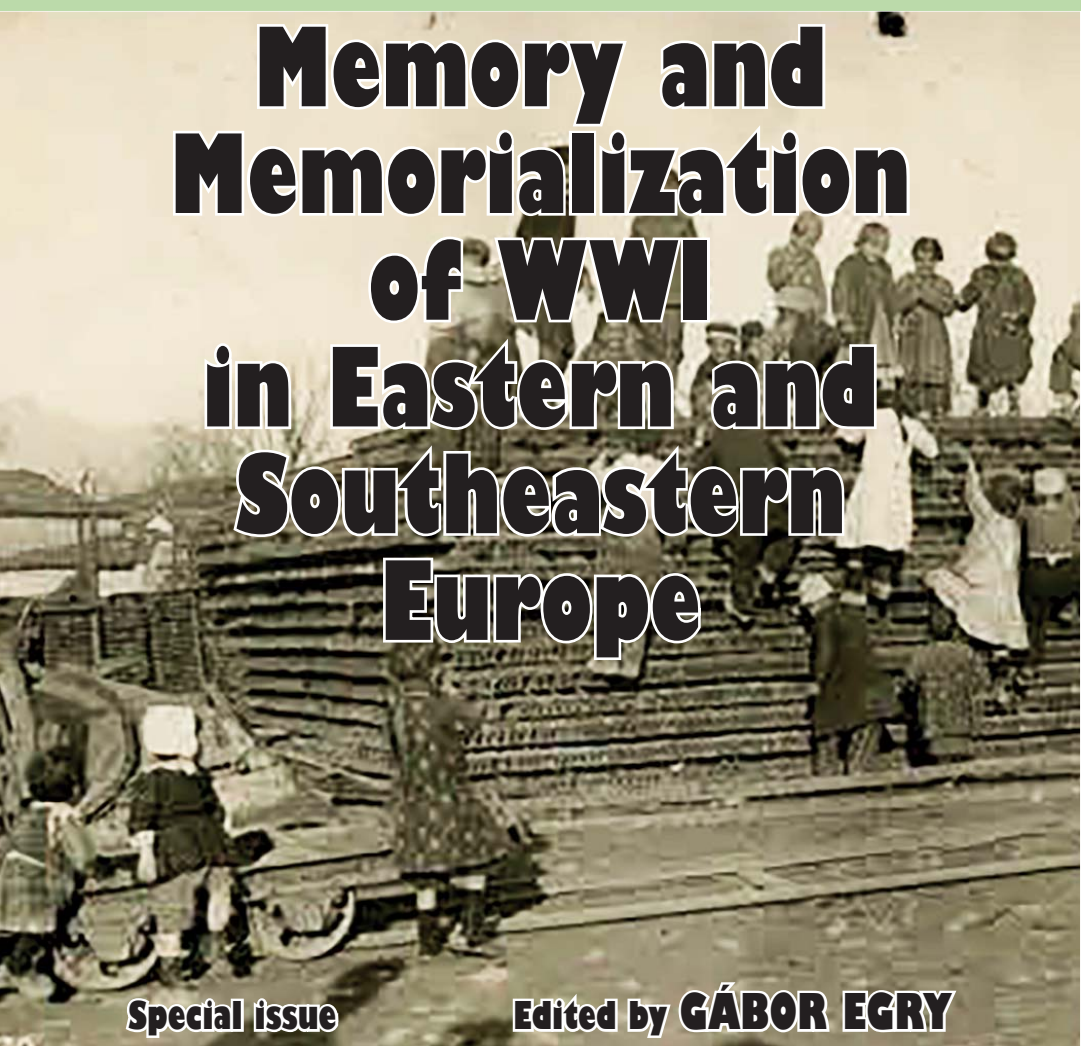


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Memory and Memorialization of WWI in Eastern and Southeastern Europe

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Preface

This volume was born out of the ‘Frontlines and Hinterland’ project at the Institute of Political History, Budapest. The collective of the institute wish to engage with blind spots of social memory on the 100th anniversary of WWI and present a new picture of the social experience of war between 1914 and 1918. This effort is aimed at revealing the experiences of those who spent the war years far from the actual battles, and also the memory of “ordinary people” in the trenches.

From the very beginning, the project intended to fit into a broader, Central and Eastern European, framework. The first step was to survey the state-of-the-art in several countries in the region, both in terms of historiographic canons and a widely understood social memory. The international conference, titled ‘Memory and Memorialisation of WWI in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: Past and Present’ and held in Budapest in December 2014, offered the opportunity to speakers from Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia to report on different aspects of social memory in their own countries, from the interwar era to the present. A selection from these papers is included in this volume.

As the next step, we invited several experts to answer a questionnaire on the state of social memory, historiography and the expectations regarding the anniversary. The second part of the volume consists of the answers. While the first part offers an insight into how social memory was constructed throughout the last hundred years, the second one gives a detailed overview of how societies remember now, on the anniversary.

The editor of the volume and the members of the team of the Institute of Political History wish to express their gratitude to all contributors. While our attempt was definitely not able to fill all the gaps in the study of WWI and its memory in the region, it is a good “starter kit” for further research.

Aleksandar R. Miletić

Institute for Recent History of Serbia

1914 Revisited

Commemoration of the WWI centenary in Serbia

This paper deals with a wide range of social, political and cultural phenomena connected with the commemoration of the centenary of the beginning of the Great War in Serbia. It addresses a variety of representations of the role Serbia played in the war in both historiography and popular culture. The paper includes analysis of official state commemorations and media interviews by professional historians, politicians, and people from media and art. It attempts to provide a contextual background of the main arguments and the most influential interpretations of the war in contemporary Serbian society. The phenomena under study include quite a recent material and still ongoing public and scholarly debates which provide for the rather ambiguous character of this study. Namely, while aiming to explain the main narratives and arguments in a neutral manner, it cannot escape being polemical towards some of them.

Although the academic genre dealing with politics of memory and culture of memory is nascent in Serbia, two important monographs by Olga Manojlović-Pintar¹ and Danilo Šarenac²

¹ Olga Manojlović-Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja: spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918-1989* [The Archeology of the Remembrance: Monuments and Identities in Serbia, 1918-1989]. Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju and Čigoja, 2014.

² Danilo Šarenac, *Top, vojnik i sećanje: Prvi svetski rat i Srbija, 1914-2009* [The Canon, Soldier and Remembrance: The First World War and Serbia, 1914-2009]. Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2014.

have recently been published in Belgrade. Manojlović-Pintar's book is primarily focused on monuments and the commemorative usage of public space in Serbia throughout the 20th century. In approaching the topic, the author was preoccupied with the official commemorations and their narratives, and state-promoted remembrance practices surrounding memorial sites and places in Serbia. Šarenac's book covers three WWI-related topics, one of them being politics of memory with regard to important sites, places, and events of the war. In this part of the monograph, the author is elaborating on the development and discontinuity in the public commemorations in Serbia from the interwar period until the very beginnings of the Milošević era in the late 1980s. Several papers and at least one monograph published recently in Serbia are dedicated to the issue of WWI controversies and public commemoration. These publications are the main objects of analysis in this paper.

This paper consists of six subtopics which are arranged as separate sections. The first and second sections deal with media interviews and scholarly works by Serbian historians related to the commemoration of 1914. These parts of the study analyze what might be considered a typically Serbian historiographic response to presumed or, at some points, evident revisionist tendencies in WWI studies. The third section furthers this discussion by introducing a more relaxed and less dogmatic approach to the alleged revisionist literature in Serbian historiography. The fourth section covers public and media responses to "WWI revisionism", yet this time the main protagonists are the high ranking state officials. This section includes also the elaboration of the official state program of commemoration, its iconography and prevalent narrative. The fifth section sheds light on and provides analysis of the 1914 commemoration in popular and high art. Conclusions and results of analyses are summarized in the sixth section.

Serbian historians vs. WWI “revisionist” literature

It was in 2013, a year before the official commemoration was to take place, that the most prominent Serbian historians had already reflected on the WWI centenary and underlined their ideological and professional stance on Serbia’s role in the July Crisis, the month following Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s murder, and its alleged responsibility for the outbreak of the war in 1914. Numerous media interviews and one monograph by leading Serbian historians were provoked by “revisionist” books on the diplomatic and political origins of WWI written by Margaret MacMillan, Sean McMeekin and Christopher Clark. Among these, McMeekin’s books on “the Russian origins” of WWI³ and on the July Crisis of 1914⁴ certainly represent the most daring revisionist accounts on the issue of the responsibility for the war. According to the author, Russia’s readiness to mobilize at the first indication of the July Crisis, and its decision to support Serbia under whatever might be the consequences were the key factors which transformed a local war into a global warfare. When it comes to the Serbian culpability in the Sarajevo assassination, McMeekin considers it “semiofficial” involvement. While the informal power networks in Serbia were responsible for the outbreak of the July Crisis, Russia’s premature mobilization was to be blamed for the outbreak of the war itself.

MacMillan’s line of reasoning on the Serbian extra-institutional involvement in the assassination is quite close to that of McMeekin’s. Yet, Serbia is not mentioned among the countries most responsible for the outbreak of the war. In that regard, MacMillan points out three main culprits Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia; namely, in her own words the war was provoked by, “Austria-Hungary’s mad determination to destroy Serbia, Germany’s decision to back it to the hilt, Russia’s

³ Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.

⁴ Sean McMeekin, *July 1914: Countdown to War*. New York: Basic Books, 2013.

impatience to mobilize”⁵. On the other hand, Clark’s book offers a completely different approach to the issue of war guilt. The book which turned out to be a non-fiction bestseller in 2013 and 2014 aims at relaxing the exclusive German responsibility as underlined by Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty. Actually, the author stated he would not deal with the issues of either responsibility or guilt at all. Clark provides questions on “how” rather than “why” the chain of events of the July Crisis of 1914 was put in motion⁶.

In a complex manner, the book suggests what might be considered a shared unawareness of the main protagonists of the consequences of their acts during the crisis. The decision-makers in Vienna, Berlin, Saint Petersburg, Belgrade and Paris are portrayed as “sleepwalkers” whose acts stemmed from the common features of European political culture of the time. Although the author promised he would not open the issue of responsibility and that of blame for the outbreak of the war, the underlying suggestive tone is that of shared responsibility, with Serbian and Russian roles particularly emphasized in order to match Austrian and German “imperialist paranoia”.

