that disability pensions were set based on the political decision that only certain categories of disabled veterans and families of fallen soldiers were eligible for it also contributed to this situation. The main condition was participation in the struggle for the Yugoslav state, as the sacrifice for liberation and Yugoslav unification was rewarded by doubling the disabled benefits. The privileged group was comprised of disabled veterans, families of fallen, dead or missing soldiers, and war orphans from the former Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, whereas only disabled volunteers and families of fallen, dead, or missing volunteers from the newly-annexed regions, as the Temporary Emergency Relief Assistance to People with Disabilities and Families of Fallen and Missing Soldiers as well as Other Civil Victims of the War Act of 1921 defined the former Austro-Hungarian regions, were eligible for support in accordance with the Serbian legislation of 1914. Former internees and detainees from around the country, victims who became disabled due to the cruelty of the enemy, and families of persons who were killed by the enemy or died in internment were also eligible for these benefits. All other disabled veterans, i.e. mostly former Austro-Hungarian soldiers, received disability pensions in accordance with the legislation of the dissolved Habsburg Monarchy.

Therefore, disability benefits for disabled veterans from former Austro-Hungarian regions were between 55 per cent and 71 per cent lower than those guaranteed for soldiers from Serbian and Montenegrin regions, while the situation regarding disability benefits for families was even worse as they were between 55 per cent and 85 per cent lower. This persisted for seven years, even though the level of benefits fluctuated due to inflation and high prices; however, the inequalities remained. In 1925, the Assembly of the Kingdom of SCS finally adopted a new disabled persons act that harmonised the rights of disabled veterans as well as those of the families of fallen, dead, or missing

soldiers across the country. This eliminated the disparity in the value of disability pensions and modified the definition of disabled veterans to include any Yugoslav citizen who became disabled during military service from the date of mobilisation until six weeks after demobilisation; the status was thus linked to military operations as well as peacetime if the injury or illness occurred through no fault of their own while on military duty.

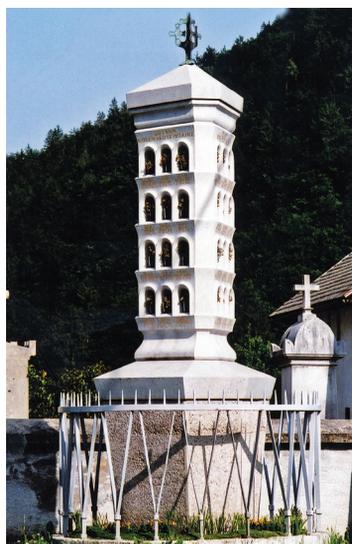


Fig. 5: The monument to the falls soldiers, Bohinjska Bela (photo D. Svoljšak).

The main eligibility condition became military service and official duty (non-military persons who became sick due to exile, combat, or defending the border as part of official duties were also given the status of disabled persons), whereas the legislation did not include civilian disabled persons and civilian victims of war as was the case before. Civilian disabled persons and disabled veterans were eligible only for activities or injuries that happened during military- or war-related activities. Despite the additional forms of state protection and assistance, such as disability allowances and disability benefits, which accounted for about 90 per cent of the rights guaranteed by law, the situation of World War veterans, disabled veterans, and families of fallen soldiers was very unfavourable, as they did not receive social insurance or any other protection for other threats to their existence. The soldiers warned that, above all, a lot of work and inventiveness was required “for a person to be able to enjoy their legal rights. Before this happens, many of those poor souls could wither away” (*Bojevník*, 15.11.1931: 3).

Furthermore, the inequalities and discrimination against veterans of the former Austro-Hungarian army compared to volunteers and other soldiers for Yugoslav unification did not end with the establishment of the SFR Yugoslavia. In 1970, the Association of Slovenian Military Volunteers from the Wars of 1912 to 1918 was founded, and in 1971 the Slovenian Assembly passed the Act on the Fighters for the Northern Border and on Slovenian Military Volunteers from the Wars of 1912 to 1918, when Slovenian volunteers were given a special place in the Slovenian Constitution. In 1980, a monument to them, the work of renowned Slovenian sculptor Janez Boljka, was erected on the Dvorni Square in Ljubljana.

The new Yugoslav authorities' discriminatory attitude was also reflected in the treatment of active officers of Slovenian and Croatian nationalities, whose loyalty was always questioned by Yugoslav military authorities. Since loyalty and patriotism meant above all devotion to Serbian state traditions and symbols, there were many reasons to doubt the loyalty of non-Serbian officers. As I. Banac points out, even in such simple and mundane cases as the use of the Cyrillic or Latin alphabet, the use of the Latin alphabet was often taken to represent an anti-state sentiment. This resulted in frequent resignations from the army, which were often refused by military authorities, who imprisoned advocates who drew attention to national inequality. Thus, on the eve of the Second World War, only 31 Croats and 22 Slovenians remained out of 191 staff officers. The direct and immediate link between the army and the Crown, and their rootedness in Serbian political tradition, Serbian national ideology, and Serbian First World War mythology, consequently constituted a major obstacle to the establishment of equal relations within the new Yugoslav state community (Banac 1984: 151–52). Even in commemoration of the fallen, it was impossible to establish equal relations between those who sacrificed their lives for their homelands.

In the fields of journalism and historiography, an important subject was that of military mutinies in the Austro-Hungarian army, which was present in the public both during the two world wars and after 1945, and which waned from public memory after the 1990s, when it became a mere footnote in historiographical overviews (Svoljšak 1993: 263–87, 547–67; Svoljšak 2014: 143–71).

The Austrian authorities linked the mutinies to Bolshevik propaganda, which was supposedly spread by returnees from Russian captivity, some of whom were indeed leaders of individual rebellions. The mass movement in support of the May Declaration, which swept across Slovenian lands and was reflected in the slogans used by rebel



Fig. 6: The monument to the volunteers in Ljubljana, Dvorni trg, 1980 (photo M. Zaplatil).

soldiers, also had a significant influence on the revolts. In terms of public commemoration, it is worth noting that in the period between the two world wars, military mutinies were interpreted mainly as processes that contributed to the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, although the rebels were not attributed any particular heroic qualities in the public discourse. Most of the records were written on the anniversaries of the mutinies or their epilogues, i.e. the summary trials and executions of the leaders of the mutinies. A special occasion was certainly the transfer of Judenburg victims to the Holy Cross Cemetery in Ljubljana in 1923.

After 1945, the issue of military uprisings remained prominent in public remembrance, and the debate was certainly influenced from 1968 onwards by the publication of a translation of a study by the Czech military historian, Karel Pichlík, *Z ruského zajetí do boje proti válce* (From Russian Captivity to the Fight Against War) (Ljubljana), which, as the title suggests, expresses the fundamental tenet of the Slavic freedom fighters in 1918, namely, the struggle against the war. Lojze Ude (Ude 1967: 965-67; Ude 1968: 185-205; Ude 1968a) and Vlado Vodopivec (Vodopivec 1967: 121-27; 1967a, 1115-121; 1968, 11.5.1968) placed the mutinies in the broader context of the events in the Monarchy, namely returnees from Russian captivity and their longing for revolution, which would bring the war to an end, thereby refuting the biased and simplified interpretation that these mutiny instigators aimed to spread Bolshevism. As Vodopivec argued, a socialist revolution was a means of fulfilling their dreams of peace. Only in 1976, the first mutiny in the Austro-Hungarian army, that of Cattaro (January 1918), received a monographic treatment, which is the only original Slovenian monograph on military mutinies (Perhauc, 1976).

Given the significance and contemporary state of Slovenian public discourse on the First World War, the Isonzo Front represents a central building block of public commemoration of the Great War in Slovenia. However, political circumstances over the past hundred (and more) years have profoundly influenced the extent to which the memory of the Isonzo Front, with all its dimensions and influences, has been present in the Slovenian public.

In the period between the two world wars, it was certainly influenced, first of all, by the national/political context. The territory of the former battlefield that stretched between the Kingdom of Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, under the terms of the London Memorandum, the Armistice of Villa Giusti, and, of course, the Treaty of Rapallo, with a large chunk of former Carniola, came under the Italian rule, which based its post-war ideology and state-forming mythology precisely on the events of the First World War and the Isonzo Front (as the 4th Italian War of Independence), excluding any form of public remembrance and commemoration of the processes and events linked with the Austrian past of the so-called new provinces.

Even the great military defeat of the Italian army in the 12th Battle of the Isonzo, known as Caporetto, which is still used as a metaphor in Italy, was turned into a great moral victory for the Italian army and the country and marked the beginning of a new (victorious) Italian military era in the interwar period, after the issue of guilt was “resolved,” as discussed by the special parliamentary commission *La commissione d'inchiesta su Caporetto* (The Commission of Inquiry on Kobarid). It was the area of the former battlefield, the so-called redeemed territory, that was marked by the Italian state in the 1920s with open-air museums, named as *zona sacra* (holy site), while, in the late 1930s, the Italian state built monumental charnel houses all along the former front, the largest of which was in Redipuglia in the Karst region of Trieste, and, in the Slovenian ethnic territory, in Oslavia (now in Italy) and Kobarid, where most of the remains of Italian soldiers were re-buried from military cemeteries. The myth of the unknown soldier was also born on the redeemed territories as the remains of the unknown Italian soldier made their last journey by train from the Basilica of Aquileia to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at *Piazza Venezia* in Rome in 1921.

The memory of the people inhabiting the most affected regions during the war and who had lived through the atrocities of war on multiple levels, from refugeedom to life in the hinterland or under foreign military occupation, was publicly suppressed. Overwhelmed by the current events of increasing fascist violence, the memory was not given

the chance to live, since the historical, material, and moral circumstances of everyday life had hardly changed in comparison to wartime, and the memory was, in a sense, also a reflection of the real-life situation. The arrival of fascism in Slovenian and Croatian regions marked the suppression of all national life, which retreated into intimacy, with memory eventually sinking into oblivion.

On the other hand, the Isonzo Front did not fit into the Yugoslav memorial landscape at all, because it did not contain the elements of the (military, political) struggle for a future unified Yugoslav state. It was thus almost overlooked by authors and, of course, completely neglected by the ruling politicians. Therefore, few memorial records of the Isonzo Front were published in the inter-war period (Svoljšak 1993: 276–78) and it was not until 1936 that Amandus Pepernik's important memoir *Doberdob, slovenskih fantov grob* (Doberdò, the Grave of Slovenian Lads) was published, a title that became synonymous with Slovenian presence and sacrifice on the Isonzo battlefield, also depicted in the popular song *Oj Doberdob, slovenskih fantov grob* (lyrics by Fran Bonač, scored by Zorko Prelovec). (Stanonik 2020: 136) The first Slovenian war novel was only published in 1940, again under the title *Doberdob, vojni roman slovenskega naroda* (Doberdò, a War Novel of the Slovenian Nation), written by Lovro Kuhar - Prežihov Voranc.



Fig. 7: Doberdo plateau during the Isonzo front (Archive Ciril Prestor, ZRC SAZU, Milko Kos Historical Institute).

The memory of the war starting in the Slovenian front yard was preserved owing to the creativity of famous Slovenian artists (Maksim Gaspari, Hinko Smrekar, Ivan Vavpotič). During the war, they created unforgettable and ever-present postcards with wartime motifs, with art accompanied by poetry, which focused mainly on refugees. However, long years of relative lull after 1945 pushed the Isonzo Front on the brink of total oblivion. The Isonzo Front has indeed become a hot topic today, endlessly discussed from a military point of view; however, some of the processes triggered by the Isonzo battlefield were historiographically completely forgotten until the 1980s, but luckily not erased from memory.

Slovenian historiography in the interwar period was mainly concerned with medieval history and the rise of the Slovenian national movement in the 19th century, and after 1945, focused explicitly on the Second World War, with the First World War remaining in the shadows of historiographical interest, with the exception of topics related to the formation of the Yugoslav state. The interwar ethnocentric concept of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was replaced by the concept of supranational sacrifice of the partisan liberation movement during the Second World War, and later by the assertion of the concept of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav nations and nationalities. The reasons for this attitude are certainly linked to the victory of the liberation movement in the Second World War and the social revolution, as well as the construction of a new Yugoslav political and social system. But it can be noted that the Yugoslav communist regime tolerated the thematisation of certain topics of the First World War, only now that perspective partly changed. The best example of this perspective change is the view of military mutinies, now seen as a subversive element of the dual monarchy after 1918, with their heroic socialist charge particularly emphasised in 1945.

The inertia of Slovenian historiography in dealing with the First World War was overcome by activities of amateur historians, who dealt particularly with the military events on the Isonzo Front, while official historiography, most notably in the first decades after 1945, dealt only with more politically convenient topics. Nevertheless, this period also saw the publication of the first and still reference monograph on the political circumstances of the incorporation of Slovenian lands into the new unified Yugoslav kingdom. In his book *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Jugoslavijo (Slovenians' First Decision for Yugoslavia)*, Janko Pleterški focused on the so-called military absolutism and political persecution in Slovenian crownlands of the former monarchy, as well as the political circumstances that led to the dissolution of the monarchy and entry into the new state, which was systematically addressed years later, most notably by Walter Lukan (Lukan 2008: 91-149; 2007: 217-83); 2014; 2017).

Thus, it was only the democratisation of political life in Slovenia, and thereby of (historical) science, that brought about changes in the treatment of the First World War towards the end of the 1980s. As in other successor states of the Habsburg monarchy, the fall of communism opened up the possibility for historiographical optimism and pluralism as old prejudices were fading, although they had not yet completely dissipated. Schindler also attributes this shift to the dictatorial and undemocratic regimes that ruled these countries, arguing



Fig. 8: Austro-Hungarian military cemetery at Gorjansko (Archive Ciril Prestor, ZRC SAZU, Milko Kos Historical Institute).

that after living in/experiencing them, the Habsburg Monarchy could hardly be called oppressive in comparison (Schindler 2003: 130).

Slovenian historiography of the First World War may not have followed the development path outlined in Western European historiography, but if the year 1992 is considered a turning point for Western European historiography – as the year of the opening of the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* museum and research centre in Perrone, near the former Somme battlefields, which was supposed to bring us closer to a transnational or at least comparative way of researching and presenting the history of the First World War – Slovenia must look to the year 2004, when the Slovenian Society (*Slovenska matica*), under the expert leadership of Peter Vodopivec, organised the first multi-disciplinary Slovenian symposium, *The Great War and the Slovenians*. At the time, Slovenian First World War history was placed within the European context of the Great War, using a name that best defined the multidimensionality of the wartime and the wartime experience. The ground-breaking nature of the symposium was not only the result of a multi-disciplinary approach, but also a variety of topics (literature, art, censorship, heritage, historiography, hinterland, religion, stereotypes) placed in a cultural-historical perspective, as well as the fact that this was the first such joint effort of Slovenian science to shed light on what happened in Slovenian regions during the First World War from various

perspectives, to confront different methodological approaches, and to show the possibilities of using various sources to gain an insight into the past. It is also worth mentioning that as early as 1995, the publishing house *Nova revija* published the chronicle *Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja* (the Slovenian Chronicle of the 20th Century), in which various First World War themes, including political, cultural, economic, and military, were presented to the Slovenian public as chronicle entries, with the First World War being named one of the turning points of Slovenian history in the twentieth century (Drnovšek and Bajt: 1995).

The awakening of Slovenian collective memory of the First World War and especially the Isonzo Front began in the 1980s, even though the first efforts to showcase the events of the Isonzo Front and the First World War can be traced back to the late 1960s when the regional Goriški Museum laid out plans for a First World War Museum at Mount Sveta Gora near Nova Gorica, a popular pilgrimage spot with a basilica dedicated to St Mary, destroyed during the war and famous for its miraculous image of Mother of God, and which shared its destiny with that of the people as it was moved to Carniola. The plan was rejected by local cultural and political authorities, claiming that the time was not yet right and that addressing the Second World War was still a priority. This could be also attributed to the fact that the territories lost during the First World War were annexed to the Republic of Slovenia after the Second World War.

In terms of subject matter, the Isonzo Front has predictably become or remained the primary subject of history writers, and it may even be argued that the memory of the Isonzo Front has colonised Slovenian memory of the First World War in general. This can be attributed to both the indecisiveness of Slovenian historiography and the exceptional interest of the population of the Isonzo region, which has “fuelled” the interest by collecting material from the battlefield over several decades, some of which serve as exhibits in museums along the former front. Historians must take responsibility for the transfer of this historical topic to the field of amateur writing on the history of the First World War.

With its establishment, the Isonzo Front represented a remarkable space of interaction between the front and the hinterland, between the civilian and the military population, between the Austrian and the Italian, between the redeemed, the occupied, and the liberated. The terminological arc reflects the diverse topics, which have been partly explored and presented in Slovenian historiography (see e. g. Klavora 1993; 1994; 1997; 2007; 2014; Šimac and Keber 2011;



Fig. 9: The monument to the Slovenian soldiers on the Eastern front, author Janez Suhadolc, 2018, (photo P. Svoljšak).

Podbersič, 2009: 517-42; Svoljšak, 2009: 343-56; Sedmak 2003; Sedmak 2001; Himmelreich 2001; Svoljšak, Pirih, Fortunat-Černilogar, and Galić 2005; Milčinski 2000).

Although with reservations, we can speak of systematic research over the last three decades, which has been affected by inadequate research policies and insufficient financial stability of the research environment, making systematic and continuous research very difficult. Nevertheless, studies have been carried out by skilled research teams and persevering individuals. If we exclude 2014 and 2015, which mark the centenary of the First World War's beginning and the Isonzo Front, and if any representation and articulation of this subject is primarily a response to the timeliness of the moment, we can nevertheless conclude that the First World War has become a field of research for almost all Slovenian research institutions and a subject of education in Slovenian history and defence studies (Svoljšak 2014: 153). The last 20 years have been a time of awakening the memory of the all-encompassing experience of Slovenian soldiers in the First World War, the so-called Slovenian regiments, and their participation in the bloody battlefields. This is also reflected in scholarly fields, but we have not yet gone beyond schematic, and certainly telling, studies of individual regiments or descriptions of the roles of individual soldiers (Lužar 2010; Podpečnik 2014).

The period of distancing from Yugoslavia was marked by the systematic publication and reprinting of memoirs, diaries, and letters of Slovenian soldiers, which showcase the Slovenian war experience in all its geographical and experiential dimensions and provide an incomparable "reference" to the combat experience on the Western battlefield. Above all, at the time of the centenary, Slovenian museums

obtained additional private pieces of heritage, photo albums, diaries, and memoirs, which serve as invaluable testimonies to the momentous time 100 years ago and reveal everyday life in the army, the good and bad sides of soldiering, holidays, encounters with new places and people, temptations that we might never have considered at home (Svoljšak 2014, 163-64).

The war victims are also an important subject and the central axis for remembering and commemorating what happened on the front lines, even after a hundred years or more. This is demonstrated by the numerous initiatives undertaken by the successor states of the Dual Monarchy, members of which fought and died on the front. For several years, the so-called Isonzo Express, with more than 500 passengers and state representatives, arrived from Budapest to commemorate the fallen Hungarian soldiers at military cemeteries in the Posočje and Karst regions, and there is also a memorial to the fallen Hungarian soldiers on Prevala, a hill above the town of Nova Gorica. Polish soldiers are honoured by a pyramid monument on Mount Sabotin, Slovak soldiers by a distinctive bell tower at Vinišče near Renče, and Ukrainian soldiers by a renovated monument from 1917 in the Panovec forest near Nova Gorica. In 2018, the Slovenian state also paid tribute to the memory of Slovenian soldiers who fought on the faraway Eastern Front by unveiling memorials at the military cemetery in Gorlice (Poland) and the Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv (Ukraine).

Determining how many Slovenian soldiers died in the Austro-Hungarian army continues to be a great wish of Slovenian First World War historiography, both for its direct demographic consequences and for its impact on commemoration, collective consciousness, and the manipulative potential of the issue. A partial picture is given by local studies, which, by examining various sources (civil registers, commemorative plaques, lists of casualties) in local contexts, have been able to provide a very credible assessment of the death toll for individual Slovenian towns with their immediate or broader surroundings (Svoljšak 2014: 167–68). In the context of the commemoration of fallen soldiers, it is worth noting that, to give the fallen soldiers a name and a place of burial even if only after more than a hundred years, data on fallen Slovenian soldiers on First World War fronts have been collected for several years now, from lists of the fallen, to parish plaques and inscriptions on monuments, to the most primary sources, namely, the registers of military units. The names and fates of fallen Slovenian soldiers are published on *Sistory*, a specialised portal of Slovenian history run and managed by the Institute

for Contemporary History and a nationwide project of Slovenian institutions and individuals who have contributed data.¹

However, while it can be said that, despite the incomplete data, it is possible to provide a very generalised picture of military victims – partly based on the database of Slovenian soldiers fallen in the First World War – the same cannot be said for civilian victims, who, as was generally the case, have been addressed only in modest contributions (Koren 2010).



Fig. 10: The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic, The Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation (<https://www.thewalkofpeace.com/sl/map/>).

¹ *Vojaške žrtve 1. svetovne vojne na Slovenskem*, <https://zv1.sistory.si/?lang=sl>

Slovenian historiography has become increasingly aware of more marginalised war topics and is not lagging behind other Western European role models (Svoljšak 2014: 150). At the same time, it also addresses wider European topics and carries out more extensive research on the history of the Habsburg Monarchy's final war (Rahten 2013; Rahten 2014; Lipušček 2003; 2012; Grdina 2009; 2010).

From the viewpoint of public remembrance and awareness of the decisive character of the First World War for the Slovenian nation and regions and their future, the lion's share was also contributed by the national Radiotelevizija Slovenija broadcaster, which actively participated in the centenary events with two documentary series: the five-part *Slovinci in I. svetovna vojna* (Slovenians and the First World War 1914-1918 from 2014: Silence Before the Storm, Bloody Fields of Galicia, Doberdó: The Grave of the Slovenian Lads, The Breakthrough at Kobarid, The Downfall) and *In Focus*, where it delves deeper into individual themes (The Background of Archduke Franz Ferdinand's Death, Women in the Great War 1914-1918, Sacro egoismo, Slovenians under the Habsburgs). Of course, other Slovenian institutions such as museums and the National and University Library were also notably active during the First World War centenary commemorations (Svoljšak 2018).

The Isonzo Front continues to resonate in various aspects of its historical role, with Kobarid and the 12th Battle of the Isonzo becoming synonymous with the Isonzo Front in Slovenia and the centre of First World War commemoration and remembrance, as well as promotion of its heritage. These tasks are taken over by Kobarid and Tolmin museums and The Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation, and with the help of local communities.² It was actually museums and collectors that first brought the Isonzo Front and then the First World War in general back into Slovenian collective memory of twentieth-century condensed history. However, heritage and remembrance have long surpassed historians' research, as many other scientific disciplines have entered with new approaches (Jezernik and Fikfak 2018; Fikfak and Jezernik 2020), and new technologies have been implemented to study heritagisation (Pisk and Ledinek Lozej 2023: 136-47; Košir 2017; Mlekuž, Košir and Črešnar 2014).³

As a result, in recent decades, we have witnessed a quantitative increase in the number of texts, but also a qualitative increase in the range of topics; in this sense, we can rightly say that the pendulum

2 The Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation: <https://www.thewalkofpeace.com/about-us/>

3 E.g. Avgusta d.o.o: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=ByZQrWnDKC4>

has swung upwards, and that obscurity and mediocrity are terms that belong to the past as regards the treatment of the First World War in Slovenian historical remembrance. Just as the period of the formation of the first unified South Slav state between 1918 and 1941 “required” a state-led and state-supported memory of the First World War, pushing Slovenian-Austro-Hungarian experience into the background as the Second World War presented new requirements for historians and writers of history, and thus determining the topics addressed by Slovenian historiography, so has the period of political democratisation and state independence brought an air of self-reflection. At the same time, there is a shift towards the emancipation of Slovenian First World War historiography within the European transnational and comparative research, and the consolidation of Slovenian war experience on the European map of the First World War.

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Graves Were Tended and Monuments Were Erected to Soldiers after the First World War

VITO HAZLER

PROLOGUE

As the son of an elementary school teacher in the village of Gomilsko, the author of this text spent most of his childhood years there, living among the families of labourers and peasants. At the time, the most widespread and profitable agricultural monocrop in the Lower Savinja Valley was hops, which were harvested from late August through the start of the school year. The hops were picked manually by hired labourers, mostly from eastern Slovenia, called *ubiruci* (pickers), and by locals, many of them children from the families of labourers and civil servants. The author himself took part in the harvest, earning some dinars to purchase school supplies.

During the hops harvest, he would often listen to the locals' tales of their life and work, as well as their service in the German and later the Yugoslav People's Army, along with many other interesting adventures.

One of the vivid recollections is of a peasant and hops producer who took part in the First World War as an Austro-Hungarian soldier on the Isonzo Front. If memory serves, he did not participate in direct combat on the front because he had a weaker constitution, making him more suitable for supplying the soldiers with water, maintaining cleanliness, sweeping, and other such tasks. This former imperial-royal soldier would always commend his Austrian army in these conversations, emphasising how tidy it was!

Another memory recalls past conversations with schoolmates as they compared two monuments: the first next to the school in Gomilsko that was dedicated to fallen soldiers and victims of Nazi terror from the Second World War, and the second in front of the church in the village of Grajska vas that was splendidly adorned with a mounted soldier and a kneeling man. Naturally, the children's eyes preferred the one in Grajska vas, but who would dare say such a thing out loud, when the one in Gomilsko was majestic even without the statues. And that was the end of it until over half a century later, when the author had the opportunity to examine the monuments and plaques commemorating the First World War not only in Gomilsko and Grajska vas, but across a much larger area as well.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This article is one of the author's texts created as the result of a years-long research project *Dediščina prve svetovne vojne: reprezentacije in reinterpretacije* (*Heritage of the First World War: Representations and Reinterpretations*), headed by Božidar Jezernik, which brought together a number of researchers. One of the achievements of the joint research efforts was the publication of a collection of papers by the same name (Fikfak and Jezernik 2021). In it, the author published an article titled *Dediščina vojaških pokopališč, kapelic, spomenikov in spominskih znamenj prve svetovne vojne* (*Heritage of Military Cemeteries, Monuments, and Memorial Plaques of the First World War*) (Hazler 2021: 41–86), and an extended monograph with related contents is about to be published.

The article focuses predominantly on the author's professional experience¹ and the latest research efforts. Not all of the research find-

1 The author is an ethnologist and conservator who worked autonomously on the recognition, evaluation, and the physical and documentary protection of immovable (predominantly) ethnological heritage at the Celje Regional Office of the Institute for the

ings could be included in this article, so only a few highlights are presented: a somewhat longer elaboration on the utilised written and pictorial sources and literature, as well as a short overview of the preservation of some the First World War units of cultural heritage in the European area, wherein only the localities are listed without longer elaborations.

In addition, the problem of the authenticity of some units of the examined heritage before and after conservation-led renovation interventions is highlighted. The uncritical use of modernist restoration interventions and (especially some) inauthentic materials constitute a problem that far too many in professional circles seem to be insufficiently aware of.

ON THE SOURCES AND LITERATURE

An array of written and pictorial sources and literature were used, all of which are pivotal for presenting the issue of military cemeteries, monuments, and commemorative plaques for the victims of the First World War. A number of texts have already been published by various authors; some are presented below chiefly for informative purposes.

One of the first prominent expert papers on the discussed topic was an article by Špelca Čopič titled *Slovenski spomeniki padlim v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Slovenian Monuments to the Fallen in the First World War*) (Čopič 1987: 168–177) published in the magazine *Kronika* 35. The book by Giacinto De Caroli and Maria Luisa De Caroli titled *Viaggio al Fronte* (*Journey to the Front*) (De Caroli, Giacinto and Marie Luisa De Caroli 2015) is very useful for field work; it is basically a diary of a former Italian second lieutenant and doctor, Giacinto De Caroli, while he was operating on the Isonzo Front, among other places.

Topics regarding the examined cultural heritage are covered in the collection of papers by the members of the Gorenjska Museum from Kranj titled *Mirno vojaki spite večno spanje* (*Soldiers at Peace Sleep the Eternal Sleep*) in which Jože Dežman published an article titled *Pokopališča in spomeniki na Gorenjskem* (*Cemeteries and Monuments in Gorenjska*) (Dežman 2014: 38–41). The work by historian

Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia for fifteen years. Among other efforts, he participated in various thematic meetings in 1982 to be informed about the newly renovated Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit in Javorca above Tolmin, which was constructed by the Austro-Hungarian military forces for the spiritual care of Catholic soldiers as well as for the last liturgical farewell from fallen soldiers.

and conservator Marko Simič titled *Po sledeh soške fronte* (*Following the Traces of the Isonzo Front*) (Simič 1996) is pertinent for understanding the conditions surrounding the the First World War years in the area of western Slovenia. Historian Marko Štepec has also recently been researching the First World War and has published and participated as editor of the publications *Bedna kritja pod planoto tik nad Sočo ...* (*Pitiful Covers Under the Plateau Just above the Soča...*) (2016: 29–38), *Take vojne si nismo predstavljali* (*We Never Imagined Such a War*) (2014), and the booklet titled *1914–1918* (2010), published in English.