After the first news came about the content of these books, some of the most influential Serbian historians – namely, Ljubodrag Dimić, Mile Bjelajac, Čedomir Antić, and Dragoljub Živojinović – almost unanimously labeled these books revisionist. Belgrade University Professor Ljubodrag Dimić provided a rather elaborate stance on the contemporary trends in WWI revisionism in several interviews. In methodological terms, Dimić claims that revisionist authors reduced the scope of their research to a small number of rather obscure and misleading sources which are applied with the aim of constructing a new paradigm that diminishes the objective (i.e. positive) German responsibility for the outbreak of the war. According to Dimić, the next step in producing revisionist pieces of scholarship is

⁵ Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace. The Road to 1914*. New York: Random House, 2013, p. XXXV.

⁶ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*. London: Penguin Group-Allen Lane, 2013, p. XXVII.

“to introduce parallel discourses” which provides for parallel interpretations of one and the same fact. All this brought about “a relativization of truth” which according to Dimić had a strong political background. In short, it was connected with the sudden rise of Germany’s prestige and power within the EU. It developed as a (German) state-funded project, and was disseminated via scholarships granted to trustworthy academics:

There is a forceful machinery which is shaping historians by means of scholarships. If you examine key authors who are handling the process of the revision of the image of WWI, you will notice that these are mainly people of Irish origin, and almost all scholars on German University stipends. After a while, they are appointed to some chairs of the great universities. Namely, when you announce your quasi-scientific thesis from Cambridge or Oxford, it has considerably more significance [than it would have otherwise].⁷

One of the general methodological guidelines frequently advised by Dimić and other protagonists of the anti-revisionist course is that historians should go back to Fritz Fischer’s thesis on the exclusive German responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Namely, in the last three decades, since the Serbian translation of Fischer’s book *Bündnis der Eliten* was published in 1985, his controversial thesis on the German war guilt has almost acquired a status of dogma among Serbian historians. Therefore, in the Serbian scholars’ interpretations, the facts which support the thesis of sole German responsibility are proclaimed to be positive and “scientific” pieces of information and vice versa. Among the revisionist authors, Dimić in his interviews frequently points out Christopher Clark and Margaret MacMillan.

⁷ The interview was published in monthly *Svedok* no. 926-927 and 928-929 (April-May 2014). Available at: <http://www.nspm.rs/kuda-ide-srbija/gavrila-principa-je-srpska-javnost-podrzala-a-politicka-elita-osudila-nemacka-stipendijama-menja-sliku-o-prvom-svetskom-ratu.html> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

Some of the aforementioned anti-revisionist arguments are reiterated in the opening remarks to a commemorative anniversary publication dedicated to the WWI centenary which Dimić co-authored with University Professor Mira Radojević. Yet, in this book, not a single critical remark on Clark's book can be found, while MacMillan's monograph is mentioned in a footnote as an example of revisionist historiography. Interestingly, Sean McMeekin's book which provides the most revisionist perspective on the origins of the war is pointed out as a citation reference for the development of the chain of events of the July Crisis⁸.

Margaret MacMillan's book could hardly be considered revisionist, yet it provoked the greatest outrage of Serbian anti-revisionist historians. The main reason for this lies in the unfortunate choice of exemplary parallels between 1914 Serbian, Bosnian and Macedonian societies and those of modern Iran and Lebanon. For the sake of truth, it should be underlined that MacMillan did not construct a total comparison between Serbian/Bosnian/Macedonian and Iranian/Lebanese states and societies. She only claimed that the Serbian unofficial frameworks which facilitated support for pro-Serbian irregulars in Macedonia and irredentist organizations in Bosnia had been functioning in a similar way ("much as") as contemporary Iranian confidential networks for the support of Hezbollah in Lebanon; nothing more than that was claimed⁹. MacMillan thus compared the *modus operandi* of Serbian and Iranian confidential undertakings, not these societies or states *per se*.

Yet, the Serbian anti-revisionist scholars intentionally disregarded that very fact and they placed emphasis on "unacceptable comparison" between 1914 Serbia and contemporary Iran. In doing so, they have created a false controversy which additionally strengthened a notion of anti-Serbian conspiracy constructed by Western historiographies.

⁸ Ljubodrag Dimić, Mira Radojević, *Serbia in the Great War: A Short History*. Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga and Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals, 2014, p. 84.

⁹ MacMillan, *op. cit.*, p. 547.

According to University Professors Čedomir Antić, Ljubodrag Dimić, and academician Dragoljub Živojinović, it was derogatory and rather offensive to make such comparisons. The democratic and liberal character of the Serbian state in the period between 1903 and 1914 is among the arguments they used to prove the improperness of such parallels. Mass-violation of human rights and the unconstitutional character of Serbian rule in the newly acquired territories of Macedonia, Kosovo-Metohija and Sandžak were simply absent from this idealized image of 1914 Serbia¹⁰:

The very idea that one would compare the Kingdom of Serbia as of 1914 with the undemocratic Iran tells of his or her malicious intentions and unfamiliarity [with the topic]. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a theocracy which negates the human rights of its citizens, while the 1914 Kingdom of Serbia was a European democracy. The idea that Serbia might be considered Iran falls prey to one single argument. Namely, [. . .]¹¹

*

“Problems” with MacMillan’s text also emerge from the fact that she finds that “it is hard not to compare” Young Bosnians and Gavrilo Princip “to the extreme groups among Islamic fundamentalists such as Al-Qaeda a century later”. In the

¹⁰ In November 1913, after the successful conclusion of the Balkan Wars 1912-1913, the newly acquired territories of Serbia were granted by a ruler’s decree an incomplete version of the 1903 Serbian constitution in November 1913. This reduced constitution did not include provisions for freedom of press and political association, electoral rights at both national and local level, and some elements of judicial protection. On the omitted articles of the Serbian constitution see more in “Ustav za Staru Srbiju (izostavljeni članovi ustava iz 1903.)” Available at: <http://internetbilten.com/izvori/item/24-ustav-za-staru-srbiju.html> (retrieved on December 20th 2015)

¹¹ “Antić: Evropa je i pre atentata Principa klizila u rat” [Even before the Princip’s Assassination Europe Had Been Moving Towards The War] In: RTV-Online, 8. November 2013. Available at: http://www.rtv.rs/sr_ci/zivot/drustvo/antic-evropa-je-i-pre-atentata-principa-klizila-ka-ratu_436197.html (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

following sentence, the author pointed out similarities in their puritanical way of life.¹² The aforementioned Al-Qaeda quotation, therefore, only referred to the prevailing ascetic character of the private life of the members of these groups. The analogy did not refer to the aims and methods of these two secret organizations in their complexity and entirety. Yet, the above mentioned anti-revisionist Serbian historians were more than irritated by this historical parallel. A distinguished member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art (Serbian: SANU), Dragoljub Živojinović, published an article in the Belgrade daily *Politika* which was entitled “Young Bosnia is not Al-Qaeda”. In this article, Živojinović raised his voice against politically inspired revisionist conspiracy; he provided also a detailed elaboration of organizational and programmatic differences between Al-Qaeda and Young Bosnia. Other anti-revisionist historians in Serbia followed the same line of argumentation. In this way, the public in Serbia was introduced to a hot debate based on a somewhat tendentious reading of MacMillan’s book.¹³

In addition to the critique of the above mentioned historical analogies, and on a more general level, Margaret MacMillan was accused of being incorrect and tendentious in labeling “Young Bosnia” as a terrorist organization. While Christopher Clark has decided to replace the terrorist label which he applied in the first edition of his book¹⁴, Margaret MacMillan remained firm on this issue. According to Živojinović, she was persistent in labeling “Young Bosnians” terrorists since they “did not seek alternative ways of solving problems with the Austro-Hungarian regime.”¹⁵

¹² MacMillan, op. cit., p. 546-7.

¹³ Dragoljub Živojinović, “Mlada Bosna nije Al Kaida“, *Politika-Online*, 12 September 2013. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Kultura/Mlada-Bosna-nije-Al-Kaida.lt.html> (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

¹⁴ The term „terrorist(s)“ was replaced with murder(s) or assassin(s) when referring to members of assassination plot.

¹⁵ “Živojinović: Ljudi lažu iz političkih razloga” [The People Lie for the Sake of Politics] In: *Nezavisne Novine-Online*, 3. August 2014. Available at: http://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/drustvo/Zivojinovic-Ljudi-lazu-iz-politickih-razloga-256534.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Novosti-NezavisneNovine+%28Novosti+-Nezavisne+novine%29 (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

It is not clear whether he quoted MacMillan's statement from media or from their private correspondence. From the interview, it seems as if Živojinović personally tried to persuade her to change her mind on this very issue.

The patriotic rhetoric of the anti-revisionist historians in Serbia almost regularly includes dramatic appeals to defend Serbia's reputation and Serbian state interests from the Western (that is, German) conspiracy. Dimić, Antić and Živojinović often speak on behalf of a personified Serbia as if they were state officials rather than scholars. They all claim that revisionism was a political project. Therefore, they propose similar state-facilitated countermeasures, at first the publication of archival material which proves Serbian innocence. In addition, Antić suggests an active collaboration with foreign scholars. He insists that "we [i.e. Serbians] are to find serious scholars who are to confront revisionism". In other words, the Serbian state is to recruit another Clark who is to write pro-Serbian bestselling scholarly books:

Serbia is to support the publication of a good scholarly monograph by a distinguished foreign historian on the causes of the outbreak of WWI. This book should be published by a respected British or American publisher [. . .] A movie, dealing with the beginning of the war, or even better, with the role played by the Kingdom of Serbia in the war, its sufferings [. . .] should be directed by an Oscar Academy Award laureate, if anyhow possible from the USA. This requires a huge amount of money, yet our authorities have in any way expended much money in the previous decades.¹⁶

The patriotic anti-revisionist WWI discourse is prevalent among contemporary Serbian historians. It is founded on a rigid "scientific" approach based on the dogmatic acceptance of the

¹⁶ D. Radeka Đorđević, "Od Gavrila Principa prave Bin Laden" [Bin Laden has been Produced Out Of Gavrilo Princip] In: Večernje Novosti-Online, 01. June 2013. Available at: <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovnna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:436815-Од-Гаврила-Принципа-праве-Бин-Ладена> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015).

Fischer thesis. It often places emphasis on rather misleading emotional and hyperbolic interpretations of the “revisionist” authors. Yet, the mode of its rhetoric is distinctively defensive and apologetic. One does not find the slightest hint of either national pride or aggression, which is a bit strange given that 1914 was marked by Serbian military successes against the Austro-Hungarian military.

Anti-revisionist reflection and beyond

Within the contemporary Serbian historiography production, the 2014 monograph by Mile Bjelajac, senior fellow and currently a director of the Institute for Recent History of Serbia, is of great importance for our topic. Namely, it represents the only relevant piece of scholarship dedicated to the “revisionist” interpretations of the origins of WWI. This book makes extensive use of the Yugoslav/Serbian, Anglo-Saxon, French, and German literature and studies from the field. It analyzes the most controversial issues related to Serbia’s alleged responsibility for the 1914 developments and the outbreak of the war. In addition to this crucial problem, it also deals with new trends in contemporary, mainly Anglo-Saxon, historiography and its approach to the Balkan studies. In this domain, Bjelajac is particularly critical about the latest affirmative interpretations of the history of “multi-ethnic and tolerant” empires, referring to the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman realms.