At the regional level, the examined heritage has been covered in important articles by several authors, including the article by Nataša Budna Kodrič titled *Vojaki s Škofjeloškega v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Soldiers from the Škofja Loka Area in the First World War*) (Budna-Kodrič 1999). The fact that *Škofja Loka* was part of the deep hinterland of the Isonzo Front is attested in important reports on the military hospital in the Ursuline convent (*Škofja Loka. Uršulinke Rimske Unije. Zgodovina*, web resource), as well as in an article about the *Žalujoča Slovenka* (*Grieving Slovenian Woman*) monument by Jurkovič (*Slovenec* 231/1928: 3), and an article on a monument to the fallen in the First World War in *Škofja Loka* and *Stara Loka* penned by Damir Globočnik (2012: 111–24), who was also the author of the comprehensive independent publication *Likovno in simbolno. Kolektivni spomin Slovencev v likovni umetnosti* (*The Artistic and the Symbolic. The Collective Memory of Slovenians in Fine Art*) (Globočnik 2017). David Erik Pipan (2003) wrote about the monument to the brave defenders of Mt. Rombon, Damjan Resnik (2004) wrote about the Isonzo Front as a memorial and a museum issue in his diploma thesis, and Vinko Avsenak (2006: 45–50) was one of the authors to write about the mosque in Log pod Mangartom.

For this study also found the articles published in the regional newspaper *Gorenjski glas* also proved very useful; articles by Miha Naglič had already been published there prior to the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, among others the article titled *Gorenjski spomeniki padlim v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Monuments to the Fallen in the First World War in Gorenjska*) (Naglič 2014: web resource).

The very topographically themed collection *Arzenal, Zbirka spomenikov, posvečenih padlim slovenskim vojakov v svetovni vojni 1914–1918* (*Collection of Monuments Dedicated to Fallen Slovenian Soldiers in the First World War 1914–1918*) can be accessed on the website of the Milko Kos Historical Institute, created in collaboration with colleagues from the Anton Melik Geographical Institute ZRC SAZU, and the Institute of Cultural History ZRC SAZU. Historian Drago Svoljšak

wrote several in-depth articles for the collection (e.g., the material on the towns of Brezje, Rateče, Srednja Vas v Bohinju, etc.).

Much of the data on the heritage of the First World War are kept in museums, libraries, and especially the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, which published the 626-page guide *Vodnik po arhivskem gradivu 1. svetovne vojne (Guide to the First World War Archival Records)* in 2017, organised by the Archives of the RS by editor-in-chief Jure Volčjak. This publication served as the main source for locating and establishing the dispersion of military cemeteries and military hospitals, as well as erecting some monuments and chapels in remembrance of the events of the Great War (Volčjak 2017).

The monograph by Tone Košir et al. titled *Dediščina župnije Šentjošt (Heritage of the Šentjošt Parish)* (Košir et al. 2013) is a valuable resource for the local study analysis of individual places and past events, as it contains a range of information about the Austro-Hungarian local soldiers who would return home for leave and would also be photographed with their family members.

In October 2018, Ljubljana hosted the two-day symposium *Jugoslovanski spomeniki, povezani s 1. svetovno vojno (1918–1941) (Yugoslavian Monuments Relating to the First World War (1914–1918))* (Žerovc, Beti 2018) with several experts from the former Yugoslavia.

In addition to these articles and monographs, the articles published in the newspapers and publications *Jutro*, *Slovenec*, *Slovenski Narod*, *Štajerski Gospodar*, and others are also significant, but most of them are not attributed. The same applies to numerous articles published online about military cemeteries in the Karst, Gorizia region, Tolmin area, Bovec area, and the Trenta Valley.

Some available printed and web resources from other European countries were also important for a general familiarity with the issue of the First World War heritage. In Croatia, Branko Ostajmer and Vladimir Geiger published an article in the *Đakovo Museums Journal* on the issue of erecting monuments–cenotaphs–and maintaining the graves of fallen soldiers in the years after the end of the First World War in the area of Đakovo and its surroundings (Ostajmer and Geiger 2013: 139–56). A similar, but more topographically oriented study of the monuments and plaques in Koprivnica and the Đurđevac area of Croatian Podravina was carried out by Ružica Medvarić – Bračko and Mira Kolar – Dimitrijević (Medvarić – Bračko, Kolar – Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62); part of their study entailed collecting data on the fallen soldiers.²

2 The author would like to sincerely thank Sanja Lončar, Ph.D., from the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology FFZG for forwarding articles and other pictorial materials.

The heritage of the First World War is a topic of interest to scientists in social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities, including archaeologists. Nicholas J. Saunders published *Killing Time. Archaeology and the First World War* (2007) with numerous drawings and analyses of the pictorial material presenting archaeological excavations from the pre-war period, which uncovered metal items and other findings under the fields of Flanders. Decades ago, archaeologists cast their gaze on the archaeological localities from the air, creating an extensive collection of papers titled *Conflict Landscapes and Archaeology from Above* (Stichelbaut, Birger and David Coweley 2016); it was a collaboration of 35 authors including Dimitrij Mlekuž, Uroš Košir, and Matija Črešnar from Slovenia with their article *Landscapes of Death and Suffering: Archaeology of Conflict Landscapes of the Upper Soča Valley, Slovenia*.

Thirty-one authors, including archaeologists, culturologists, and anthropologists contributed their findings in 14 articles for the collection of papers *Rediscovering the Great War. Archaeology and Enduring Legacies on the Soča and Eastern Fronts* (Košir et al. 2019), edited by Uroš Košir, Matija Črešnar, and Dimitri Mlekuž; it features a 3D digitalisation to present the former conflict area in the tourist offer of the Rombon and Kolovrat Mountains.

INTER-WAR AND POST-WAR PERIODS OF MILITARY CEMETERIES

During the First World War, parts of Slovenian as well as European territories were ravaged by military battles and their aftermath, which was also reflected in harsh interventions in nature and the landscape, especially in Alpine regions. Directly along the front lines, the warring sides dug trenches, hollowed out caverns, and dug tunnels into rocks. Hosts of shells reshaped landscapes. New buildings and equipment were being put up in places, including religious and commemorative plaques, water regulation devices, fenced military cemeteries, new roads and tunnels, railway tracks, cable lifts, etc. The war, therefore, led to significant transformations of cultural landscapes into “war landscapes,” whose traces remain visible even after over 100 years. Consequently, the heritage of the First World War is expressed in more diverse landscapes than any war has ever left behind, before or since.

Nowadays, the remnants of many military cemeteries and burial grounds, which have not all been preserved, mainly due to soldiers' posthumous remains being relocated, are limited to larger cemeteries and ossuaries. After the exhumations, the memory of the original cemeteries has largely faded and few now remain who remember the graves as they once stood in Bled, Hrušica, Kranjska Gora, Šentvid nad Ljubljano, and elsewhere.

The majority of the military cemeteries in Slovenia that are preserved are located directly on or in the hinterland of the Isonzo Front, where hospitals were often set up out of need during the war, along with various military devices and objects, which meant that military cemeteries would spread out around them. At a distance from the front's hinterlands, these remnants of the horrors of war become less common sights.

Viewing military cemeteries with today's eyes, the question of their authentic image arises: it is clear that different refurbishments occurred over the course of the century, including new materials being added out of a desire for a more permanent preservation of grave markings. This means some cemeteries have almost completely lost their original image and gained a new, upgraded one, which in time came to be accepted by the general public as historic fact. The field of conservatorship should be the first to practice consistency here.

A comparison of predominantly pictorial materials reveals that the graves of Austro-Hungarian cemeteries had originally been marked by Latin crosses made of sawn-up planks, whereas Islamic grave markers were made of cut-up boards, as best preserved, albeit in a later form, in the cemetery in Log pod Mangartom. In cemeteries and burial grounds in mountainous areas, the Catholic graves were marked by crosses made of hand-planed spikes and branches, while markers for Islamic graves



Fig. 1: Log pod Mangartom, Austro-Hungarian war cemetery with iron Catholic crosses and wooden Islamic grave markers (photo: V. Hazler, July 25, 2012).

were hardly discernible. Crosses in Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in the remote and hilly regions of the village of Lepena, Mt. Mrzli Vrh, Medvedje pasture above Zatolmin and Polog pasture, and elsewhere were mostly made of hand-carved wooden sticks. These cemeteries are now mostly abandoned due to post-war exhumations and relocations; the only indicators today are informative signposts and in some places, for example in Lepena, the remnants of former cemetery chapels.

The general maintenance of the Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in the post-war years was accompanied by a tendency towards more permanent grave markings: examples of this can be found in Log pod Mangartom and the Trenta Valley, where the wooden crosses were replaced by iron crosses; only the Islamic grave markings remained



Fig. 2: Ajševica, remnants of reinforced concrete crosses with alcoves and metal plates in an Austro-Hungarian cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 24, 2021).



Fig. 3: Grgar near Nova Gorica, remnants of reinforced concrete crosses with alcoves and metal plates in an Austro-Hungarian cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, November 15, 2018).

unchanged. This significantly changed the appearance of these cemeteries, especially where the wooden crosses were replaced by identical reinforced concrete crosses. Most of the soldiers' graves from the Soča to the cemeteries in the Karst and the Vipava Valley, such as in the settlements of Brje, Bukovica, Dutovlje, Gorjansko, Grgar, Lipa

na Krasu, Oševljek, Prvačina, Renče-Žigoni, Renče-Lukežiči, Sežana, Vogrsko, and elsewhere, bore this type of grave markers.

In many other war cemeteries, concrete squares with a tilted upper facing side and a rounded back were placed on soldiers' graves after the war; these markers had a convex poured cross on the front with two square slots beneath, where iron pegs were used to place lead nameplates with the engraved names of the deceased. This kind of gravestone can be found in Austro-Hungarian war cemeteries in Banjšice, Bovec, Črniče, Gorjansko (also concrete crosses), Komen (simplified form), Loče near Tolmin, Loke near Kromberk, Modrejce, Podnanos, Solkan, under Vipavski Križ, Volčja Draga, and perhaps elsewhere.

In some Austro-Hungarian cemeteries, besides concrete tombstones in the shape of a cross and a cuboid, there are also preserved tombstones of officers, sanitary and quartermaster personnel. These tombstones are usually larger than those of soldiers, have different shapes, are often decorated with various artistic, even Art Nouveau motifs (Sežana) and were placed individually or in groups (Grgar) in the cemetery. Their shape and size seem to have been determined by military rank and status. Such clearly recognisable



Fig. 4: Loče near Tolmin, an older concrete gravestone with two slots to place the nameplate in an Austro-Hungarian military cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 6, 2021).



Fig. 5: Loče near Tolmin, younger concrete gravestone without two slots to place the nameplate in an Austro-Hungarian military cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 6, 2021).

gravestones of officers and other commanders can be found in the Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in Ajdovščina, Ajševica, all four war cemeteries in Brje pri Komnu, Črniče, Dutovlje, Gorjansko, Grgar, Kidričevo, Komen, Loče near Tolmin, Modrejce, Osek near Gorica, Prvačina, Renče-Žigoni, Renče-Lukežiči, Sežana, Sveto, Škofja Loka (preserved gravestone of a post office servant, Ger. Postamtsdiener), Štanjel, in Vipavski Križ and elsewhere.

In addition to these grave markings, some war cemeteries have also preserved central monuments with a distinct spatial placement

and various original design motifs, such as the monument in Log pod Mangartom, created in 1917 by Czech sculptor Ladislav Kofránek (1880–1954), and the monument with a staircase in the military cemetery near Štanjel, where this majestic four-column monument was erected in mid-1917. At the time, the cemetery in Štanjel already had stone-carved entry doorframes inscribed with the years 1915 and 1917 and a fence made of stone columns and wooden planks. The cemetery, which was half the size of today's dimensions, had around ten grave rows running parallel to the staircase under the central monument with about ten to fifteen grave units (or more or less in places) that were surrounded with a low stone wall, while the crosses and the Muslim grave markings were made of wood. The pictorial materials lead to the presumption that several gravestones shaped like the Maltese cross were put up soon after the war, along with two Jewish headstones³ and at least three iron crosses on stone pedestals.

A number of central monuments have a pyramid shape, such as the ones in the villages of Čepovan, Modrejce, Sveto, Vojščica, Volčja Draga, the shape of a step pyramid, such as in the villages of Lipe na Krasu and the Medrja mountain pasture above Zatoľmin, the shape of a large step cuboid as in the village of Črnič, the shape of a large Latin cross as in the village of Renče (hamlet of Lukežiči), the shape of a large cross as in the village of Dutovlje and an abandoned Italian cemetery in the village of Avče.

The most diverse grave marking designs can be found in the Austro-Hungarian military cemetery in Gorjansko in the Karst, which already largely assumed its original appearance in the final years of the First World War. Many other cemeteries also have central monuments with very diverse designs, confirming the theory that each cemetery is actually original both in its artistic design as well as its layout and size.⁴

The aforementioned changes and additions in several Austro-Hungarian military cemeteries were carried out as part of systematic reconstruction efforts by the state and veteran institutions in Austria and Germany that took place soon after the end of the First World War; these were very diligently carried out in the territory of today's western Slovenia, which fell to Italy in 1920 after the Treaty of Rapallo. This illustrates the respectful attitude towards the deceased on the part of both warring sides. The same, however, cannot be said of territories that were merged

3 One was placed on the grave of a sergeant by the name of Dezső Steiner (who fell on August 19, 1917) with an inscription in German and Arabic.