According to Bjelajac, a rather romantic and idealistic picture of these empires is regularly contrasted with the supposedly destructive power of nationalism associated with the new nation states founded on their ruins. This is particularly emphasized in case of the negative assessment of the Serbian national and revolutionary movement. In this particular context, the negative image of Serbia produced in the public opinion in the 1990s was mechanically attributed to events and characters in the late 19th and early 20th century. At the same time, the Tsarist

Russia is the only one out of the pre-1914 European empires which is excluded from this positive reassessment.

A new paternalistic paradigm is constructed which tends to disqualify positive connotation attributed to the small nations' liberation movements. Among these, the Serbian nationalism is perceived as particularly "malignant". Moreover, Bjelajac reminds his readers that the revisionist authors such as Clark, McMeekin and others particularly posit responsibility for the outbreak of the war in 1914 on Serbia and Russia. According to him, this argument is somewhat discordant when compared to the general trends of reconciliation of former enemies in contemporary official narratives:

On the one hand, there is insistence that after a century went by, no nation is to be burdened with feeling of guilt – namely, everybody suffered and felt pain equally – on the other hand, all of a sudden, a finger is pointed towards two states, two nations at this moment outside the EU, or more precisely, outside the so-called international community. Is this a sort of prediction of "a new political correctness" for a new cold war period?¹⁷

One of the main theses elaborated by the book is that the key arguments of contemporary revisionism can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s state-facilitated German diplomatic and propaganda efforts focused on contesting the war guilt clause of the Versailles Treaty. Bjelajac provided a rather detailed elaboration of the development of revisionist scholarship and its close interconnectedness with particular German or broader EU or US foreign policy agenda. The author is a particularly harsh critic of the paternalistic attitude towards "uncivilized" Balkan societies and Serbia. Following the example of Maria Todorova, Bjelajac's book deconstructs some of the negative stereotypes and misconceptions about the Balkan countries

¹⁷ Mile Bjelajac, *1914-2014: Zašto revizija? Stare i nove kontroverze o uzrocima Prvog svetskog rata* [1914-2014: Why There is Revision. The Old and New Controversies About Causes of the WWI] Belgrade: Medija centar "Odbrana", 2014, p. 232

which had been adopted in the US and European public opinion during the 1990s.

In the realm of the technicalities regarding the particular Serbian share of responsibility, Bjelajac provides data and arguments which contradict any allegation concerning the involvement of civil authorities in the assassination. When it comes to the Serbian military and military intelligence involvement, Bjelajac made an effort to confirm that the head of the Serbian military intelligence service – notorious colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis – had only approved what had originally been an independent assassination plot designed and later executed by Young Bosnians, all of them Austro-Hungarian subjects. Only shortly after the approval was given, the Serbian intelligence staff, and Apis himself, invested all their powers to revoke the assassination plan. Yet, it was all in vain, for the Young Bosnians were eager to finish, once and for all, with the archduke.

The issue of the dysfunctionality of the Serbian state and its inability to control branches of military was not among topics discussed in this book. A few lines dedicated to this problem could have counterbalanced Bjelajac's firm anti-revisionist discourse. Apart from this objection, the book proves to be an extremely valuable contribution in the domain of anti-revisionist WWI studies. Translated to English, it would certainly contribute to a more balanced and a more constructive debate on the origins of WWI in global scholarship.

Scholarly vs. "scientific" approach

Apart from this prevalent apologetic attitude and defensive stance against revisionism, one also finds authors in Serbian academia who have taken a more relaxed approach to the issues of WWI controversies. In this context, I will mention two historians, namely Dubravka Stojanović of the Belgrade University and Danilo Šarenac of the Institute for Contemporary History in

Belgrade. Not only that these two historians do not share the dominant “patriotic” discourse on 1914 but they have argued against it in media interviews and scholarly works. In the first place, they object to the degree of emotional mobilization caused by (mis)interpretations of the revisionist scholarship. Stojanović labeled it “hysteria”, while in Šarenac’s opinion this overall anxiety had already reached a level of collective paranoia. More specifically, Stojanović was surprised to witness such a high degree of public outrage in a society which has generally been either ignorant or completely indifferent about the gruesome details of war crimes committed by Serbian (para-)military during the the 1990s. Namely, while there was almost no public response to the thousands of monographs dealing with these crimes, the publication of the Clark’s book has provoked a broad public response in media, political circles and historiography.¹⁸

Šarenac, on the other hand, considers Clark’s book a revisionist piece of WWI scholarship. In line with this principal stance, he wrote a review of the book which included a detailed elaboration of his general objections to and particular disagreements with its contents¹⁹. Yet, instead of emotional exclamations and xenophobic remarks, we have here a calm scholarly mode of reasoning and critical reflection. Šarenac summarized what he considered acceptable and what was tendentious and problematic in Clark’s book. His argument is that only time will prove the credibility of such a controversial publication. Stojanović’s discourse is much more critical towards the Serbian-orchestrated historiography response against alleged revisionism. She defines it as a rather spontaneous expression of the *modus operandi* of the mainstream institutional historiography in Serbia:

¹⁸ The transcripts of Stojanović’s interview broadcasted in Radio program Pešcanik on 2nd December 2013 is available at: <http://pescanik.net/ljudi-iz-sume/> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015).

¹⁹ Danilo Šarenac, “O knjizi *Mesečari. Kako je Evropa ušla u rat* profesora Kristofera Klarka” [On The Book *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*] *Vojnoistorijski glasnik* no. 1 (2013), pp. 267-80.

How come that one book could cause such an avalanche of hysteria? [. . .] What happened with this book is no incident – it is something deeply rooted in the tradition of contemporary historiographies which are at first critical towards themselves [their own societies] and this is a good evidence that our historians understand their profession exclusively as subordinated to the state; for they consider it is nothing more than the one who orders you and thereafter you will write. This is why they believe that someone ordered Christopher Clark to write the book. This is evident from frequent requests that the Serbian state is to react, that our diplomacy should write a protest note [. . .].

According to their statements and writings, both Šarenac and Stojanović generally accept much of Fritz Fischer's thesis, yet they do not consider it dogma. They also have many objections referring to the aforementioned books by revisionist authors but they argue that historiography could only benefit from scholarly debate provoked by such controversial monographs. Moreover, these two historians do not believe in a politically inspired historiographical conspiracy against Serbia, nor do they consider themselves obliged to act on behalf of the state as state-designated officials. On the contrary, the public activism of Dubravka Stojanović aims at confronting the stereotypical ethnocentric mode of WWI commemoration as perceived by official state policy in Serbia. In broader scholarly terms, Stojanović and Šarenac proved to be open to deal with new interpretations and new approaches to WWI studies within a more relaxed notion of scholarly approach which is clearly confronted with an uncompromising "scientific" approach as proposed by their mainstream colleagues.

Šarenac was the only specialist in WWI studies from Serbia who took part in the international conference dedicated to the centenary of the war which took place in Sarajevo in June 2014. The conference had been condemned by the leading Serbian historians and state officials even before it actually took place, and one would assume that this was not an easy decision for a young scholar from Serbia to participate in it. Šarenac presented

there a paper on the issue of the national minorities recruited as combatants in the Serbian army; he also participated in the conference debates. Šarenac's participation in the conference was of a huge symbolic importance; his readiness to be engaged in debate rather than to criticize from a distance is an encouraging gesture in terms of contemporary development of the Serbian historiography. This is true, even more so as Šarenac is one of the most promising young historians in the country.

Stojanović, in the interview for the radio program *Peščanik*, claimed that much of the problem with accepting WWI controversies comes from the fact that the Serbian public and mainstream historians were unaware of developments in modern Anglo-Saxon, German or French historiography. The Serbian scholars' inability to accept a more relaxed and often self-questioning stance of these national historiographies comes from their own state of mind which does not include self-critical reflections in the realm of the national history. While assessing the work of foreign authors, they were reading it using their own distorted lenses. Only from this perspective could alternative historiography interpretations be perceived as nothing more than a politically inspired conspiracy against Serbia:

Modern British, French, Canadian or American historiographies cannot be content with the [thesis of] exclusive German responsibility. That is something people here cannot understand at all. Everything here is to be perceived black-and-white; our side is to be perfectly innocent, which is not the case in modern societies where the social sciences are to question [everything] and to question themselves. Already for decades, these serious historiographies have been dealing with their own responsibility. Another problem is that no one here was aware of this, that no one read these books [. . .]

In her interview, Stojanović also tackled a controversial issue of Serbian war guilt. In that very field of inquiry, she recognizes

Serbian state responsibility for being unable to impose effective control over military affairs, and more specifically, over military intelligence headed by colonel Apis. Stojanović considers it would be much better if Serbian historians were preoccupied with this very issue, namely the long-term problem of fragile institutions and that of the state jurisdictions being always inferior to the uncontrollable para-institutions. She does not blame Serbia for the outbreak of WWI; according to her, this was the exclusive responsibility of the great powers. Yet, according to Stojanović, “for one who lives here, this perspective [i.e. of dysfunctional state involved in the 1914 assassination] of the event is to be crucial”. Namely, quite a similar pattern of anti-government plot by insubordinate branches of military, police and state security took place in the organization and execution of the assassination of Serbian PM Zoran Đinđić in 2003.

The official state commemoration

Most probably influenced by the aforementioned Serbian mainstream historians, the official state commemoration was very much focused on the issue of “ungrounded accusations” against Serbia. In thematic terms, the commemorative manifestations placed emphasis on the victimization of Serbia and its population in WWI. While Serbia is portrayed merely as a victim of Austro-Hungarian aggressive policy, Tsarist Russia assumed the role of almighty savior. Like the anti-revisionist historians, the official commemoration has displayed a rather defensive stance against alleged trends of revisionism in WWI studies. This is evident also in the official state-funded “musical and theatrical fresco” *Amanet* [Legacy] – a low-budget (probably in a spirit of proclaimed austerity measures) performance dedicated to the centenary commemoration. Although it was announced as a performance which would deal with “both Serbian sufferings and victories in WWI”, the play was focused again on victimization rather than on “glorious” victories which

actually marked 1914 on the Serbian frontlines. Namely, in the two decisive battles that took place in August and November-December 1914, the Serbian army was able not only to repulse the Austro-Hungarian military, but the invading armies were almost completely annihilated.

The *Amanet* play introduces a personified Serbia as an innocent fragile ballerina confronted with the Austrian military and other perils of war. The authentic photographs of the Austrian atrocities committed against the Serbian civilian population during the unsuccessful campaigns of 1914 are displayed in the stage background. Salvation for the ballet dancer comes from the strong figure of Nicholas II representing Russia. It is rather surprising that Tsarist Russia was the only Serbian ally to be particularly mentioned and emphasized in this play and throughout the official commemoration of the centenary. On the occasion of the 2014 anniversary, Russia finally replaced France in the official narrative as the most esteemed wartime ally of Serbia. Namely, in Serbian popular and official narrative, France had always been recognized as the most valuable ally; this was obvious in the interwar period and onwards until this very commemoration. The Serbian/Yugoslav commemorative homage to France has much to do with the role played by the French military in rescuing remnants of the Serbian military after its retreat across Albania in Winter 1915/1916²⁰. In the following months, the French military rearmed Serbians and provided them with all necessary provisions after which they became capable of taking part in military operations on the Macedonian Front. As far as I could confirm, throughout the 2014 commemorative manifestations, the French alliance was not even mentioned. The aforementioned shift from the French

²⁰ The Serbian army, together with the members of government and Parliament was compelled to retreat after a joint German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian military offensive that took place between October and December 1915. What remained of the Serbian military found a refuge on the Greek island of Corfu, and afterwards they joined the Allies on the Macedonian Front. The Serbian Army played a decisive role in the Dobro Pole Battle after which the Bulgarian and Turkish government decided to sign the armistice agreements with the Entente.

to the Russian alliance narrative is evident in the erection of a monument to Nicholas II in downtown Belgrade in October 2014.

The public statements by President Tomislav Nikolić and then-Prime Minister Ivica Dačić followed, almost in every detail, the logic and rhetoric of the anti-revisionist historians. President Nikolić particularly amply argued about German war guilt, about credibility of the historiographic facts and methodology, about distorted contextualization applied by revisionist authors, etc. His opinion is that the German and Austro-Hungarian responsibility for the outbreak of the war had already been established by a “special allied commission”. In the domain of revisionist historiography, Nikolić expressed his disagreement with Christopher Clark’s book in particular. He considered it unacceptable to pardon Germany and to introduce a notion of shared unawareness of sleepwalkers “who staggered into the war”. The PM Ivica Dačić was less elaborate, yet he also warned about “distortion and revision of history” and underlined that the war was the “expression of German and Austro-Hungarian expansionism”²¹. What we have here is an odd situation with historians who assumed the rhetoric of state officials and politicians who adopted the phraseology of historians. In that quasi-professional capacity, president Nikolić delivered an emotional speech on the opening of the international history conference organized by SANU in Belgrade in June 2014:

Cicero’s words remind us, Serbs, confronted with an attempt of the falsification of history [. . .], that evil and dishonesty are widespread phenomena and a constant feature of the history of mankind. [. . .] There are attempts to throw into the mud the Serbian war of liberation which has been for a century a symbol of struggle for justice and truth. Ample evidences of the

²¹ “Optužba da je Srbija kriva za rat iskrivljavanje prošlosti” [The Accusation that Serbia Is To Be Blamed for The War is A Distortion of the Past] Politika Online, November 11th, 2013. Available at: <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Ekonomija/Dacic-Izgradnja-Juznog-toka-da-pocne-24-noveembra.sr.html> (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

events, facts and historical material – all this is futile when individuals recruited by echelons of power will take the facts out of context, reverse them, change their meaning, give them new clothing and outfit and lie will become a generally accepted truth. In this new truth, these great deeds will become a great shame; bravery will become terrorism, and the nobleness – weakness. What remains to us is to fight by words and deeds in the pursuit of preventing revision of historical facts [. . .] To remain silent and indifferent is to be an equal accomplice in guilt, the same as if it were accepted.²²

A strong pro-Russian undertone is evident also in what might be considered a semi-official centennial commemoration organized by Emir Kusturica in Višegrad in Republika Srpska, the Serbian entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The commemoration took place in a newly constructed quarter of the town called Andrićgrad (i.e. town of Ivo Andrić, the celebrated Nobel Prize winner). The construction of Andrićgrad was a joint venture of Kusturica's company Lotika, the communal authorities of Višegrad, and the governments of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska. Situated on a picturesque place on the banks of the rivers Drina and Rzav, Andrićgrad hosts cultural institutions, a scholarly institute and a film academy²³.

The official opening of Andrićgrad took place on the very anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination on 28 June, 2014, in the presence of the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska, Aleksandar Vučić and Milorad Dodik. The highpoint of the event was a theatrical performance named "Rebel Angels" which was directed and performed according to Kusturica's own artistic design. The apologetic approach was most evident when Gavrilo Princip and his accomplices in the assassination were represented as angels. In a somewhat

²² "Nikolić: Srbija ušla u Prvi svetski rat da bi opstala" [Nikolić: Serbia Had Entered the First World War in Order to Survive] In: *Blic-Online*, June 13th, 2014. Available at: <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/473201/Nikolic-Srbija-usla-u-Prvi-svetski-rat-da-bi-opstala> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

²³ See more on the Andrićgrad's official web-site: <http://www.andricgrad.com/en> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

bizarre and confusing manner, Kusturica also introduced a ridiculed figure of Uncle Sam who is placed in Sarajevo during the assassination.²⁴

According to the official commentator who was broadcasting the event for the Radio and Television of Republika Srpska, “the figure of Uncle Sam [. . .] is symbolizing the entire Western world that allowed Austria-Hungary to invade Serbia in a peculiar and conscious manner and for the sake of its own interests”. One is to have an extremely exaggerated anti-Western and anti-American attitude to have such a distorted perception of WWI to disregard Serbian war alliance with Western European Entente Powers and the USA. Such a hostile attitude is even more puzzling from the state-run television of the Bosnian entity which advocates, at least nominally, an active pro-EU policy.

On the very scene of the assassination, Gavrilo Princip and other “rebel angels” are coming out from the sky waving their clumsy wings. After the archduke was murdered, the play proceeds with trial proceedings against “Young Bosnians” emphasizing their martyrdom. The performance ended up with sounds of artillery which announced the war, and powerful Soviet military songs (such as *Nesokrušimaya i legendarnaya, Polyushka, polye* etc.) which probably emphasized Russia’s decisive support to Serbia in 1914. In a rather surreal context of 1914, the Soviet music was performed by the official Russian Army Ensemble *Alexandrov* which provided for the official Russian presence in Andrićgrad commemoration. At the same time, in Sarajevo Town Hall, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performed a concert of classical music. One could not imagine a more discrepant pairing of the musical motives and political agendas.

In Serbia, there was no corresponding commemoration of the centenary of the Sarajevo assassination. However, as it has been

²⁴ “Rebel Angels” recording by Radio Television of Republika Srpska is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjQu444c6bo> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

mentioned, Serbian state officials took part in the Andrićgrad commemoration held on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This was consistent with the official state agenda which defined the assassination as an exclusively Bosnian undertaking, committed by Bosnian patriots with no involvement of official Serbian authorities.

WWI controversies in media, film and art

One photograph, shot in a compartment of Adolf Hitler's special train *America* near Graz, on 20th April, 1941, became in the Autumn of 2013 a strong visual symbol of the forthcoming WWI commemoration in Serbia. The photo had captured a moment when a memorial plaque from Sarajevo was handed over to Hitler as a birthday present. Sarajevo and the rest of Yugoslavia had just been occupied by the armies of the Nazi Germany and its allies, and this was to be considered as a war trophy. The memorial plaque which bore the name of Gavrilo Princip in Cyrillic letters was removed from the 1914 assassination site, and the photo depicts Hitler accompanied by two officers staring at it. The photo was shot by Hitler's official photographer Heinrich Hoffmann, and it was published for the first time on the front cover of the Serbian weekly *Vreme* [Time] in October 2013²⁵.

The "untold story" about this photograph was announced by the weekly editorial with a suggestive title, "Hitler's Revenge on Young Bosnia" on the front cover. The photo was accompanied by an article written by Sarajevan author Muharem Bazdulj; it was entitled with another expressive title, "Happy Birthday, Mister Hitler". There was no additional German text attached to the original photo, yet Bazdulj gave his best in trying to recreate the entire context and Hitler's hidden reflections on Gavrilo Princip, Young Bosnians, and Yugoslavia. In popular perception, the discovery of the photo finally resolved many of

²⁵ *Vreme*, no. 1191, 31. October 2013.

the traumatic issues of modern Serbian history. Unexpectedly, all the Serbian enemies were exposed and lined up behind the arch-evil himself. From this utterly problematic perspective, Gavrilo Princip was perceived as a symbol of struggle not only against Austrians, but Nazi Germans as well. Motivated by the discovery of this picture, Predrag J. Marković, one of the most mediated historians in Serbia was advocating a similar popular conception of Gavrilo Princip's role in Serbian history²⁶.

Another Sarajevan, the aforementioned world famous movie director Emir Kusturica was, apart from his semi-official role in the Andrićgrad commemoration, very much engaged in the discussion over 1914-related topics in the Serbian cyber-media and press. A picture of him kissing Gavrilo Princip's bust on the official opening of the monument in the small community of Tovariševo in Vojvodina became widely known and shared in the Serbian cyberspace²⁷. In February 2014, Kusturica even initiated a petition to organize a revision of the trial proceedings against Gavrilo Princip and members of Young Bosnia. In an interview for the state-run Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), he said he would start the legal procedure after his initiative obtained one million signatures²⁸. To this very moment (January 2016), we still have no indication on whether we would eventually witness the initiation of such an epic retrial or not.

While arguing for the retrial, Kusturica was actually reiterating arguments which had already been used by Gavrilo Princip's defense attorney Rudolf Cistler in the Sarajevo trial in 1914. The forgotten hero of this historic trial was the only court

²⁶ Marković's interview in a popular TV program 24 minuta, authored by Zoran Kesić was broadcasted on 29th June 2014. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUR4FbZmVcQ> (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

²⁷ "Sami digli Principu spomenik, Kusturica ga otkrio" [They erected the Princip's Monument Themselves, Kusturica Has Unveiled It] In: *Kurir On-line*, April 22nd, 2015. Available at: <http://www.kurir.rs/tovarisvevo-sami-digli-principu-spomenik-kusturica-ga-otkrio-clanak-1333329> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

²⁸ "Princip ponovo pred sudom?" [Princip Once Again Before the Court?] In: *RTS-ONLINE*, February 14th, 2014. Available at: <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/Dru%C5%A1tvo/1522721/Princip+ponovo+pred+sudom%3F.html> (retrieved on May 5th 2015)

designated attorney in the process who actually defended the accused. He did it in spite of threats, and allegedly while facing a danger of being lynched by the Austrian officers. Consistent with his own ethics and an uncompromising attitude of a professional attorney, he pointed out that the charge of high treason against Young Bosnians could not have been legally valid, since Bosnia-Herzegovina had not been legally part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the moment of the assassination. Cistler claimed that following the ruler's act of annexation in 1908, there was no subsequent parliamentary procedure of ratification in either Hungarian or Austrian legislative bodies. Under the circumstances, subjects of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1914 were still living in a state of disputed citizenship. From that perspective, Young Bosnians could not have been considered culpable for the crime of high treason.