4 For comparison: four Austro-Hungarian cemeteries of different sizes in the village of Brje na Krasu, whose shape was determined in part by the varied terrain configuration.

into the new country, i.e., the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The reason for this probably lies in the conflict of interest and the related renovation possibilities, because despite the War Cemeteries and Graves at Home and Abroad Act of 1920, the Kingdom of SCS did not take significant steps in that area. It was only between 1954 and 1974, and especially after 1980, that the conditions in the former Socialist Republic of Slovenia began to improve. At that time, the Office for the Protection of Monuments focused part of its activities on preserving this heritage and started working with other relevant institutions to meet the obligations of the Geneva Convention for the Protection of War Victims of 12 August, 1949 (war cemeteries, gravesites, and graves from the First World War, web resource).

In light of the aforementioned situation, the military cemeteries on Slovenian territories to the east of the former border, as was set in the Treaty of Rapallo, were not maintained with the same intensity as those to the west of the border. The equipment of these cemeteries, which were mostly in the deeper hinterlands of the Isonzo Front together with war hospitals, were generally not preserved nor updated. Typical examples of this are cemeteries in Bohinj on Reber Hill above Bohinjska Bistrica where the central monument to fallen soldiers from the First World War was not erected until 1945,



Fig. 6: Bohinjska Bistrica, Rebro Hill with an Austro-Hungarian war cemetery. Years ago, the white-painted wooden crosses with no roofs were replaced with wooden crosses in a natural hue with roofs, which raises the question of modern interpretation of tradition (photo: V. Hazler, January 13, 2019).

and the cemetery in Ukanec, which was in use between June 1915 and November 1917. A stone monument was erected there back then with a plaque that reads: “To the Heroes of Krn, the Defenders of Bohinj.” The monument also features a wooden cross on a stone pedestal with a built-in plaque saying: *Strangers before – now you have become brothers after graves have been dug for you here. May the*

mountain sun shine on you, may the Bohinj Lake bring you peace! and a wooden chapel with a belfry on top of the roof ridge.

Both cemeteries in Bohinj are well maintained, but have been callously updated in recent years with the placement of new, smoothly planed wooden crosses, protected with wood finishes and protective roofs, which is a deviation from the grave markings' original appearance. The gabble roofs especially stand out, as available sources attest



Fig. 7: Bohinjska Bistrica, Rebro Hill with an Austro-Hungarian war cemetery. The oval plaque is attached to the cross with two *spax* screws (photo: V. Hazler, January 13, 2019).

that former military cemeteries certainly did not have them. The oval (Rebro cemetery) and square (Ukanc cemetery) name plaques with modern iconography that are attached using industrially produced *spax* (sic!) screws are also completely new. According to available sources, no such examples have been recorded abroad. Only one exists in neighbouring Austria in the town of St. Michael in Upper Styria to the northeast of Graz, where the graves of a smaller military cemetery similarly have brown painted wooden crosses with gabble roofs placed on graves.

ORIGINALITY OF THE MEMORIAL MEANING OF TWO MONUMENTS

This article focuses on a smaller part of a more extensive body of research on the First World War heritage that encompasses multiple areas. The first area includes military cemeteries, gravesites, churches, chapels, and a mosque erected by the authorities during the war for the spiritual care of soldiers. The second area includes chapels, small chapels, and crosses that were put up by soldiers and their relatives to return home or to remember a fallen relative. The third area analyses

the monuments and memorial plaques that were mostly erected in the post-war years, some even after the Second World War (1941–1945), Slovenia's independence (1991), and on the occasions of the centennial of the beginning (2014) and the end of the First World War (2018). Altogether, the three areas encompass 524 units.

This article presents the problem of preserving the original appearance of such heritage using a few selected examples. Preserving originality wherever and as much as possible is one of the fundamental principles of contemporary conservation. For more reflection and encouragement, two examples of public monuments created in the 1920s are presented, in addition to examples mainly found in military cemeteries.

GRAJSKA VAS

Erecting monuments and plaques has always garnered a response from the local inhabitants, preserving diverse written and pictorial material and even oral tradition. Some of the most notable events are documented in newspapers, especially in cases where the journalist was a local or was familiar with local goings-on.

Such attention was paid to the erection of a monument to those fallen in the First World War in Grajska vas in 1924 and its solemn unveiling, which was reported by the *Jutro* newspaper in the article titled *Grobovi tulijo*. The author is said to be Stanko Virant, a journalist and editor of that newspaper, and a local from the neighbouring village of Gomilsko.

The monument to fallen local soldiers in Grajska vas is one of the most extraordinary freestanding monuments of the First World War. The monument is about four metres high and stands in the very centre of the village, to the south of the north–south oriented of St Christopher's Succursal Church. Together with the church and the neighbouring farmsteads, it forms one of the most picturesque clustered villages in Slovenia, with active agricultural practices of cattle breeding and hop growing. The central structure of the village is obviously also reflected in the exemplary mutual help and cooperation even in the most difficult tasks, such as the construction of a monument to fallen locals in less than six years after the First World War.

Soon after the war ended, the inhabitants of Grajska vas founded a committee to erect a monument of their very own whose purpose was both to give thanks for the safe return from the war, and

to show respect to the fallen locals. Landowner Jernej Kunst assumed the role of president and treasurer of the preparation committee, and he was in charge of the monument's construction from initial preparations to the solemn unveiling.

The design for the monument was created by master bricklayer Ivan Basle (some sources cite him as Vasle), who envisaged it in the shape of a triangular column, on top of which was an open, three-sided hutch with a concrete roof and a cross above. In the open three-cornered hutch, a wooden sculpture is placed of St Martin and the Beggar by Celje native sculptor Miloš Hohnjec (Grajska vas – Spomenik padlim v prvi svetovni vojni, web resource).⁵

Marble plaques are affixed onto the lower triangular section of the monument, created by a stonecutting company from Celje. These plaques bear the divided inscription IN MEMORY OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS and the years 1914–1919 on all three sides, then three slabs of black marble below on each side, with nine names and dates of birth and death of the fallen soldiers inscribed.

The models for the concrete pours of individual parts of the monument were created by Martin Rajovec, and were such that the monument could be assembled gradually, piece by piece (Šmajdek, Grajska vas, web resource). Three cast-iron grenades are placed at a certain distance from the corners of the triangular monument.

The locals renovated this majestic monument years ago, protecting the open three-sided hutch with sculptures of Martin and the Beggar with transparent plexiglas.

The significance of the monument and its most recent renovation was covered in a review article by Marija Rančigaj in *Detel'ca*, the newsletter of the Gomilsko Cultural Society, titled *Grobovi tulijo ...*, which is a partial summary of Virant's article from 1924 (Rančigaj 2002: 17–9). In the article with the same title as the aforementioned one in the *Jutro* newspaper from 1924, the author describes all of the circumstances surrounding the creation and construction of the monument, listing numerous pieces of information she had gathered from locals and the Celje Historical Archives. She also described the event when one of the three iron grenades poured into the Ravne Steelworks in July 1924 for 1,435 dinars was stolen. The grenade was stolen by unknown persons years ago, which reduces the expressiveness of the monument; a suitable replacement for the grenade has not yet been found. Marija Rančigaj wrote in the newsletter: "I also spoke with Mr.

5 Sculptor Miloš Hohnjec piqued the local women's attention both with the sculpture as well as his appearance (field notes V. Hazler, August 21, 1997).



Fig. 8: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher, in 1976 (photo: V. Hazler 1976).



Fig. 9: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher, in 2018 (photo: V. Hazler, September 29, 2018).



Fig. 10: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher (photo: V. Hazler, September 29, 2018).

Milan Sušak, who went to great lengths to procure a replacement grenade from the Isonzo Front, but which needs considerable refurbishment. Unfortunately, its dimensions do not exactly match, as it originated from the Italian, not the Austrian side, and its diameter is 2 cm smaller” (Rančigaj 2002: 18–9).

Compared to the monument’s state in 1976, its appearance today is significantly better following renovation. The monument has been entirely reconstructed, including the area around it and the smaller park surrounding the church. However, the monument has one unnecessary addition that significantly mars the integrity of its appearance: the fact that the images of St Martin and the Beggar have been covered up with transparent plexiglas.

ČRNUČE

The Črnuče District in Ljubljana has a monument to the fallen in the First World War by architect Ivan Vurnik (Ivan Vurnik – Pogled osebnosti, web resource) in front of the parish church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus from 1927. The monument is shaped like a Minoan column, with a pronounced cylindrical capital and Ionic volutes and crosses at the very top (Ljubljana – Spomenik pri cerkvi Simona in Jude Tadeja v Črnučah, web resource). A metal rim with four lanterns is placed under the capital with an inscription underneath: TO THE VICTIMS OF THE PLAGUE AND FAMINE IN THE PERIOD 1914–1918. The three sides of the capital have the names of 34 fallen soldiers along with the years of their birth and death inscribed in black letters. These were locals from the villages of Črnuče, Gmajna, Prod, Nadgorica, Podboršt, Dobrova, and Ježa.



Fig. 11: Črnuče in Ljubljana, monument to the fallen soldiers in the First World War in front of the church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus in 1927 (photo: unknown author, photograph provided by Janez Bogataj).



Fig. 12: Črnuče in Ljubljana, monument to the fallen soldiers in the First World War in front of the church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus in 2019 (photo: V. Hazler, January 9, 2019).

Compared to its original appearance at the official inauguration in 1927, the monument today looks quite different, much more modest. The reason for this is the excessive filling of the terrain around the monument and up to the church. Originally, the surrounding terrain was up to 20 cm lower, which changed the appearance of the monument. It was once higher than the surrounding terrain, and a double concrete enclosure with iron bars, along with what appeared to be a chain and a decorative flower bed, gave the monument a more sombre appearance than it has today. It is very likely that the original letters of the text and the names of the soldiers were originally not black, but lighter, probably gilded. It seems that these changes do not bother anyone, because the older inhabitants of Črnuče do not remember the original appearance of the monument.

EPILOGUE

The heritage of the First World War, as well as all other wars and their aftermath, is part of the shared, collective memory. This heritage is often connected to painful losses of loved ones, relatives, friends, or neighbours, even though over a century has passed since the tragic events. There are plenty of families in Slovenia for whom the memory of a deceased relative or friend is very much alive, so these memories must be nurtured and passed on from generation to generation. Monuments and plaques with no living personal or collective memory of these people and events are doomed to deteriorate soon. Along with them, the memory of all other similar events that have carved a painful memory into a nation's history must be preserved and nurtured.

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Commemorating Fallen Slovenian Soldiers in Austro-Hungarian Uniforms and the Yugoslav Idea

BOŽIDAR JEZERNIK

Archduke Franz Ferdinand personally commanded the military manoeuvres, and after their conclusion on June 28, 1914, a grand military parade was held in Sarajevo. This day was also a “holiday that served to call and remind each and every Serb to take revenge on all tyrants who wanted to keep the Serbian people divided and disunited in bondage and darkness” (Obradović 1928: 6). Accordingly, many people saw the parade as a “deliberate insult to Serbian sentiment” (Bartulović 1925: 45; Obradović 1928: 6; Ćorović 1936: 594). In such a context, the shooting of Gavrilo Princip did not come as a surprise to many people. Princip was hailed as “the embodiment of Miloš who killed Sultan Murad on Vidovdan” (Obradović 1928: 7; see also West 1942: I, 339–43).

In the first days following the assassination in Sarajevo, the mood of the population was determined by a sense of curiosity, a morbid fascination with the death of a celebrity, rather than belligerence

(Watson 2014: 54). The press satisfied this curiosity with extensive reports on the transfer of the remains of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Duchess Sophie von Hohenberg to Vienna. They emphasised the great sadness of citizens over the murder of the crown prince and his wife. These reports had a strong effect on the mood of the population, making their attitude towards Serbia increasingly hostile. Public outrage was further fuelled by reports in the Serbian press blaming Austria-Hungary for Gavrilo Princip's crime due to its misguided policies in the Balkan Peninsula, as well as the findings of the police investigation implicating Serbian authorities in the Sarajevo assassination (Watson 2014: 55–6). This set the stone rolling and triggered an avalanche that buried millions beneath it.

Instead of reporting the events, the contemporary press stirred up popular sentiment in Austria-Hungary. In this spirit, for example, Alexander Roda Roda wrote in the *Vossische Zeitung* in Berlin in 1914 that the Dual Monarchy had stood idly by in 1909 and 1912 when it could and should have reacted. However, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated, all Austro-Hungarian peoples demanded revenge for the heir to the Habsburg throne. Dozens of military bands played the Radetzky March. The battle of the black double-headed eagle against the white double-headed eagle reportedly enjoyed greater popularity in the monarchy than ever before. Allegedly, the Germans, Slavs, Hungarians, and Romanians unanimously and loudly demanded that the emperor take revenge for Franz Ferdinand (Anon. 1914c: 18–9).

The Slovenian press, leading political parties, opinion leaders, and journalists joined in the bellicose rhetoric. The day before the Dual Monarchy declared war on Serbia, the daily *Slovenec* published an editorial on Slovenes' enthusiasm for war under the ominous headline "Long Live Austria! Down with Serbia!" (Anon. 1914a: 1). When the Dual Monarchy officially declared war on Serbia, the press was full of reports of people's spontaneous enthusiasm for war against Russia and Serbia, as if all the citizens of the vast empire were zealous worshipers of the god Mars (Herceg 1919: 13; Blašković 1939: 79; Cornwall 2000: 16).

As the priest and writer Janez Kalan noted after the war, the Catholic clergy may also have offered a helping hand. Kalan agreed that it was wrong for them to speak and write as they did, but he believed it was possible to explain, at least in part, why they did. They deeply regretted his death because they supposedly did not know at the time that Vienna had sent Franz Ferdinand to his death, and because they expected him to be a wiser and more just ruler for the Slovenes than Franz Josef. When his remains were transferred via Ljubljana, they felt

as if all of their hopes had been buried with him. Franz Ferdinand's death was thus only the pretext for the war, not its cause,¹ "the spark that flew into two loaded cannons that could explode at any moment" (Nemanič 1920: 12–3).

Nico Wouters and Laurence van Ypersele rightly argue that "it is wrong to equate state propaganda completely with a devious manipulation of the hearts and minds of the passive population." According to them, the First World War propaganda "explicitly aimed to enhance internal national cohesion by exploiting pre-existing prejudices and stereotypes about other national groups." As such, it was a mirror reflecting the deeper needs of Austro-Hungarian society: the perceived values, beliefs, fears, and hopes of the population (Wouters and van Ypersele 2018: 3). This also explains why, on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs in 1914, there were "no rebellions, no acts of sabotage, no demonstrations, no desertions, and no failures to respond to the calls of arms" (Dragnich 1983: 7).