Rudolf Cistler's life and his valiant trial defense of the Young Bosnians was the topic of a 160-minute commemorative movie which was entitled *The Man Who Defended Gavrilo Princip*²⁹. The movie production received a generous funding from the Serbian state which provided for its fast completion in 2014. In his interviews, the movie director Srđan Koljević often emphasized that the film script was entirely based on historical documents. Cistler's anti-Austrian and anti-annexation attitude is even more highlighted as this attorney was of a mixed German-Croatian ethnic background. According to Koljević, Cistler's argument of the illegality of the Austrian unilateral act of 1908 is of paramount importance: "Therefore, if we are to talk about the origins of WWI, it was the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 which produced the chain of events which brought about its beginning in 1914".

Koljević proved to be well-informed about the new European trends in commemorative practices which sought to find a common integrating narrative rather than divisions between former enemies. Yet, he is not particularly fascinated by these

²⁹ More info about the movie available at: <http://kosutnjakfilm.rs/press/projekti/branio-sam-mladu-bosnu.html> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

new developments. Koljević is also very much concerned of the role of Germany in this process and distortion of historical facts which is associated with such commemoration policies:

From Germany's point of view, it is understandable that it has requested from Great Britain that throughout the commemoration of the jubilee, there won't be either defeated or victors, that there won't be those who are guilty and those a bit less guilty. It is understandable why Germany would like all of us to be equally responsible for that war, yet from the point of history and that of the victims, this is unacceptable. Even if such a request was issued for the sake of reconciliation, which is of course affirmative, the reconciliation does not mean alteration of historical fact.³⁰

A diametrically opposed artistic perception of the Sarajevo assassination is provided by Serbian playwright Biljana Srbljanović in her latest drama entitled *Mali mi je ovaj grob* [This Grave Is Too Small for Me]. Srbljanović was commissioned to write this play by the Schauspielhaus Theater in Vienna where it was performed for the first time on October 16, 2013. As far as I know, the play was later on performed in theaters in Belgrade and New York, while in Serbia it was also published as a book³¹. This paper will not be engaged in the assesment of the artistic value of the play; it will rather focus on the author's interpretation of the 1914 assasination and public debates inspired by it.

Srbljanović provides a rather affirmative account of Gavrilo Princip and Young Bosnians in terms of their positive social activism, pro-Yugoslav liberation ideology, and their anti-occupation and anti-colonial stance. What is alluded by the

³⁰ The interview was published in: Sonja Ćirić, "Branio sam Mladu Bosnu" [I Defended Young Bosnia] *Vreme*, no. 1186, 26th September 2013. Available at: <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1139707> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

³¹ Biljana Srbljanović, *Mali mi je ovaj grob. Drama u dva dela* [This Grave Is Too Small For Me. The Two Parts Play] Belgrade: Samizdat B92, 2014.

drama is that much of the problem in 1914 Bosnia came from the Austrian occupation, yet Srbljanović did not portray Austrians as the number one villains. This role was assumed by the Serbian military intelligence and its chief Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis. According to Srbljanović's artistic interpretations, Apis is to be blamed for exploiting the idealism of Young Bosnians for the sake of his nationalistic ambitions. While Young Bosnians dreamed of liberated Yugoslavia, Apis only thought of enlarged Serbia.

In order to point out the persistent problem of the omnipotent and insubordinate military and intelligence services in modern Serbia, Srbljanović included in her play several contemporary quotations. In the drama dialogues, one finds quoted statements by notable Serbian politicians and people from intelligence service sector. Almost all the quotations refer to the political environment and the technicalities surrounding the assassination of the Serbian pro-EU, democratic PM Zoran Đinđić in 2003³². Srbljanović's underlining rationale is quite an obvious one, namely, in both 1914 and the contemporary period, Serbian society was confronted with the very same problems of a dysfunctional state unable to impose effective control over the branches of military, paramilitary and intelligence service. From this very perspective of a socially engaged artist-intellectual, Srbljanović's critique of modern Serbian society is very similar to that of historian Dubravka Stojanović. Such a principal attitude becomes even more imperative in the view of the most recent developments which once again point out the insubordinate position of the military intelligence in Serbia. On this occasion, high ranked officials from the military intelligence denied access to their documentation when it was officially requested by ombudsman Mr. Saša Janković.³³ An orchestrated media campaign against Janković which followed and which was going on for several months (April-July 2015)

³² Srbljanović, op. cit., 30, 38-9, 100, 143.

³³ "Serbia's Angry Leaders Turn on Ombudsman" in *BalkanInsight*, 29 April 2015. Available at: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-s-angry-leaders-turn-on-ombudsman> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015)

is a clear sign of the strong influence of para-institutional networks in the Serbian society. The campaign against Janković calmed throughout the second half of 2015; however, he has not yet (January 2016) been allowed to inspect the requested transcripts.

Concluding remarks

One after another as they were coming out of printing press, the revisionist books altogether had a profound impact on the scholarly circles and public sentiment of the people in Serbia. One cannot deny that there were some degrading remarks, offensive historical parallels and cases of unjustified moral bias against Serbia. For instance, it might not have been necessary to provide such historical analogies which link Young Bosnians with Al-Qaeda terrorism, or 1914 Serbia and Bosnia with the contemporary troublesome Middle Eastern societies, no matter how scrupulously these correlations were defined by the corresponding authors.

The Serbian public might also be confused by Christopher Clark's point given in the book's intro that after a harsh experience of Serbian military campaigns in the 1990s, it "became easier to conceive of Serbian nationalism as an historical force in its own right"; in this regard he added that "our [referring to the Western world] moral compass has shifted too".³⁴ Regardless of the fact that Clark wanted to communicate a more complex explanation, for an average Serbian the first reflection is that the author had already been convinced about the moral character of the role played by Serbia in 1914 even before he began writing his book: namely, what do the Siege of Sarajevo and the Srebrenica Massacre of the 1990s have to do with professional scrutiny of the work with 1914 archival material?

³⁴ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. XXVI.

One should acknowledge that there were many provocative points which might have offended or could have had a negative impact on the scholars and general public in Serbia. This, on the other hand, cannot be used as justification for an irresponsible and exaggerated response by the Serbian mainstream historians. Instead of pointing their fingers on the unconfirmed foreign conspiracies, and instead of raising emotional arousal of an already distressed nation, they should have engaged in a professional debate based on concepts, facts and interpretations. Instead of speaking in the name of the state and nation, they should have written their works and spoke publicly only on behalf of their profession. Bjelajac's 2014 anti-revisionist monograph provides a nice model of such intellectual response to what was perceived as revisionist studies.

However, an ideal concept of what I would like to read from a Serbian WWI specialist would combine Bjelajac's critique of revisionist authors with strong self-critical reflections provided by polemic writings by Dubravka Stojanović. Otherwise, in terms of ideological balance within the Serbian historiography, it would be good to have more scholars engaged in the self-critical and self-questioning tendencies, especially when it comes to the main topics of Serbia's Grand National narrative. In this context, I have to mention a powerful remark by German historian Holm Sundhaussen, specialist of the Balkan and Serbian history, concluding his lecture held on 4 July, 2014, in Berlin. After dealing with anti-revisionist rhetoric in Serbia and after providing a positive assessment of the social role played by Fritz Fisher in German society, he asked one simple question, namely: "Where is the Serbian Fritz Fischer?"³⁵

A more moderate and self-critical and less emotional and apologetic mainstream historiography would provide for a more responsible and more balanced stance by the Serbian government and – consequently, for more constructive and

³⁵ Sundhaussen's lecture translated in Serbian is available at: <http://pescanik.net/sarajevski-atentat-srbija-i-duh-1914/> (retrieved on May 5th, 2015).

conciliatory WWI commemorations in the future. Serbian historiography should be a vanguard in this process. In doing so, it does not need to “recruit” another Christopher Clark from abroad who would write apologetic bestsellers on Serbia’s role in the July Crisis. One also has doubts whether anything would become different after a Hollywood block-buster about 1914 funded by Serbia as proposed by the aforementioned Belgrade University Professor. What the Serbian historiography and Serbian society desperately need is more self-critical reflection which would enable them to begin constructing a more complex identity structure and more responsible and tolerant scholarly and societal community.

András Joó

The Origins and Legacy of World War I

An (Austro-)Hungarian Perspective

For the ordinary soldier, there was probably much less doubt about the personal significance of either the beginning or the end of the First World War regarding the simple question of survival. However, from the political elite's point of view, the Great War (*la Grande Guerre*, as in Western Europe this cataclysm is mostly referred to) had begun long before any single declaration of war was dispatched. For statesmen and diplomats, for all the key persons involved in policy-making, as well as for monarchs and army leaders, the war had indeed begun earlier – just as it did not finally end in the early days of November 1918. As it is pointed out in a very interesting monographic survey on World War One historiography, “because war is not a discrete entity, but something intricately lived, conceptualized, and imagined”.¹ Our interest is actually more likely to be awakened today by the various interpretations of a collective experience, and the different reasons why certain moments and events remained in the focus of retrospective thinking.

One of the purposes of this paper is to give the reader an insight into what could be called a significant and most visible variety of the post-World War One Hungarian “mind-set” influenced by the outbreak, the outcome and the long-term historical impact of the war. This insight is provided through the

¹ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

presentation of the reminiscences of a handful of protagonists and witnesses who felt inclined to write with a more analytical type of approach which is closer to the historian's perspective, and in whose works foreign policy and diplomacy lay in the focus of attention.

Although the choice of authors introduced here may seem somewhat arbitrary at first glance, it is a result of an intention to provide a selection of writings representing a cross section of political attitudes. The simple fact that a handful of authors are picked may arouse legitimate skepticism regarding the title which is suggesting a more generalizing approach. Nevertheless, this paper has the intention to present views and characters which can be called unique with respect to their roles and responsibilities as decision-makers, their political views, personal judgements, or simply because of their impressive remarks highlighting the importance of the historic legacy of the First World War for Hungary.