PROPAGANDA VS REALITY

Successful mobilisation in a multiethnic empire was far more complicated than in a nation-state. Unity is essential in mobilising for war, but that was difficult to achieve among Habsburg subjects in 1914. Not only did the posters announcing mobilisation have to be printed in fifteen languages, but an even greater problem was the lack of a common identity. In the Empire and Kingdom, where national ideology divided rather than united people, the bond between citizens belonging to different peoples, many of whom were in conflictual relationships, was weak (Watson 2014: 90). For example, Slovenes conscripted to the war against Serbia were no closer to Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina than they were to Serbs from Serbia. Austro-Hungarian wartime propaganda attempted to paint a picture of a cohesive multiethnic community that in reality almost never existed. Despite all efforts to paint the

1 "Austria could not remain calm towards Serbia," Vladimir Ćorović opined. "It believed that after such great successes the young kingdom would not only become more conscious and resistant than before in its old garb, but that it would become, if not more active, at least more attractive. Notwithstanding Austrian interests, a nation-state of unquestioned hardness and value had emerged on its frontier, with which it would soon have difficulties similar to those with Italian Piedmont. This had to be prevented at all costs. Vienna, therefore, intended to militarily crush Serbia before it became dangerous. All that was sought was a favourable pretext for the attack" (Ćorović 1924: 77–8; see also Bataković 2015: 15).

picture of interconnected and cooperating peoples, however, concern came from all corners as to whether the members of the subordinate peoples, especially the Slavs, would support the war effort of the black and yellow eagle with two heads? Would the increasingly important national question interfere with the war effort? Because of the general enthusiasm for punishing the Sarajevo assassins and censorship, this question was not often raised in public (Orzoff 2004: 162).

When war was finally declared on Serbia, large public rallies were held in various cities of the Dual Monarchy, organised by civil and military authorities. Austro-Hungarian newspapers welcomed the war in unison with bombastic editorials (Romsics 2006; 27; Bobič 2012; 29). Externally, representatives of all political parties joined forces and took a unified stance. Before the war, the mayor of Ljubljana and leader of the so-called Liberal Party, Ivan Tavčar, and the prince-bishop of Ljubljana, Anton Jeglič, could not agree on practically any issue, but now both used bellicose, anti-Serb language. On July 28, 1914, Mayor Tavčar delivered a public speech from the town hall at a patriotic gathering. The cannon's thunder, Tavčar said, signalled to the whole world that Slovenes intended to remain loyal to the Austrian Empire until "the end of their days," adding that the Slovenian fist would not cease "until the enemy is trampled to dust and the black and yellow flag flies proudly over the defeated troops of the eliminated enemy!" (Anon. 1914b: 2). A few days later, Bishop Jeglič addressed the soldiers during Sunday Mass before they took their oath. In his address, the bishop declared the upcoming war a "just cause" and told the soldiers that it was their duty to exact just retribution for the "grossly unjust, underhanded, ongoing efforts to dismember and destroy our wonderful Austria, blessed by the rule of the old Habsburg dynasty." The soldiers were advised by Bishop Jeglič not to fear for their families or their heroic death, their martyrdom (Jeglič 1914: 1).

Of course, the widespread anger against Serbia was a public impression based on official propaganda as well as deliberately misleading public statements (see, e.g., Hribar 1928: II, 110). What people really felt remained unknown. Four years after the end of the war, Ivan Matičič recalled the day of mobilisation from a different perspective. He claimed that people "restless, pale, crying, frightened, desperate" stormed through the streets expressing their view that the devil should "take Austria" and all those who turned against the Serbian "brothers" (Matičič 1922: 3).

What is certain, though, is that many people were court-martialed and sentenced to heavy penalties for insulting His Majesty, disturbing public order, and similar "crimes." For example, on August



Fig. 1: Austrian soldiers posing over the body of a slain Serb soldier. Photo taken on the southern battlefield in 1915, from the private collection of B. Jezernik

24, 1915, Ivan Brence, an innkeeper from the village of Dovje, was executed by firing squad in Suhi Bajer near Ljubljana for claiming the previous month that the “foolish emperor” had started the war and that it would have been better if he had established relations with Russia instead of Germany. On October 15, 1915, Janez Komar, a blacksmith from the village of Radoha in southeastern Slovenia, was sentenced to death and shot in Suhi Bajer because an informant claimed to have heard him say, “Serbia is right (to defend itself)” (Pleterski 1971: 23).

On the other hand, it is also true that a considerable number of the letters sent to the press by Slovenian soldiers from the Serbian battlefields did not conceal the pride of the senders in their exploits on the battlefields. For example, Lieutenant Pavel Cvenkel, who was seriously wounded during the storming of the Drina, wrote in *Ilustrirani Glasnik* that the feeling the Austro-Hungarian soldiers had when they first stepped on Serbian soil was indescribable: “We officers were strangely moved and exclaimed ‘Alea iacta! Alea iacta! (the die is cast),’ and the troops shouted joyfully towards the other side, where the Serbs were hiding, ‘We are together now, “braćo” (Serbian for “brothers”)!’ At that moment we almost swore that we would rather go to our deaths than cross the Drina back” (Cvenkel 1914: 2).

COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

At the height of public enthusiasm, most people expected the Dual Monarchy's war with "Little Serbia" to end within a few months. "We will be home, before the leaves fall," sang the Slovenian soldiers (Simčič 2014: 40). But the months turned into four terrible years, during which the illusions of heroic deeds, as depicted by military painters since the time of "Father" Radetzky, perished and the nation's hero was finally buried in "anachronistic school readings" (F. G. 1924: 1; Jezernik 2014: 42–5). Indeed, technological progress prided death with a huge scythe that it could wield ever faster and more viciously—the death toll went into the millions.

Before the First World War, the heroes whose deeds were cast in bronze or carved in stone for posterity were always military commanders and leaders; the common soldiers were forgotten (Mosse 1975: 37, 47; 1990: 99; Winter 2006: 281). The harrowing turmoil of the war, however, led to a change in the perception of the collective memory of the war's essential protagonists. The victor was replaced by the "unknown soldier," the regular infantryman who bore the brunt of suffering and was subjected to the full onslaught of "the most terrible war the world has ever seen" (Strobl 1915: 1). The enormity of the war's casualties, which could be found neither in the experience of contemporaries, nor in the chronicles of history, triggered a paradigm shift and, not least, paved the way for democratic thinking:

The fate of the nation, its fortune or misfortune, should not be decided by a handful of men who came to power by birth, luck, or favouritism. The nation itself should forge its own path, determine its own destiny, good or bad, and bear its own burden! Those who have the right to suffer and sacrifice undoubtedly have also the right to decide on the cause of their own sacrifice and suffering. (Neznan 1919: 91)

The First World War lasted a long time and did not end with a triumphal procession, as many people imagined at the beginning. Rather, as Count Max Montgelas put it, it ended with "no one knowing why they had fought" (Montgelas 1925: 11). Nevertheless, after the war there was a fundamental break in the collective memory of the Slovenes. When the war ended, both victors and losers came together to mourn, honour the dead, and pay respect to the fallen soldiers of all nationalities. As stipulated in international agreements, the countries involved in the war, pledged to care for the graves of fallen soldiers, regardless of nationality or citizenship, as they saw fit for their own dead,

for they had all sacrificed what mattered most to them—their lives—in the service of their homeland. A special international fund was established for this purpose, to which all participants in the war contributed “considerable sums of money” (F. B. 1923: 3; J. H. 1923: 2). In the years following the war, countless cemeteries for fallen soldiers of all nationalities were established in cities and villages across the Old Continent. Their message was to honour the self-sacrifice, suffering, and memory of all war victims. A notable exception was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It was established as a Yugoslav nation-state on December 1, 1918, less than a month after the protracted and bloody war in which its citizens had been mobilised against each other. It thus united all Yugoslavs, the “winners” (the former citizens of the Kingdom of Serbia) and the “losers” (the former Yugoslav citizens of the Dual Monarchy) of the war into one state.

The Austro-Hungarian campaign against Serbia, in which a large part of the mobilised Yugoslavs were on the side of the aggressor, claimed an enormous number of victims and caused severe economic damage. When the Serbian government returned home at the end of the war, it found, “nothing but a heap of ruins and a vast, burning earth; a starved country, barbarously devastated and bereft of everything. Roads and railroads were destroyed, and there was still no post office, telegraph, or telephone” (Nedeljković 1919: 3). Serbian losses in blood were even higher, with the blood toll of the “Mother of Heroes, the Kingdom of Serbia,” amounted to one million lives out of the four million lives who had inhabited it before the war² (Šišić 1937: 267). In comparison, about 35,000 Slovenian soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms died, and 11,000 invalids (Dobida 1929: 430).

Although the death toll on the Serbian side was much higher than that of the Austro-Hungarian war veterans, the Serbian veterans at least had the satisfaction of knowing that their sufferings and sacrifices were not in vain, as they had achieved the liberation and unification of the Slavic South. Commemorations of the anniversaries of important battles served to alleviate the traumas of war. The invasion of the Austro-Hungarian army, Serbian victories in the early months of the war, and the eventual defeat, retreat, occupation, and victory against an overwhelming superior forces became elements of

2 The exact number of Serbian casualties has never been determined, but according to historian Branko Petranović, Serbia lost around 370,000 soldiers during the war. Another 630,000 died from cholera, hunger, and the harsh living conditions in the camps of POW. Roughly 114,000 war invalids survived the war and 500,000 children were left without parents (Petranović 1980: 35).



Fig. 2: “Serbian war memorial, which was not erected due to the quick intervention of our troops.” Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

the Serbian postwar narrative that gave meaning to the war experience. Leading Serbian politicians, who held the lion’s share of power in the common state, rarely failed to mention the great Serbian sacrifices for liberation and unification. For instance, in a book edited by Lazare Marcovitch, *Serbia and Europe 1914–1920*, we read:

In history there are already examples of peoples who pay for their national unity with their blood. But the efforts of the Serbian people, the sacrifices they have made and continue to make to secure their independence and free their Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian brothers from a foreign yoke, have surpassed anything seen before. And in the face of this spectacle, so tragic from the human point of view, so noble and significant from the point of view of the destiny of peoples, both friends and enemies of our nation will understand why Serbia continues this struggle to the death. The communiqués speak of liberated square kilometres, but the Serbian blood shed in torrents shows that the goal, the only possible and conceivable one, is the complete and total liberation of our nation. (Marcovitch 1920: 81–2)

POILU IN AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN UNIFORM

The great change in the collective memory of Europe is best illustrated by the fate of the monument in Metz, France, originally dedicated to Kaiser Wilhelm II, which was demolished after the war and replaced

by the monument to the *poilu* (French infantryman). The monuments erected in the affected countries often depict soldiers in uniform, as was the case in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. However, this custom posed a particularly difficult problem when it came to commemorating the fallen soldiers who had died in Austro-Hungarian uniforms. Accordingly, “uniformed” monuments were rare in the Drava Banate, but some were erected nonetheless. The first was the so-called Kranjski Janez statue in the Holy Cross Cemetery in Ljubljana, although it was not officially dedicated to any fallen soldier, but to the Slovenes of the 17th Imperial and Royal Regiment who were executed for their rebellion against the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the Judenburg Mutiny on May 12, 1918. It was originally planned and created as a monument to the bravery and loyalty of Slovenian soldiers in Austrian uniforms during the war (Anon. 1916: 4), but was then discarded after the end of the war and finally erected with a different connotation.

After the war, there was hardly a Slovenian family that had not suffered a loss, and their immense pressure for a worthy place of remembrance made the previous neglect impossible. The memory of Slovenian soldiers who had died fighting for the Austrian army was kept alive in an organised way by the “non-partisan and non-political” Association of Slovenian Soldiers, which held its first general assembly in 1924 “around the throne of the Queen of Heaven” in Brezje. As Ivan Rozina, the chairman of a group of war veterans from Ljubljana, once said, in the period between 1918 and 1924 Slovenian war veterans “fell into a kind of indifference” and thought that “with the end of the war and the liberation of their homeland they had completely fulfilled their duty” (Anon. 1934: 2). Subsequently, however, on the initiative of the Association, monuments were unveiled almost every Sunday in parishes throughout the Drava Banate (Stelè 1931: 412); by 1926, almost 150 monuments, mainly plaques, had been erected to fallen “Slovenian heroes” (Anon. 1926: 6; Dobida 1929: 430; Bonač 1931: 1–2). These monuments were intended to give descendants a lasting testimony to the reverence for fallen comrades and the culture of the Slovenian nation, which acted according to the motto: “A people that honours and respects its dead forges its future in gold” (Anon. 1934: 2).

In addition to smaller monuments in parishes and villages, the secretary of the association, Franc Bonač, announced as early as 1926 the intention to erect a dignified, extensive, neutral large monument in Tivoli Park in Ljubljana, dedicated to all victims of the war (Anon. 1926: 6). This monument was never erected, though. As a rule, memorials to fallen soldiers in Austrian uniforms were erected

almost exclusively in parishes and villages. An outstanding exception represents a memorial plaque on the façade of the Metlika town hall, inaugurated in 1928 on Unification Day (December 1). The plaque contains only a selected list of names of the fallen citizens of Metlika: the names of those who had fought on the Italian or Russian fronts are listed, while the names of those who had fallen on the Serbian front are omitted (Rus 2021: 161).



Fig. 3: The original monument to the Unknown Serbian Soldier, Avala. Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik

At a time when Serbian parts of the country were taking out state loans to erect monuments to soldiers who had fought in Serbian uniforms, the state made no effort to honour soldiers who had fallen in other uniforms, leaving it to the villagers, relatives, and veterans to bear the cost themselves. As a result, people considered these monuments, i.e. markers commemorating the First World War, as part of their property and their intimate, family commemoration of fallen and missing soldiers as well as the suffering of civilians. They became part of the local community's embodied memory of the war, which often diverged from official interpretations. Again, this was not a helpful means of healing the wounds of war, instead it ensured that the bitter and intense enmity of the prewar period deepened rather than bridged the gaps between the peoples of the new nation-state. The confrontation with the divisions of the past also led to a change in interpretation of the present and the future, which played an identity-defining role for many individuals.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was established in 1918 as a nation-state of one nation. However, disagreements over

who won and who lost the war heightened awareness of different identities, and awareness of different identities exacerbated the division between its citizens, which eventually developed into a division between Us and Them. An increasing number of Slovenes, welcomed initiative to commemorate the fallen soldiers, even though they were repeatedly accused of “Austrianism.” Many were silenced by these accusations, but Secretary Bonač rejected the accusations, saying that they were merely an expression of “Byzantinism” (cf. Anon. 1925: 377). In 1924, Fran Bonač defiantly declared that the sea of blood between the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was radically reshaping the hearts and minds of all European nations:

That is exactly why we shall erect monuments and honour the blessed memory of those who swam in that gruesome lake and, in their effort to keep the waves from swallowing us all, were themselves drowned and lost. Their pitiful, scattered burial grounds serve as landmarks of our lives. Every soldier of the Great War was a martyr, regardless of nationality. (Bonač 1924: 2)

His attitude eventually hardened, and he did not shy away from taking steps towards historical revisionism, as shown by his prayer for the “fallen heroes” at the open-air meeting dedicated to the victims of the First World War in Brezje in 1925 (see Anon. 1925: 377).

Since the past and its interpretation are the key to nation-building—because the common perception of a common past is the strongest justification for the existence of a particular nation—this triggered a series of changes. When a group of Catholic Slovenian war veterans offered a reinterpretation of the existing public narrative and chose Brezje as the setting for its public expression, they also emphasised the Catholic faith as the most distinguished characteristic of the Slovenian people. In a multi-confessional kingdom, this could not be accomplished without a fundamental change in what should be remembered and what should be forgotten.

After 1918, in order to strengthen the common identity, efforts were made to suppress the collective memory of the Yugoslav peoples, who had previously been part of the Dual Monarchy, and promote the Serbian collective memory of the Great War as a war of liberation and unification. By portraying Slovenian war victims and their sufferings as sacrifices for their homeland, those who did not want to accept Yugoslav identity obviously contradicted this concept.

Those who spearheaded the search for alternative commemorations were well aware that their actions would raise many question marks, so they attempted to disguise them as mere acts of reverence

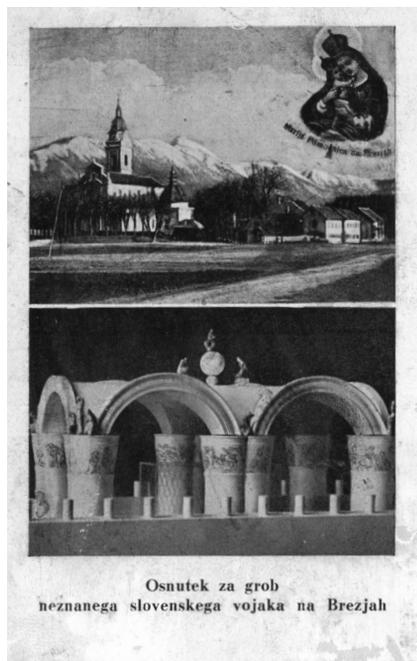


Fig. 4: Design for the grave of an unknown Slovene soldier in Brezje. Published by the Association of Slovenian Fighters. Postcard from the private collection of B. Jezernik.

that a civilised nation cultivates toward its sons (Bonač 1931: 1–2; K. M. H. 1935: 1). In particular, former Austrian war priest France Bonač vehemently advocated the right of the fallen Slovenian soldiers who had given everything on the altar of the homeland to “a dignified grave and a dignified memory.” As an honorary speaker at numerous commemorative and remembrance ceremonies in the Drava Banate, Bonač repeatedly referred to biblical examples, such as the story of Saul’s concubine Respha, and asserted

Just as Respha watched over the wretched corpses of her crucified children, so shall we in this association protect the graves of our fallen comrades and remind our people not to forget their sons, but for each hamlet to put up at least one modest plaque in their honour, to pray for them, and to pay tribute to their sacrifice, their love, and their loyalty—to us. (Bonač 1929: 407)

Bonač repeatedly emphasised the non-political character of the Association of Slovenian War Veterans, but he also never missed an opportunity to address burning political issues in his speeches. He repeatedly said that Slovenes love “their country,” so he demanded that the leaders of the nation-state also show love for it by “lightening

their heavy tax burdens and returning them to the entire population of the country without distinction”; and that they do “not neglect their disabled, who have contributed everything on the altar of the fatherland.” These were, of course, obvious political demands. Bonač also dismissed those who expressed doubts about the patriotism of former Austrian soldiers. In the course of time Bonač’s attitude hardened, and finally he did not shy away from steps towards historical revisionism, as his prayer for the “fallen heroes” at the open-air event in honour of the victims of the First World War in Brezje in 1925 shows (see Anon. 1925: 377).

The political motivation for commemorating fallen Slovenian soldiers in Austro-Hungarian uniforms became clear in the mid-1930s, when the association began to organise so-called *tabori* (gatherings) of the Slovenian people. The first of these gatherings took place on Sunday, August 11, 1935, in Komenda. The *tabor* was attended by several thousand people, including schoolchildren, firemen, folklore groups in traditional costumes, and the brass band of the Domžale district. The honorary speaker on this occasion was Ban Marko Natlačen. He did not dwell on the past, but focused on the present, in particular on the relationship between the Slovenian and Yugoslav national consciousness, or as he said, on how “we perceive the Yugoslav nation and Yugoslav national unity.” He explained that it is important to distinguish between the idea of the Yugoslav nation in the state-political sense and the Yugoslav nation in the ethnic-cultural sense. According to Ban Natlačen, all citizens of Yugoslavia, including Germans and Hungarians, constituted the Yugoslav nation as a single entity in the political sense. In the ethno-cultural sense, however, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were three distinct national entities. Therefore, he said, any kind of hegemony of one nation over another should be considered intolerable. He concluded by stating that the Slovenes formed a nation-state with the Croats and Serbs in 1918 in order to become stronger together and not to lose their national individuality (Anon. 1935: 1–2).

MONUMENTAL SOLDIERS IN AUSTRIAN UNIFORMS

In the Slovenian part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Slovenian soldiers fallen in Austrian uniforms were not publicly commemorated in the first post-war years. However, when monuments and memorials to fallen Slovenian soldiers began to be erected, their number

increased rapidly. In the Drava Banate with its 1,144,298 inhabitants on 15,746 km² (Zupan 1937: I, 4) Vito Hazler documented more than 525 of them (Hazler 2021). These are mainly name plaques on church walls or cemeteries, but also figurative representations of soldiers in Austrian uniforms. The depiction of soldiers in Austrian uniforms on monuments in the Yugoslav nation-state was burdened with a special mortgage, as it was the Austro-Hungarian army that invaded the Kingdom of Serbia, leaving behind great human losses and terrible devastation.

The first of these monuments was Kranjski Janez, designed in 1916 by Slovenian painter Ivan Vavpotič and Slovenian sculptor Svitoslav Peruzzi, a one-year volunteer, but never completed because Peruzzi was discharged from military service. It was carved in marble by Slovenian sculptor Lojze Dolinar, also a one-year volunteer (Anon. 1916: 4). According to a contemporary account, Kranjski Janez was most likely contemplating about the past and future days of glory and victory, remembering the heroes who had achieved this and would achieve it again, sacrificing everything they held dear on the altar of the homeland—their lives. Every vein of the created hero was said to breathe life, pride, and self-confidence. “This is the Kranjski, the Slovenian soldier—a hero!” (Orešan 1917: 115–16).

In the spring of 1917, the High Command of the Imperial and Royal 17th Infantry Battalion “Crown Prince” requested the Ljubljana City Council to determine a location for the monument. As *Slovenec* reported on April 4, 1917, Mayor Tavčar welcomed the proposal and mentioned two possible locations for the monument in the city centre (Anon. 1917: 1–2). Kranjski Janez, however, was not erected until 1923, when the remains of the victims of the Judenburg Mutiny were brought to Ljubljana (Čopič 1987: 168–69). It was then erected at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Ljubljana, not to honour the fallen soldiers on the battlefield, but to commemorate the victims of Judenburg who should have gone to the front on May 12, 1918, but refused (Anon. 1923: 277).

A few years after Ljubljana, the village of Dovje erected its own statue of Kranjski Janez. It was erected on the initiative of a preparatory committee, which organised a fundraising campaign that brought in about 25,000 dinars. When thinking about the representation of the statue, it was decided that it should represent a regular soldier of the 17th Slovenian Infantry Division in a typical Austrian uniform. The committee’s position was that “history simply cannot be rewritten” and therefore the statue should be considered “a contemporary document, a sad reminder of an even sadder past, when Slovene boys and men were forced against their will to participate in a worldwide massacre” (Anon. 1938b: 3).

However, not everyone shared their opinion. The monument in Dovje was eventually wantonly destroyed because it allegedly depicted “a soldier in too Austrian a uniform,” as some repeatedly pointed out in protest (Anon. 1938a: 8). The statue and its pedestal were torn down and the head removed from the site. However, the marble plaque with the engraved names of some 60 fallen and missing soldiers was spared the fury of the perpetrators. “The sight of the destroyed statue is pitiful—a mute testimony to the suffering of our Slovenian boys and men who were forced to fight for predatory foreigners and the oppressors of our country,” *Slovenec* reported (Anon. 1938b: 3).

On November 26, 1933, an interesting figurative monument depicting a soldier in Austrian uniform was erected in the town of Trebnje. It was dedicated to the parishioners of Trebnje and the surrounding villages who died in the First World War. On the day of the solemn unveiling of the monument, France Bonač, who “moved the people of Trebnje to tears” with his performances, gave a speech during the mass in the packed parish church. The monument in Trebnje is more than six metres high and depicts a soldier in full military gear standing bruised and battered on the rubble of a battlefield. Behind him is Christ on the cross—the Comforter and Helper who delivers him from his despair. On the sides, large shells are carved from black granite, and a marble plaque in the centre of the pedestal bears the enigmatic inscription “To the heroes—compatriots of our homeland.” At the unveiling ceremony, Bonač refrained from explaining how to understand the inscription, which says that the hero in the (Austrian) uniform embodies the homeland. For which homeland, then, did the heroes fall: Austrian or Yugoslav? Whatever the answer, the message of the stone soldiers in Serbian uniforms in one part of the Yugoslav nation-state and in Austrian uniforms in another part was that the First World War was not really over in the 1930s, but continued at least symbolically (see Jezernik 2017). The Serbian and Slovenian political leaderships developed a consistent narrative of the righteous victimhood of their respective people, which was eloquently and convincingly espoused by their respective parties of resentful partisans. In short, in the Yugoslav nation-states, the cult of fallen Serb, Croat, and Slovene soldiers became a central component of Serb, Croat, and Slovene nationalism and thus an important emotional component that blocked the development of a common Yugoslav identity.

Finally, the Association of Slovenian War Veterans began to organise large commemorative events, unveil memorial plaques and perform rituals, especially on the holiday of November 1. The outdoor gatherings of Slovenian war veterans in Brezje played an important

role. They were included in the commemorative calendar in the middle of August, on the feast of the Assumption of Mary, as they claimed, although they closely coincided with the old war pilgrimages in honour of the birthday of Emperor Franz Josef I (August 18). So closely, in fact, that this coincidence could not have escaped the notice of anyone familiar with the pilgrimages during the war. Perhaps the largest gathering took place on St. Mary's Day in 1925. It was estimated that about 12,000 participants came from all Slovenian regions, including those outside the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

Commemorations of fallen soldiers were declared apolitical every time, and Slovenian war veterans often paid lip service to the royal house to dispel suspicions of Austrianism. At almost every rally, general assembly, and similar event or meeting, a telegram of allegiance was sent to King Aleksandar to emphasise the non-partisan and non-political nature of the movement. Occasionally, the king's name was also associated with that of the fallen soldiers, creating a radically whitewashed interpretation of their historical role and significance. For example, the local veterans' organisation in Vodice restored a monument to the fallen soldiers of their community whose names had been obscured by the rain. In 1935, the names of the fallen were gilded, and the king's name was additionally engraved in a prominent place on the monument (Anon. 1935a: 3). Although great efforts were made to conceal the political component of the movement, this dimension was evident: it was intended to mobilise the masses for specific political goals and to support the notion that "something must be done" to correct the current situation.

At gatherings on the occasion of the unveiling of memorial plaques or at commemorative ceremonies, political views were regularly expressed, mostly formal ones, but always referring to the present and not to the past. In the nation-state whose current citizens had fought on the other side of the front line not so long ago, the memory of the war had become one of the central ideological battlefields. This struggle became more and more open and political over the years. As documented by the leadership of the Association of Slovenian Veterans, the gatherings "developed into genuine national manifestations in the first half of the 1930s (Osrednji odbor Zveze bojevnikov 1933: 3). Speakers at the war veterans' gatherings systematically emphasised their determination and the need to preserve the Slovene language,³

3 "Language is by no means merely an external means of communication, but an essential part of the individuality and culture of every nation," proclaimed *Slovenec* in 1924 (Anon. 1924: 1).

Slovene national characteristics, and the Catholic faith, that is to say, what they considered the most important signs of Slovene national individuality.

In the 1930s, numerous commemorative events were held in Slovenian parishes in honour of the fallen Slovenian soldiers. The number of monuments with lists of fallen soldiers grew rapidly, and soon there was hardly a parish without one (Anon. 1935c: 1). Although all this took place far from the kingdom's capital and was obscured by an incomprehensible Slovene language, the goings-on eventually drew the attention of Belgrade. In late 1925, the Belgrade newspaper *Politika* released a biting commentary condemning the events:

We have no objection to families tending their graves out of reverence for those who lost their heads in war through accident, bad luck, or lack of consciousness, but we have our legitimate doubts about ostentatious, formal ceremonies that praise and glorify those who fought in the name of Charles of Habsburg against the common cause of the Allies and Yugoslavs. For it is clear and indisputable that these fallen soldiers fought with all their might against the liberation of this country—even if unknowingly or against their will. (Z. 1925: 5)

Politika's concerns were dismissed in *Slovenec* by the leadership of the Association of Slovenian War Veterans as an “unfounded attack.” They pointed out that the graves of all soldiers who had fallen in various countries were all being cared for, even those belonging to the enemy's army, including Germans slain in the invasion of Belgrade. Because of this, Slovenes also could not stay silent and thus “spit on the bones of their brothers and sons” who had fallen in Gorizia and in the Primorska region, where they “defended their own soil” (Glavni odbor Z. S. V. 1925: 2).