The main line of discourse after 1918 was largely determined by the war guilt problem, in all its individual and collective implications. Hungary with the experience of defeat and dismemberment could hardly imagine the tragic outcome as a simple and logical consequence of the new international situation at the end of the war. Questions concerning guilt and responsibility were focusing much more on the unsuccessful endgame (or searching for reasons why the collapse came as a result of a long-term historical process), and less on the July Crisis or the outbreak of the war. This is reflected in the monumental French language overview on historical literature and research in Hungary following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise by Tibor Baráth², a young historian and secretary of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. While it

² Tibor Baráth (1906-1992), historian who was greatly in favour of modernizing historical thought in Hungary following modern French schools. Following his return to Hungary, he became a supporter of the extreme right relatively soon, ending up serving the Arrow Cross government in 1944. See: Rudolf Paksa, "A történetírás mint propaganda. Baráth Tibor útja a szaktörténetírástól a mítoszgyártásig," *Kommentár* 5 (2006), 69-79.

provides detailed bibliographic information, it only contains limited commentary. Little is mentioned on the European aspects of Hungary's tragic fate, while special emphasis is laid on the source value of Count István Tisza's wartime correspondence, the "only statesman" opposed to the war.³

After a revolutionary rupture, both Austria and Hungary experienced post-imperial trauma combined with loss of territory and, indeed, a more or less justifiable feeling of the loss of their so-called historic mission (as it had been interpreted in the two imperial halves). By the end of the 1920s, conservative elites strengthened their influence and determined the tone for national remembrance (especially in Hungary), and later, during the interwar period, this was challenged by the far right rather than by any other force in the political spectrum. It seemed difficult to integrate scholarly work in the context of a continental or broader international framework, or to put forward the Austro-Hungarian interpretation of the causes of the war in the form of reminiscences also digestible for a wider public in the English speaking world. The task was all the more difficult as a strong and uncritical feeling of nostalgia for the "good old times" before 1914 continued to prevail.⁴ Pacifist hopes disappeared as the policies of the Entente became clear, and harsh criticism so much present in the November days of 1918, looking bravely into the face of a "fate deserved" ("Verdientes Schicksal", as the title of the leading article in the famous *Arbeiter-Zeitung* of Vienna put it), was not at all typical later. In fact, the breakup of the Dual Monarchy, its disappearance from the map had the far-reaching consequence of the disappearance of a genuinely "Austro-Hungarian" memorization process independent from post-war power relations and the daily political business in the

³ Tibor Baráth, "L'histoire en Hongrie (1867-1935)," *Revue historique* 178 (1936), 126-127.

⁴ Hannes Leidinger, "Historiography 1918-Today (Austria-Hungary)," In *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, March 4, 2016, http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/historiography_1918-today_austria-hungary

1920s, and set in a more global context.⁵ In this paper, the choice of works was made on the basis of their unique approach, whether memoirs and pamphlets of a more apologetic nature or works marked out for the purpose of historical analysis. In the two decades after the end of World War I, the two purposes were all too often merged into one another.

The “political metaphysics” of missing leadership

The attitude and self-reflection in the writings of Hungarians is with little doubt very different from the attitudes of authors in most of the successor states, including Austria. Hungarians, as did many Austrians, frequently looked at the dissolution of the ‘good old Monarchy’ with considerable bitterness, though the historical turning point of 1918 proved to have a divulging effect in their lamentations over the end phase. Beside the question marks of self-reflection and the ‘ifs’ of history, there remained the need for the justification of past decisions. All this was done not without the intention to find examples of some kind of greatness or heroism on the side of the late Habsburg Empire. Like Alexander Spitzmüller⁶, the last common Finance Minister remembered the character of Emperor Karl IV in a semi-heroic light in the late 1940s. He also weighed the possibility of following a strong-hand policy involving the use of violence which the emperor would not find a plausible option

⁵ Manfred Rauchensteiner: „Reichshaftung: Österreich, Ungarn und das Ende der Gemeinsamkeit,” In *Österreich und Ungarn im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Csaba Szabó, 53-76. (Wien: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung in Wien–Balassi Institut–Collegium Hungaricum Wien–Ungarische Archivdelegation beim Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, 2014) 53. 58-59. See the article of Friedrich Austerlitz in a downloadable digital copy of the original pages: April 8, 2016, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19181105&seite=1&zoom=38>

⁶ *Alexander Spitzmüller* (1862–1953), Austrian lawyer, bank director and politician. He served as the last common Finance Minister of Austria–Hungary from September the 7th to November the 10th 1918. Between 1919 and 1922, he served as Governor of the Austro-Hungarian Bank and was entrusted with its liquidation.

at all, thereby – according to Spitzmüller – opposing quite a few in “ruling circles”. The question, he continued, whether the “attitude” of Karl “was justifiable, belongs to the realm of political metaphysics”, yet Spitzmüller closed his reminiscences with the words of Heinrich von Srbik⁷ (in whose case the fact is not entirely without historical importance that following the Anschluss he became NSDAP representative in the *Großdeutscher Reichstag*) who once told “in Spitzmüller’s presence” that “under such circumstances a sovereign should have iron in his blood”.⁸ In Hungary, during the interwar years, many thought, quite similarly, that the sudden collapse of the Dual Monarchy may have been avoided had the last emperor (and, more importantly, those in power after the collapse and dissolution) shown more composure. The strange “political metaphysics” related to all the eventful years before, during and after the Great War (with its numerous and far-reaching consequences) remained disquieting for the political and cultural elite of Hungary between 1920 and 1945. The idea of more composure in times of unprecedented turmoil also remained (and remains in our days) a key issue for both historical and retrospective political analysis. In Hungary, more often than not, current politico-historical debates are filled with commonplace remarks on personal responsibility, conspiracy and scapegoat theories.⁹

It is right to say perhaps, though with some exaggeration, that the cornerstones of historical thinking about WWI in Hungary were laid down in the interwar period. After the decades of Communism, our public debates on history seem to return to their basic ideological sources whose genesis is to be found in

⁷ Heinrich von Srbik (1878–1951), Austrian historian. From 1912 to 1922 a professor at the University of Graz, and from 1922 to 1945 at the University of Vienna.

⁸ Alexandre (Alexander) Spitzmüller, “L’automne 1918 en Autriche-Hongrie,” *Revue historique* 205 (1951): 81.

⁹ For scapegoat theories in Hungarian history see: György Gyarmati, István Lengvári, Attila Pók and József Vonyó (eds.): *Bűnbak minden időben: Bűnbakok a magyar és az egyetemes történelemben* (Budapest, Pécs: Kronosz Kiadó – Magyar Történelmi Társulat – Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, 2013)

and after 1918, keeping in mind that the war of 1914 had a major catalytic effect. It is enough to throw a glance at Kossuth Square after its recent renewal, and compare the new look with the past appearance of the square to understand the importance of 1918 as a historic reference point of utmost significance for the whole political spectrum. Thus, after almost a century, a further understanding of the “political metaphysics” of the war and 1918 has not yet lost its importance.

Chaos was a characteristic of events both in Austria and Hungary. In the latter, the upheaval proved to be a more extended period, while earlier, in the days of armistice, Austria seemed to be in a lot more complicated situation, not even in a position to define itself as an independent national identity. Chaos management and adapting policies to a new situation were ultimately more successful in Vienna.¹⁰ Indeed, one aspect of the “politico-metaphysical” views still well-established in the Hungarian mind is what we could call a certain “chaos theory”; that is to say, the absence of a competent leader aggravated by the confused state of mind of the masses. It is an idea of bad leadership combined with the hazy perception of the people in the streets fully incapable of recognising their own interests. Strong emphasis is given to descriptions of inadequate governance, mostly with particular relevance to the days of November 1918. In this respect, the well-known writer and politician Count Miklós Bánffy gives a very vivid description of those days in his memoirs written in an entertaining belle-lettres style. Bánffy, with his witty remarks, gives a good example of the Hungarian mind-set or the “chaos theory”, and he provides an interesting analysis of the human and political character of Count Mihály Károlyi, his former childhood friend and relative. Looking for explanations concerning events and unsuccessful government policies between November 1918 and March 1919, Bánffy tried to provide an early, not scientific analysis of psycho-history. According to Bánffy, his relative was a gambler who had always been prone to seek challenge and

¹⁰ Rauchensteiner, *Reichshaftung*, 59-65.

extreme risk. All this, allegedly, resulted from his childhood illnesses and relative isolation. Károlyi, he argued, was eager to find both self-esteem and respect, and this explains why he had been ready to put his life at risk as a young man, and why he was equally ready to “stake his all upon a single cast” following his vague hopes for a world revolution in 1918.¹¹ Bánffy recalled two events concerning the youth of Károlyi: on one occasion, he tried his luck in a multi-purpose balloon and parachute gadget built by a suspicious inventor; and on a second occasion, he put his (and Bánffy’s) life at risk on the stormy Adriatic Sea just to get earlier to a ball in Fiume.¹²

Remarks on the dualist system, questions of responsibility and the role of Tisza

As for 1914, the idea of missing or inadequate leadership is rare to find in the memoirs of the pre-1918 ruling elite. It is interesting how the pressures and inadequacies of the dualist system appear in the book written by Count István Burián after the war. With allusions to political responsibility, Burián concludes in his flight of wit that the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs was in an isolated position because he “was joint minister for the two countries, but did not form any cabinet with such colleagues as were also joint ministers”, only presided at a “conference” of joint ministers on a quasi *ad hoc* basis. He would indicate that any decision of serious kind had been the result of a compromise, while the Foreign Minister was acting at best as mediator, very much at the mercy of the two Prime Ministers East and West of the river Leitha.¹³ Count

¹¹ Miklós Bánffy, Gróf, *Egy erdélyi gróf emlékiratai: Emlékeimből – Huszonöt év* (Budapest: Helikon, 2013), 65-75., See also: *The Phoenix Land: The Memoirs of Count Miklós Bánffy*, trans. Patrick Thursfield and Katalin Bánffy-Jelen (London: Arcadia ; 2003)

¹² Ibid., 67-68.

¹³ Stephan Burián. *Austria in Dissolution* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925), 244.