At the events of the Association of Slovenian Soldiers, and later after its violent restructuring (having attracted the attention of Belgrade) into the Association of Yugoslav Fighters “Boj,” the language of the speakers became all the more political, with a direct and clear agenda of struggle against centralism and for the autonomy of the Slovenian nation. Not everyone could take the podium at these commemorations; all speakers had to be approved by the association. The language of the speakers became increasingly radicalised and eventually took on an openly Slovenian nationalist tone. Its use at ceremonial and ritualised occasions paved the way for it to become part of the worldview of the participants, confirming their sentiments as morally right. The places and occasions in which they were uttered gave them a strong emotional dimension, a prerequisite for the effective transformation of an idea into a material force.

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Imensko kazalo

A

ALEKSANDAR I., KING 26, 28, 78, 81,
119–121, 129, 135, 139, 150, 158, 165–167,
169–172, 188, 198, 322
ALUJEVIĆ, DARIJA 206, 210
ANDONOV, KIRO 92
ANIĆ, ANTE 16
ANTOLIČIĆ, GREGOR 262
ANTUNOVIĆ, IVAN 87
ARAČIĆ, VUKMAN 57
ARIES, PHILIPPE 34
ARNAUTOVIĆ, ŠERIF 148
ASHPLANT, T.G. 26
ASSMANN, JAN 149, 180
AVSENAK, VINKO 290

B

BABIĆ, DŽEMALUDIN 164
BABOVIĆ RASPOPOVIĆ, SENKA 119–121,
135
BAJT, DRAGO 276
BALDAUF, GUSTAV 213
BÁLEK, JAROSLAV 18
BALJAK, MIROSLAV 33
BANAC, IVO 188, 271
BANJANIN, JOVAN 10, 15–17
BAOTIĆ, ANDREA 163
BARČOT, TONKO 187
BARIŠIĆ, PETAR 236
BARTULOVIĆ, NIKO 10, 307
BASLE (VASLE), IVAN 300
BATAKOVIĆ, DUŠAN T. 309
BATRIČEVIĆ, BOBAN 144
BAZHENOVA, HANNA 232
BEAUMONT, JEAN 235
BEGOVIĆ, SENAD 169
BEJTIĆ, ALIJA 162
BENKÓ, TIBOR 248
BESTALL, JULIO (GYULA) 219–220
BEUS RICHEMBERGH, GORAN 244–245
BIČANIĆ, STANKO 186
BILANDŽIĆ, DUŠAN 233
BILIĆ, TONČI 244
BIRO, KAROLJ 87
BJELAJAC, MILE 240
BLAŠKOVIĆ, PERO 17, 148, 308
BLAŽEVSKA, KATERINA 108
BOBIĆ, PAVLINA 310
BOGATAJ, JANEZ 302
BOGDANOVIĆ, BRANKO 60
BOJKOVSKI, ZLATKO 110–111
BOKOVOY, MELISSA 25
BOLJKA, JANEZ 271
BOLLÉ, HERMAN 185
BONAČ, FRAN (FRANCE) 274, 315, 317–
319, 321
BOROJEVIĆ DE BOJNA, SVETOZAR 218, 233
BOROŠAK MARIJANOVIĆ, JELENA 236

BOROVIĆ, GORDANA 124–125, 127, 133
BOROVNJAK, ĐURĐIJA 60
BORY, EUGEN 152
BOSEOVSKI, TRAJKO 92
BOŠKOVIĆ, NOVICA 130
BOŠNJAK, ILIJA 15
BOŽOVIĆ, RADOMAN 86
BRDARIĆ, FRANJO 191
BRENCI, IVAN 311
BRENNAN, CHRISTOPHER 231, 241
BROZ, JOSIP (TITO) 143
BÜCHERL, KARL 76
BUCUR, MARIA 135
BUČAR, MARIJA 213
BUDNA KODRIČ, NATAŠA 290
BULIĆ, PAVLE 57
BUNJAC, BRANIMIR 191

C

CIK, NIKOLA 191
CLARK, CHRISTOPHER 231, 240–241
CONNERTON, PAUL 180
CORNWALL, MARK 308
COWELEY, DAVID 291
CVENKEL, PAVEL 311
CVETANOVSKI, VIKTOR 105

Č

ČABRINOVIĆ, NEDELJKO 156
ČAKŠIRAN, VLATKO 187
ČARNOJEVIĆ, ARSENIJE, PATRIARCH 17,
19
ČOLOVIĆ, IVAN 158
ČOPIĆ, ŠPELCA 289, 320
ČREŠNAR, MATIJA 281, 292
ČUBRILLOVIĆ, BRANKO 142
ČURBILOVIĆ, VELJKO 156
ČUSTO, AMRA 153–154, 156, 160, 163, 165,
168, 171
ČOROVIĆ, VLADIMIR 207, 309

D

DALGLEISH, ANDREW 248
DAMJANOVIĆ, DRAGAN 181, 185, 206
DAMJANOVIĆ, MIROSLAV 81
DAWSON, GRAHAM 26
DE CAROLI, GIACINTO 289
DE CAROLI, MARIA LUISA 289
DELIĆ - DUBIČKI, STJEPAN PL. 196
DESPIĆ, IVA 169
DEŽMAN, JOŽE 289
DIEM, PETER 210
DIVKOVIĆ, ANA 250
DOBIDA, KAREL 313, 315
DOBROVŠAK, LJILJANA 59, 178, 180, 182,
186–187, 189, 191–194, 196–197, 205–207,
212, 214, 229
DOBUŠEVA, MARINA 60
DOLINAR, LOJZE 27, 169, 266, 320

DRAGNICH, ALEX N 309
DRAGONI, PATRIZIA 178
DRAŠKOVIĆ, ALEKSANDAR 142–143
DRNOVŠEK, MARJAN 276
DUČIĆ, JOVAN 165
DUŠAN, TSAR 150
DŽAMIĆ, VLADIMIR 59, 61

Đ

ĐOKIĆ, DRAGAN 33
ĐORĐEVIĆ, VLADAN 35
ĐURIĆ, MILAN 57

E

EBERT, FRIEDRICH 97
EBERT, HEINRICH 97
EKERT, IVAN 169
EMŠOV 92
ENDLICHER, IVAN 27, 266
EŠKIČEVIĆ, VASA 42

F

FAUST GILPIN, DREW, 34
FIKFAK, JURIJ 281, 288
FILIPOVIĆ, IVAN 236, 245
FOGARTY, RICHARD S. 260
FORTUNAT - ČERNILOGAR, DARJA 278
FRANCESCHI, BRANKO 242
FRKA - PETEŠIĆ, ZVONOMIR 237

G

GABELICA, MISLAV 196, 221
GALIĆ, GORAN 240
GALIĆ, LOVRO 278
GALOVIĆ, KREŠIMIR 184
GANGL, ENGELBERT 81
GARELJIĆ, ZLATKO 244
GASPARI, MAKSIM 274
GAVRILO V., PATRIARCH 129, 141
GEIGER, VLADIMIR 183, 291
GILLIS, JOHN R. 150
GLAVAŠKI, MILAN 211
GLOBOČNIK, DAMIR 290
GOJKOVIĆ, ILIJA 57
GRABAR KITAROVIĆ, KOLINDA 249
GRABEŽ, TRIFKO 156
GRANIĆ, MATE 248
GRDINA, IGOR 281
GREGORČIĆ, SIMON 14
GRGIĆ, ANTE 195
GRGIĆ, MARIJAN 210
GRUJIĆ, IVAN 236
GULIĆ, MILAN 131

H

HABSBURG, ELISABETH, EMPRESS 71
HABSBURG, FRANZ FERDINAND,
ARCHDUKE 10, 15–16, 152, 221, 307–309
HABSBURG, FRANZ JOSEF I, EMPEROR 15,

162, 164, 166, 185–187, 205–206, 215–219,
223–224, 308, 322
HABSBURG, FRIDERIC, FIELD MARSHAL
161, 218
HABSBURG, KARL I, EMPEROR 217–218,
323
HABSBURG, LEOPOLD SALVATOR VON,
ARCHDUKE 214
HAFNER, JERNEJ 13–15
HAFNER, RADIVOJ 221
HAJŠMAN, JAN 18
HALBWACHS, MAURICE 179–180
HAMERŠAK, FILIP 52–53, 61, 178, 206,
212, 236
HAZLER, VITO 188, 288, 293–295, 297–
298, 300–302, 320
HEINZL V. 215
HERCEG, RUDOLF 12, 308
HERMAN KAURIĆ, VIJOLETA 178, 184–
185, 205, 207, 213–215, 233–234, 236–239,
244
HERRMANN, FRIEDRICH 76
HIMMELREICH, BOJAN 278
HOBBSAWM, ERIC 93–94
HOHENBERG, SOPHIE VON, DUCHESS 10,
152, 308
HOHNJEC, MILOŠ 300
HOLEČEK, MARIJOFIL 15
HOLJAC, JANKO 208, 213, 223
HORVAT, JOSIP 214
HÖTZENDORF, FRANZ CONRAD VON 218
HRIBAR, IVAN 310
HUSEINOVIĆ, ISMET 164
HUZJAN, VLADIMIR 178, 183, 189

I

IGNJATOVIĆ, ALEKSANDAR 194
IKIĆ – BÖHM, ANDREA 246
ILIĆ, DANILO 156
IVANIŠEVIĆ, PETAR 125
IVANKOVIĆ, ANTE 169
IVANOVIĆ, JOZO 236–237

J

JAHIĆ, ADNAN 166
JAKČIN IVANČIĆ, MIRJANA 193
JAKOVINA, TVRTKO 240
JAKOVLJEVIĆ, MARKO 19
JANKOVIĆ, BOGDAN 57
JANKOVIĆ, DRAGOSLAV 22
JANZ, OLIVER 259
JAREB, MARIO 151, 188
Jeglić, ANTON BONAVENTURA 310
JELAVICH, CHARLES 24
JENKO, AVGUST 19
JERAS, JOSIP 264
JEZERINAC, JURAJ 245–246
JEZERNIK, BOŽIDAR 11, 13–14, 21, 27–28,
52–53, 75, 79, 93–94, 118, 158–159, 164,

184, 188, 192, 281, 288, 311–312, 314, 316,
318, 321
JOANIKIJE, OF BUDIMLJE (BISHOP) 129,
139, 141
JOSIPOVIĆ, IVO 244–246
JOVAN NENAD, MYTHIC KING 71, 83,
85–86
JOVANOVIĆ, MIHAJLO - MIŠKO 156
JOVANOVIĆ, MILORAD 195

K

KADARE, ISMAIL 34
KALAN, JANEZ 308
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, ALEKSANDAR I, KING
26, 28, 78, 81, 119–121, 129, 135, 139, 158,
165–167, 169–172, 188, 198, 322
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, MARIJA, QUEEN, 150
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, PETAR I, KING 23,
53–54, 56–57, 61, 66, 69–70, 78, 87, 150,
165–166, 169–173, 188, 197, 264
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, PETAR II, KING 129–
130, 138, 141, 150–151, 170
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, PAVLE, PRINCE 83, 150
KARAOBRĐEVIĆ, TOMISLAV, PRINCE 169
KARL I., EMPEROR 25
KAURIĆ, SAŠA 242, 247
KAZAZ, ENVER 159
KEBER, KATARINA 277
KEROVIĆ, MITAR 156
KEROVIĆ, NEĐO 156
KESIĆ, DRAGOLJUB 156
KIRINIĆ, ANAMARIJA 236
KISIĆ TEPAVČEVIĆ, DARIJA 87
KIŠ, PATRICIA 184
KLAVORA, VAŠJA 277
KLEMENČIĆ, IVANKA 10, 339
KLEMENČIĆ, MLADEN 236–237
KNEŽEVIĆ, LIDIJA 236
KOČIĆ, PETAR 57
KOFRÁNEK, LADISLAV 164, 296
KOLAR - DIMITRIJEVIĆ, MIRA 178, 188–
189, 191–192, 196, 291
KOLAR, IVAN JANEZ 19
KOLAREVIĆ, STJEPAN 191
KOLARIĆ, JURAJ 246
KOMAR, JANEZ 311
KÖNIG, MIROSLAV 210–211
KOREN, TADEJ 280
KORUNOVIĆ, MOMIR 98, 102
KOSI, ANTON 18
KOSIĆ, KREŠIMIR 208
KOŠIR, TONE 291
KOŠIR, UROŠ 281, 292
KOVAČEVIĆ, MARIJA 72
KOVAČIĆ, ANTE 193
KOVAČIĆ, VIKTOR 184, 216, 222
KOŽUL, STJEPAN 223
KRAKOV, STANISLAV 40–41
KRALJEVIĆ, MARKO 17, 19

KRANJČEV, BRANKO 192
KRESAL, FRANCE 267, 269
KREŠIĆ, MIRELA 237
KRONENBERG, MARTIN 206–207, 212–214
KRSTIČEVIĆ, DAMIR 248
KRSTIĆ, ANĐELKO 45–46
KRSTIĆ, BOŽIDAR 129–130, 141–142
KRŠINIĆ, FRANO 169, 172
KRŠNJAVI, ISO 221
KRUŠKIN, LEOPOLD 68
KRYMOVA, VIKTORIJA 60
KRZNARIĆ, MARKO 183
KUHAR, LOVRO (ALIAS PREŽIHOV
VORANC) 264, 274
KUHTIĆ, JOSIP 248
KUKIĆ, BORIS 178, 193, 195, 205–209,
211–212, 216–220, 241–242
KULJIĆ, TODOR 143, 157, 171
KULMER, MIROSLAV 215
KUNOVČIĆ, PETAR 44
KUNST, JERNEJ 300
KURTOVIĆ, ĐORĐE 57
KUŠLER, JOSIP 68

L

LAH, IVAN 261
LAJBENŠPERGER, NENAD 51–54, 59, 109,
188, 196
LAMPE, JOHN R. 25, 27
LANG, SEÁN 260
LEDINEK LOZEJ, ŠPELA 281
LEMIĆ, VLATKA 245
LIEVEN, DOMINIC 34
LIPOVAC, JOANIKIJE I, BISHOP 129, 139, 141
LIPUŠČEK, UROŠ 281
LISKOVSKI, PETKO 94–95
LOVRIĆ, LUJO 131
LOVRIĆ, MIHAJLO 68
LUKAN, WALTER 275
LUŽAR, KLEMEN 278