Burián somewhat downplayed the significance of his own high office by neglecting the importance of informal powers rendered to it. Placing the role of the Common Minister of Foreign Affairs in a comparative line of thought, Burián emphasized the constitutional weaknesses of this otherwise important office. While he must have clearly felt the aforementioned weaknesses of his position in the historic end phase, before the final collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, the informal power assets attached to it were still significant. Informal assets were derived from the unique and yet constitutionally hazy nature of the position, leaving a wide margin for successful manoeuvres and serious errors at the same time.¹⁴ The Foreign Minister could have an important role in setting the agenda for the Common Ministerial Council, or process selected information to influence decision-makers of the two imperial halves, receive confidential information through agents and contacts from different political circles in Hungary and Austria, and act accordingly (all this being more evident in times of debates and crisis). The door of Francis Joseph was open for the Foreign Minister without previous notice, while personal trust and close working relationship could be developed between the Emperor and the holder of this high office, which, (in the case of Alois Lexa Aehrenthal for example) meant an utterly profound attachment on the side of Francis Joseph. In Burián's book, the special significance of the office of Foreign Minister and his proximity to the imperial sovereign were largely left in the shadows. Meanwhile, it can be accepted that the ultimate responsibility for grave decisions rested with the Emperor who was nevertheless more exposed to the influence of strong political characters inside and outside the "*Ministerrat für Gemeinsame Angelegenheiten*" (the Common

¹⁴ For decision making and the impact of informal power assets attached to the Foreign Minister, the Emperor and other important public figures see: István Diószegi, "A külpolitikai ügyintézés struktúrája és a döntéshozatal mechanizmusa az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchiában," *Grotius*, April 25, 2016, http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/MHHLZG/dioszegi_omm_kulpol.pdf

Ministerial Council).¹⁵ Later, following the outbreak of the war, as the viability of the Monarchy was at stake and the military-operational interests had to be brought in harmony with political goals, the position of the Foreign Minister gained importance, particularly as a member of the Military Chancellery. Francis Joseph saw his own responsibility in the July Crisis in between the two Prime Ministers and the Foreign Ministry in a somewhat obscure light, viewing himself as a “constitutional monarch” who in the midst of pro-war attitudes and advisors “could not act otherwise” and was finally “forced to give in”.¹⁶

Count Burián was a long-standing political supporter and friend of István Tisza whose motives and intentions regarding foreign policy and war aims could hardly be interpreted better by anyone else.¹⁷ He remains mostly apologetic of Tisza in his book, although with a clear touch of criticism which, by any means, occasionally cannot be called even gentle or considerate. Burián argued that Tisza’s judgment “on certain points” affecting Hungary’s position in Europe and the position of the “Magyar race in Hungary itself” was “led astray by atavistic prejudice”, and arrived at a conclusion as follows here:

“...he sincerely believed that the welfare of his country would be assured by maintaining unchanged the relationship between the various peoples of Hungary, which he regarded as sanctified by law and tradition and unassailable as a dogma. (...) Tisza was a thoroughly representative man, and therefore his policy, which was always rather of a broad-minded order, was somewhat out of tune with the times. (...) Tisza overlooked one

¹⁵ Somogyi Éva, *Kormányzati rendszer a dualista Habsburg Monarchiában* (Budapest: História-MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1996), 93–101, 178–182.

¹⁶ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914 – 1918* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag 2014), 621–622, 629. For the contacts of the Emperor and the Foreign Ministers see: 623.

¹⁷ Tamás Goreczky, „Stefan Burián, ein ungarischer gemeinsamer Minister der Habsburgermonarchie im Spiegel der österreichischen Memoirenliteratur,” In *Öt Kontinens – Az Új- és Jelenkori Egyetemes Történeti Tanszék tudományos közleményei 2009*, ed. István Majoros, 187–202. (Budapest: ELTE, 2009), 196., Burián, *Austria in Dissolution*, 251.

thing, that his policy, whether sound or not, had become impracticable during the period of his political activity. The disposition of forces in the country had gradually shifted, especially under the influence of neighbouring national states, who followed the general trend of the time and were obviously influenced by catch-words invented abroad.”¹⁸

Indeed, Tisza had a primarily Magyar perspective and in following the national objectives, he kept opposing all ambitious plans before and during the war which intended to revitalise the Dual Monarchy on the level of European great power politics. He did not find it difficult to adapt his policies to the Hungarian mainstream predominantly occupied with internal policy, the nationality issue and constitutional problems. He strongly opposed not only the integration of “Congress Poland” into the Habsburg Monarchy which Burián had proposed in August 1915 and which had been advocated by Count Gyula Andrassy the Younger, but was less than enthusiastic about German and Austrian *Mitteuropa* Plans.¹⁹

Many years after the world crisis, Tisza, long deceased, was unable to defend his standpoint and, similarly, many of the key players were dead before the late twenties or proved to be meticulous and slow due to the awareness of their personal role as the example of Count Leopold Berchtold shows us.²⁰ Berchtold had never been in doubt that neither himself nor Germany carried any particular responsibility or war guilt (*Kriegsschuld*) for bringing about the catastrophe of the century. Still, he wanted to show every aspect and motive with an interest in international relations.²¹

¹⁸ Burián, *op.cit.*, 252.

¹⁹ Alfred Francis Pribram, *Austrian Foreign Policy, 1908-18* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923), 93-94., Burián, *op.cit.*, 263.

²⁰ Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., „Austria and the Origins of the Great War: A Selective Historiographical Survey,” In *1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I*, eds. Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karlhofer, Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., 21-33. (Innsbruck, New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press-Innsbruck University Press, 2014), 23.

²¹ Günther Kronenbitter, „Amnesia and Remembrance – Count Berchtold on 1914,” In *1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War*

Personal impressions, the international horizon and memories

While the scope of the memoirs written by Austrians can be characterized by a wider international horizon, on the Hungarian side, most remarkably, few were interested in the tangled web of diplomatic relations and international events beyond the borders of Hungary. The majority of narratives remained “domestic”. The missing or limited international horizon of Hungarian memoirs is without exaggeration a fairly general characteristic mostly determined by political myth-making. The work of Gyula Andrassy Jr.²² is an exception (representing a certain segment of the post-war conservative elite in Hungary). Apart from him, only those heavily opposed to Horthy and his system would discuss the question of nationalities and social problems, and they would be the ones to show serious criticism concerning foreign policy decisions.²³ According to Andrassy, the “system” maintained peace longer than a “concert” of fully independent states with a “free hand” would have done – yet “a shorter peace would not have ended with a world disaster”. He pointed out that the mutual relations of the two groups of states only “assumed a dangerous aspect” when the “Anglo-German opposition was added to the controversy”. He described the Anglo-German antagonism as the second most important cause of the Great War.²⁴ He devoted quite a few lines to the Anglo-Saxon ways of policy-making and the role of King Edward VII. Looking for explanations for the success of British diplomacy,

I, eds. Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karlhofer, Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., 77-90. (Innsbruck, New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press-Innsbruck University Press, 2014), 78.

²² Andrassy Gyula (Julius) (1860–1929) on October 24, 1918, in the closing days of the Great War, he succeeded Count Stephen Burián as Foreign Minister with the purpose of terminating the alliance with Germany concluded by his father in 1879.

²³ Gergely Romsics, *Mitosz és emlékezet: A Habsburg Birodalom felbomlása az osztrák és a magyar politikai elit emlékirat-irodalmában* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2004), 66.

²⁴ Count Julius Andrassy, *Diplomacy and the War* (London: John Bale Sons and Danielsson, 1921), 2., 82.

he approached the problem from a peculiar angle of a sort of “mentality study”. His illustrative thoughts are here:

“Anglomania and snobbery are diseases that have spread far and wide, but they are also powerful weapons of English diplomacy. Many people are glad to be mistaken for Englishmen. A large proportion of our diplomats are very much impressed by the English gentleman. Most of our diplomats are proud, if they meet an English lord, and they believe blindly whatever a Salisbury or a Grey says to them. The natural, easy and simple appearance of Englishmen gives the impression of honesty. However, in the blood of every Englishman there is so much political experience and such a tradition of self-government as has never been inherited by the sons of another nation. Every Englishman has been brought up in the school of international politics and self-government in a measure in which no son of the same social strata of another nation, either in the past or in the present, has ever done.”²⁵

The words quoted above reflected widespread views which became deeply rooted and recalled several times after the First World War. Andrassy formulated his opinion cautiously with some gentle irony in his words. This shows, however, the negative attitudes towards “perfidious Albion” without whose clever machinations, as we find similar implications in various texts and allusions, peace could have been preserved easier.²⁶ After the war, Count Alexander Hoyos, who had a key role during the July Crisis with his mission to Berlin to assure German backing for Austria-Hungary against Serbia, devoted a whole book to the study of the Anglo-German Antagonism, though he added little to the general controversy.²⁷ The central role and

²⁵ *ibid.*, 101.

²⁶ András Joó, „Perfidious Albion” vs „Austria-Germany”: Aehrenthal, Cartwright and the Dual Monarchy: Great Power Policy through the Eyes of Diplomats,” *Studia Finno-Ugrici* (1999-2001): 158-160.

²⁷ Alexander Hoyos, *Der deutsch-englische Gegensatz und sein Einfluß auf die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns* (Berlin: Verlag de Gruyter, 1922)

responsibility of England is an ever-returning topos. Even the relatively Entente-friendly diplomat Baron Gyula Szilassy who had good ties to Mihály Károlyi, and a former student at the reputable public school of Harrow, argued that Englishmen carry matters to extremes following the principle of “right or wrong my country”.²⁸

Andrássy, when looking back at events, did not forget to view those, as it was the case during the time of the war already, with a strong, critical judgement. In his analytic memoir, though, he felt necessary to identify himself frequently with the official position of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. As Gergely Romsics pointed out in his book, he expressed even linguistically (with the use of the present tense) the drama and agony of the Habsburg Monarchy. As most Hungarian writings, even Andrássy's can be characterised as a chain of episodes and also more in the style of pamphleteers than that of a devoted historian. Austrians generally wanted to show a more distancing view relying on documents and research. Berchtold was working painstakingly on his memoirs through extensive correspondence with his former *Ballhausplatz* colleagues, while rejecting pressing requests to publish his own version of events.²⁹ A British writer expressed to him that the “world” was “looking forward to hearing” what he had to say. This directs the attention to a major dilemma of writing history, and more exactly writing about one's own past. Should one share subjective reminiscences without the support of proper evidence, thereby risking inexactness, or do meticulous archival research? Some – like Berchtold – were too worried that their memory would fail them. Mostly, it was clear that before all the archival papers were combed through and every detail of the chain of events was elaborated, witnesses of history were likely to descend into their graves.³⁰

²⁸ Baron Julius (Gyula) Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Vaterland, 1921) 26.

²⁹ Romsics, *Mítosz és emlékezet*, 142., Kronenbitter, „Amnesia and Remembrance”, 84-85.

³⁰ Kronenbitter, *op. cit.*, 85.