M

MAČKOVIĆ, STEVAN 68, 76, 78, 82
MALAGURSKI, ALBE 81
MAMULA, ĐORĐE 51–54
MANDIĆ, NIKOLA 148–149
MANOJLOVIĆ PINTAR, OLGA 24, 52, 61,
158, 169, 232
MARCOVITCH, LAZARE 314
MARKOVIĆ, MIHAJLO 35,
MARKOVIĆ, MILORAD 38
MARKOVIĆ, SLOBODAN 155
MARTINOVIĆ, PETAR 124–125, 141
MARTINOVIĆ, VALERIJA 141
MASARIK, TOMAŠ 81
MATIČIĆ, IVAN 310
MATIĆ, PREDRAG 244–245
MATIJEVIĆ, MARIJAN 125
MATIJEVIĆ, ZLATKO 167

MATKOVIĆ, HRVOJE 188
 MATUSKA, JÁNOS 78
 MCCARTNEY, HELEN 229, 231
 MEDENICA, MILOŠ 141
 MEDENICA, VASO 141
 MEDVARIĆ - BRAČKO, RUŽICA 178, 189,
 191–192, 196, 291
 MEŠTROVIĆ, IVAN 194
 MIHAILOVIĆ, DIMITRIJE 57
 MIHAILOVIĆ, DRAŽA 166
 MIHAJLOV, FILIP 104
 MIHALČIĆ, STANOJE 133
 MIKIĆ, SAVA 141
 MILAČIĆ, STANOJE 129
 MILANOVIĆ, ZORAN 244
 MILČINSKI, FRAN 278
 MILKOVIĆ, KRISTINA 208
 MILOŠEVIĆ, GAVRO 131–132, 135, 137–
 139, 142
 MILOŠEVIĆ, TOMO 133
 MILOVIĆ, JAKOV 156
 MLADENOVIĆ, BOŽICA 150
 MLEKUŽ, DIMITRIJ 281, 292
 MLIKOTA, ANTONIJA 178
 MOLNÁR, TIBOR 68
 MOMBAUER, ANNIKA 231
 MONTGELAS, MAX 312
 MORGAN - OWEN, DAVID G. 229, 231
 MOSSE, GEORGE L. 312
 MOSTIĆ, MILAN 57
 MRKONJIĆ, PETAR, PSEUDONIM OF PETAR
 KARADORĐEVIĆ
 MULALIĆ, MUSTAFA 166
 MULLEN, JOHN 231
 MÜLLNER, JOSEF 212
 MUSABEGOVIĆ, SENADIN 155
 MUTEVELIĆ, BEHDŽET 157
 MUTNJAKOVIĆ, ANDRIJA 172

N

NAGLIČ, MIHA 290
 NATLAČEN, MARKO 319
 NEDELJKOVIĆ, MILORAD 313
 NEDELKOVSKI, MILENKO 105, 108
 NEDIĆ, MILAN 57, 137, 141, 148
 NEDOK, ALEKSANDAR 46
 NESTER, JOŽEF 68
 NEUMANN, EMIL (MIRKO) 217–218, 224
 NEWMAN, JOHN PAUL 23, 25, 118, 155,
 159, 264
 NIKOLIĆ, ANDRA 57
 NIKOLIĆ, DIMITRIJE 38
 NIKOLIĆ, ZORAN 44
 NJEGOŠ, PETAR II. PETROVIĆ 129, 156
 NOAKES, LUCY 231
 NORA, PIERRE 178–180
 NOVAKOVIĆ, STOJAN 57

O

OBILIĆ, MILOŠ 17, 19, 150
 OBRADOVIĆ, DUŠAN 10, 16–17, 19, 307
 OBRENOVIĆ, VIOLETA N. 57, 59, 60
 OBULJEN KORŽINEK, NINA 237
 OMEROVIĆ, ENES 148
 ORČIĆ, NOTARY PUBLIC 70
 ORZOFF, ANDREA 310
 OSTAJMER, BRANKO 291
 OZVALD, KAREL 25

P

PAGANINI, JOŽEF 73
 PALAVIČINI, PETAR 83
 PALIR, JAKOB 15
 PANCIROV, LJILJANA 237
 PAPP, ÁRPÁD 85
 PAŠČENKO, JEVGENIJ 178
 PAULIN, RAJKO 19
 PAULOVÁ, MILADA 16
 PAVIČEVIĆ, MIČUN M. 19
 PAVLIČEVIĆ, DRAGUTIN 191, 233
 PAVLIN, LAVOSLAV 172
 PAVLOVIĆ, LELA 59
 PEČOVSKI 15
 PEERZ, RUDOLF 15, 18
 PEEV, GUEORGUI 105
 PEJAČEVIĆ, TEODOR 184
 PEKIĆ 141
 PEPERNIK, AMANDUS 274
 PERHAUC, RAFAEL 272
 PERIN, MARKO 156
 PERUZZI, SVITOSLAV 27, 266, 320
 PEŠIĆ, PETAR 141
 PETRANOVIĆ, BRANKO 313
 PETROVIĆ, BOŠKO 86
 PETROVIĆ NJEGOŠ, NIKOLA I, KING 139
 PICHLÍK, KAREL 272
 PIČMAN, JOSIP 172
 PILAR, IVO 249
 PIPAN, DAVID ERIK 290
 PIRIH, DARJA 278
 PISK, MARJETA 281
 PIVKO, LJUDEVIT 263–264
 PLAMENAC, MIRKO 130
 PLEČNIK, JOŽE 266–267
 PLENKOVIĆ, ANDREJ 237, 248–249
 PLETERSKI, JANKO 261–262, 275, 311
 PODBERSIČ, RENATO 278
 PODPEČNIK, JOŽE 278
 PONOŠ, TIHOMIR 240, 246
 POPADIĆ, MILUTIN 34, 43
 POSILOVIĆ, JURAJ 221
 POTOČNJAK, FRANKO 16–17
 PRELOVEC, ZORKO 274
 PREMERL, TOMISLAV 206
 PRIC, DRAGUTIN 81
 PRINCIP, GAVRILO 10, 152–156, 307

PRODANOVIĆ, MILETA M. 38–39
PRODANOVIĆ, ZDRAVKO 38
PROKIĆ, ĐURA 57
PROST, ANTOINE 259–260
PROTIĆ, MARKO 68
PROTIĆ, STOJAN 22–23
PRSTEC, FRANJO 246
PUCAR, ĐURO 143
PUHOVSKI, DINA 245
PUTIN, VLADIMIR 232
PUTNIK, RADOMIR 57

R

RAČIĆ, PUNIŠA 28
RADAUŠ, VANJA 195, 212, 241
RADEV, RUMEN 106
RADIĆ, STJEPAN 28
RADOJEVIĆ, ANTE 81
RADOVANAC ŽIVANOV, ANA 60
RADOVANVIĆ, MILIVOJE 172
RADOVIĆ, ANDREJA 237
RADOVIĆ, SRĐAN 150
RADUNOVIĆ, BOŠKO 123
RADUNOVIĆ, MILOŠ F. 123, 125, 127
RADUNOVIĆ, VELIŠA 123
RAHTEN, ANDREJ 281
RAJOVEC, MARTIN 300
RAKOČEVIĆ, RADOMIR L. 143
RANČIGAJ, MARIJA 300–301
RASTODER, ŠERBO 119–120
RAŠOVIĆ, RENATA 241
RAVNIKAR, EDO 266
RAZUM, STJEPAN 223
REGÉNYI, GÁBOR 74–75
REGÉNYI, LAJOS 75
REINER, ŽELJKO 248
RELJANOVIĆ, MARIJO 237
REPAR, IGNACIJE 221–223
RESNIK, DAMJAN 290
RISTANOVIĆ, SLOBODAN 19
RODA RODA, ALEXANDER 308
RODINIS, ANDREJ 154–155, 158, 170–171
ROMSICS, GERGELY 310
ROPER, MICHAEL 26
ROTHSCHILD, JOSEPH 22
ROZINA, IVAN 315
RUS, ZVONKO 316

S

SAMBOLOK, JOSIP 68
SARKOTIĆ, STJEPAN 160
SAUNDERS, NICHOLAS J. 291
SCHACHINGER, WERNER 148, 164
SCHINDLER, JOHN S. 275–276
SCHMITT, AUGUST 43
SCHNEIDER, GERHARD 207, 213
SCHWATHE, HANS 221
SEDMAK, DRAGO 278
SIMICSKÓ, ISTVÁN 248

SIMIČ, MARKO 290
SIMIĆ, DAVID 57
SIMONOVIĆ, JOVAN 47
SIVAN, EMMANUEL 179–180, 230, 236
SKOUPÝ, ARNOŠT 60, 178
SMETKO, ANDREJA 237, 249
SMREKAR, HINKO 274
SOČICA, MUJO 124
SOKOLOVIĆ, MIODRAG 59
SOLAKOVSKI, PETAR 99
SOLLAR, FRANJO 213
STANČIĆ, NIKŠA 233
STANINIK, MARIJA 274
STANIŠIĆ, ALEKSA 124
STANOJEVIĆ, VLADIMIR 45–46
STANZER, SLAVKO 220
STAREK, NJEGOVAN SINIŠA 190
STAVREV, PETAR 93
STEINER, DEZSÖ 296
STELÈ, FRANCE 315
STEPHENS, PHILIP PEMBROKE 154
STERNER, K. 206, 210–211
STICHELBAUT, BIRGER 291
STIJOVIĆ, RISTO 122, 124–125, 130
STOJADINOVIĆ, MILAN 120–121
STOJANOV, PETAR 92
STOJANOVA, MERI 92
STOJANOVIĆ, RISTO 124, 133
STOJANOVIĆ, SRETEN 169
STOJANOVIĆ, SVETOZAR 26
STOJČEV, VANČE 92, 105
STOPAR, BOGDAN 15–16
STOŠIĆ, ANTONIJE 129
STRČIĆ, PETAR 236–237
STROBL, KARL HANS 312
STRUCHLY (COLONEL) 161
SUČIĆ, STJEPAN 237
SUDAREVIĆ, VRANJE 76
SUDAREVIĆ, BENO 75–76
SUHADOLC, JANEZ 278
SULEJMANAGIĆ, AMER 151, 164
SUMBUL, AVDO 157
SUNKO, DIONIS 222
SUPILO, FRANJO 16
SUŠAK, MILAN 301
SVOLJŠAK, DRAGO 270, 291
SVOLJŠAK, PETRA 25, 234, 262–264, 268,
271, 274, 278–279, 281
SZPOCIŃSKI, ANDRZEJ 179–180

Š

ŠARENAC, DANILO 37, 51, 53–54, 60, 188,
240
ŠEBA, JAN 81
ŠEGULA, FRANČIŠEK SERAFIN 15
ŠEHIĆ, ZIJAD 148
ŠIKOPARIJA, VOJISLAV 38
ŠIMAC, MIHA 277
ŠIMETIN ŠEGVIĆ, FILIP 209

ŠIMPRAGA, SAŠA 166
ŠIPUŠ, BERISLAV 244
ŠIŠTEK, FRANTIŠEK 122, 124, 136
ŠIŠIĆ, FERDO 313
ŠKILJAN, FILIP 187
ŠKRLEC LOMNIČKI, IVAN 213, 215, 217
ŠMAJDEK, PRIMOŽ 300
ŠNEDORF, LUJO 189-190
ŠNJARIĆ, LUKA 220
ŠOKČIĆ, JOSIP 81
ŠOLA, PERO 183
ŠPADIJER, MARKO 123
ŠPIŠIĆ, BOŽIDAR 215-216
ŠTAKOREC, SILVIJA 185
ŠTEPEC, MARKO 290

T

TADIĆ, GOJKO 195
TALEVSKI, METODIJA 94
TAVČAR, IVAN 310, 320
TAVERNIE, BERTRAN 34
TEŽAK, SPOMENKA 189
THIESSEN, ILKA 93
TISCHLER, ROBERT 97
TODOROV, PETAR 92, 94, 104
TODOROVIĆ, KOSTA 187
TOMČEV, CVETAN 309
TOMIĆ, JAŠA 19-20
TOMINAC, NIKOLA 178
TOMISLAV, KING 166-169, 188-189, 198
TÖRLEI, GYULA 73
TROCH, PIETER 23
TURKALJ, JOZA (JOSIP) 195, 212, 216,
224, 241
TURŠIĆ, LEOPOLD 12

U

UDE, LOJZE 272
URBANIA, JOSEF 160-161
URBANIJA, JOŽE - LIMBARSKI 15
URLIĆ, VELIMIR 187
UROŠEVIĆ, ČEDA 57
UŠENIČNIK, ALEŠ 11-12

V

VALDEC, RUDOLF 169
VALENT, IVICA 187
VARJAČIĆ, MILENKO 131, 138, 141-142
VAVPOTIČ, IVAN 274, 320
VELIMIROVIĆ, MILUTIN 44
VIDIŠ, DAVOR 236
VINAVER, STANISLAV 20
VIRANT; STANKO 299-300
VLASIDIS, VLASIS 47
VODOPIVEC, PETER 262
VODOPIVEC, VLADO 272, 276
VOGEL, JAKOB 162
VOLČJAK, JURE 291
VRABEC, VESNA 221

VRBICA, VASILIJ 139, 141, 143
VUKIČEVIĆ, MARKO 178, 206-207, 211,
213-214, 217
VUKMANOVIĆ, SAVO 128, 130
VUKOSAVLJEVIĆ, TEODOSIJE 59
VUKOTIĆ, DRAGAN 240
VUKOTIĆ, JANKO 57, 135-136, 139,
141-143
VUKOTIĆ, VUKAŠIN 139, 141
VURNIK, IVAN 302

W

WATSON, ALEXANDER 308-309
WENDEL, HERMANN 19
WENKE, MAX 211
WERHAS, MARIO 236
WEST, REBECCA 10, 20-21, 307
WINTER, JAY 179-180, 230-231, 235-236,
241, 259-260, 312
WOUTERS, NICO 309

Y

YPERSELE, LAURENCE VAN 309

Z

ZAPLALIĆ, JOSIP 68
ZAPLATIL, MARKO 272
ZDRAVKOVSKA, ŽANETA 94, 111
ZEBIĆ, IVAN 237
ZEBIĆ, ENIS 245
ZEČEVIĆ, SLOBODAN 47
ZELEZNY, FRANZ 164
ZLATAR VIOLIĆ, ANDREA 236, 245
ZUPAN, GVIDO 320

Ž

ŽERAJIĆ, BOGDAN 156
ŽERAJIĆ, MILAN 35-37, 39-40
ŽITOMJEREC, JOSIP 68
ŽIVANOVIĆ, MILANA 52-53, 61
ŽUNAC, GJURO 217

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