The problems discussed here could be called the “paradox” of contemporary history writing. While important witnesses were still around, worries of possible public reactions and haunting thoughts of their shattered world would not help them to discuss recent history in an objective manner. Clearly, there might have been numerous reasons to keep silent; as József Szterényi, Minister of Commerce in Sándor Wekerle’s third government, emphasised in the foreword of his memoirs (having the somewhat romanticising title “Recollections of Times Long Past – Political Notes”), he published “only a part of the rich material” of “eventful political times”. Only the part, he indicated with special stress, which was “ripe for publication”.³¹ Szterényi, like Wekerle, rose to the highest political leadership due to his talent, hard work and some good luck. His remembrance reflects a particular viewpoint of those assimilated Jews (both his parents came from rabbinical families) who experienced an unprecedentedly quick career.³² He remained attached to the Dual Monarchy and most particularly to its exiled Emperor. He condemned the October Revolution and Károlyi’s policies, but could not really identify himself with the public spirit of the Horthy era. Szterényi’s description of the efforts of Emperor Karl to consolidate his empire in the last moments before the final collapse is very vivid and informative, and a touch of irony is not missing from it, either. In fact, the account of his talks with Karl and the background information he provides show clearly why the endeavour of the Emperor to give a new federal structure to the Danubian Monarchy was hopeless. He also indicated his confidential relationship to the last King of Hungary, while almost sarcastic irony is reflected in his words when describing an episode en route to Reichenau where he was, among others, ordered by Emperor Karl for important talks. On the train, General Adolf von Rhemen’s (then the

³¹ József Szterényi, *Régmúlt idők emlékei: Politikai feljegyzések* (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Rt., 1925), 5.

³² György Kövér, “Bekeresztelkedők: Társadalomtörténeti adalékok arról, hányféle asszimiláció lehetséges egy családban”, *Kommentár*, no. 6., 2012, April 19, 2015 http://kommentar.info.hu/iras/2012_6/bekeresztelkedok#foot50

Military Governor of Serbia) attention was fully captured by his fellow-general's efficient boot polish in spite of his interlocutor's repeated efforts to change the subject; he was simply "most interested in this", Szterényi observed, and he closed abruptly the relevant paragraph.³³

On the historian's side, a fair judgement concerning causal connections is hardly possible without a picture of political relations reflecting life's reality and the knowledge of how much those involved were indeed well-informed. A useful memoir provides information that goes beyond what is called "common knowledge". A remark uttered accidentally by a key decision-maker and cited later may encourage us to re-evaluate a situation. In the July Crisis and before the 1918 armistice, there were several moments in which the personal exchange of information seemed decisive. Szterényi also indicated the importance of personal relations and the flow of information influencing the effectiveness of political endeavours.

Interpretation of domestic and structural problems, the "war guilt" question and the history of the defeated

It depends largely on the approach of the historian to what extent he sees explanations in the overall rivalry of great powers. In this context, war seemed to be nearly unavoidable and any peaceful settlement impossible. Other historians may be more inclined to focus on the phases of the July Crisis, personal intrigue, intelligence failure or the breakdown of diplomatic communication. One of Hungary's most respected historians Henrik Marczali (the son of Rabbi Morgenstern of the provincial town of Marcali, exposed to disguised anti-Semitic witch hunts before and after World War I) in his pamphlet "How the Great War was made?" (dedicated to the memory of István Tisza), draws the attention to the significance of private information gaps and distortions. Thus, he thought, all the fervent endeavours

³³ Szterényi, *Régmúlt idők*, 219-224., for the ironic paragraph see: 219.

of the crowned heads of Europe were to no avail. He presented the decision of Tsar Nicholas to enter the war as the result of misunderstandings, distorted information and lies, although the Russian emperor feared the catastrophic consequences. So did German Chief of the General Staff Helmuth von Moltke who indeed said that the upcoming war would “annihilate the civilisation of almost the whole of Europe for decades to come”.³⁴ Still, Moltke did not hesitate to issue orders, and ultimately nor did the Tsar.

In Marczali's interpretation, as a result of great power rivalry, particularly the German challenge to the 19th century balance of power, the decisive moment had come in July 1914. With reference to his articles before the First World War, quoting his own words, the historian shows himself prophetic in his introductory passage. He mentions that due to Tisza's confidence, he was allowed to get access to “unpublished material”. He argues that in October 1918, Tisza's son was lamenting over his “poor father” who was then about to “perish miserably” because he “did not listen to Marczali”.³⁵

Regarding domestic politics, Gyula Andrássy Jr. was a severe opponent and ardent critic of Tisza, not even on speaking terms with him following the days of July 1918. Nevertheless, after a lengthy analysis of pre-war international relations, he still pays tribute with the following words to Tisza, whose attitude was “most peaceful”. He argued like this:

“During the first Cabinet meeting which considered the consequences of the murder, all the Hungarian and Austrian Ministers, with the exception of Tisza, demanded the war and considered that immediate action which would surprise Serbia was the only means to the desired end. It was only Tisza who prevented

³⁴ Henrik Marczali, *Hogyan készült a nagy háború?* (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., 1923), 55-57., for the role of private information and common knowledge, as well as the words of Moltke see: Jack Snyder, “Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War,” *International Security* 39, no. 1 (Summer 2014): 71., 77-78.

³⁵ Marczali, *op.cit.*, 6.

the realization of this conviction. He was ready to be content with a diplomatic victory which should be the starting point for a more active policy that was to improve our position. However, this attitude did not finally dictate the policy of the Monarchy. When the ultimatum was drafted, and during subsequent events, the intention of forcing Serbia to war became paramount.”³⁶

It should be added that Tisza at a certain point of the Balkan wars, for example, was more in favour of a military strike than the Foreign Minister, Count Berchtold.³⁷ The endless debates on personal responsibility for Armageddon in the 1920s and 1930s diverted the attention from the structural problems of competence and authority within the dualist system. Notably, the final decision concerning war and peace lay with the Monarch, and this – politically speaking – left limited freedom of manoeuvre for Tisza, or else Hungarian loyalty could have been questioned seriously. With a bit of sense for psycho-history as well, Tisza’s wavering is more understandable. After long decades of prosperity and stability which bore high respect for Francis Joseph, Tisza’s representing minority opinion probably proved to be too heavy a burden. During the crisis, the importance of the Imperial House was strengthened and following the declaration of war on Serbia, pro-war sentiment was further reinforced. In Budapest, mass demonstrations of loyalty towards the new heir apparent and his wife Zita strengthened the will to bring sacrifice for the Monarchy. During the July Crisis, it seemed that dualism “withstood its test of fire” as it was put into words by the author of a comprehensive monograph on the role of nationalism and the crowd in Hungary.³⁸ The real test of fire, however, was still to come.

³⁶ Andrassy, *Diplomacy and the War*, 59–60., see also Andrassy Gyula gróf, *Diplomácia és világháború* (Budapest: Göncöl-Primusz, 1990), 42.

³⁷ Eric A. Leuer, “Die Mission Hoyos – Zur Rolle österreichisch-ungarischer Diplomaten während der Juli-Krise 1914” (M. Phil. diss., University of Vienna, 2010), 71.

³⁸ Alice Freifield, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Baltimore, London, Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press–The Johns Hopkins University Press), 305.

In Hungary, after the First World War, the highest authority on diplomatic history was Jenő Horváth³⁹ who wrote a comprehensive essay on post-war school books at the request of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1926. His observations on the origins of the war were summarized in an impressive illustrated volume on the Great War with a foreword by Archduke Joseph Habsburg. Most interesting is his argumentation related to the end phase of the war and the impact of President Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points. Horváth found American entry into the war very decisive. The Fourteen Points in his interpretation were only part of a tactical game on the side of the USA. Thus, Wilson continued to negotiate and maintained secret channels to Austria-Hungary first with the intention to influence the outcome by the promise of a just peace, with even a separate peace for the Monarchy on the horizon. Still, Wilson proved to be too weak and his policy served only the interests of the French and the annexationist peace for the benefit of the successor states.⁴⁰ This reflects one of the mythical topoi of inter-war Hungary which could be called Wilsonian "treachery". As historian Tibor Glant pointed out on Hungarian myth-making concerning Wilson a couple of years ago, any illusions of American support for the preservation of historical borders were utterly false by October 1918. False impressions were largely generated by whirling events followed by a period of illusory expectations and painful awakening. The "great failure" of the USA, ultimately not a signatory power of the Trianon Treaty, was hoped to be corrected according to the general view in Hungary. Treacherous Wilsonism became a topos, though supported only by little evidence in the documentation already known in Hungary between the two world wars. It was more or less part of the process of digesting the nation's recent past.⁴¹

³⁹ Jenő Horváth (1881-1950), diplomatic historian.

⁴⁰ Jenő Horváth, "I. rész: A háború politikája," in *A világháború története*, ed. Jenő Pilch, 9-64. (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1927), 45.

⁴¹ Tibor Glant, "A 14 pont története és mítosza," *Külügyi Szemle* vol. 8., no. 4 (October 2009): 91-96.

Besides myth-making and “home” historiography, Hungary was an active participant of the efforts made on the international level to explore the history of the Great War as it was shown by volumes which were the result of research work supported by the Carnegie Endowment. Hungarians including Szterényi, Count Albert Apponyi, Gusztáv Gratz (former Director of the Politico-Commercial Department of Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appointed by Count Ottokar Czernin) and a few others, all experts in their respective fields, took part in the cooperation to publish a series of studies and monographs.⁴² While Hungary and Germany found it important to make their contributions to a joint international effort initiated from the other side of the Atlantic, there were organised initiatives to work together to build up a scientifically well-founded refutation of the War Guilt Clause in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles which forced to accept the responsibility of Germany and her allies for imposing the war on the Entente by their aggression. The German Foreign Office supported research and publications on the *Kriegsschuldfrage* (war guilt question). A conference of Austrian, Bulgarian, German and Hungarian “*Kriegsschuldforcher*” was organised behind closed doors in Berlin from 15th to 19th April, 1926. The conference was presided by the famous Otto Hintze, historian and former government official. A network of institutes was envisaged and coordinated propaganda efforts were suggested in an effort to question the war guilt defined in the peace treaties and to avoid blaming former allies. In the second half of the year 1926, further talks followed, including one in Budapest. A kind of common strategy that preparations should be made to come up with a research project in order to win the support of the Carnegie Endowment became crystallized. This would have resulted in extensive research done mostly for the exploration of the war guilt problem, but the Carnegie Endowment was not

⁴² James T. Shotwell, ed., *Economic and Social History of The World War: Outline Of Plan – European Series* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924), 15-16.

“inclined to spend any more of its limited budget” on the project in which Jenő Horváth was also planned to be involved.⁴³

Two somewhat unique observations outside the main line of discourse

Criticism, although not entirely missing, was not at all characteristic of Hungarian reminiscences. The origins and structural causes of the war were mostly analysed by opponents of dualism, mainly the Hungarian liberals and social democrats, many of whom were forced into exile after the failed revolutions. They emphasise almost unanimously that reform was coming too late and hesitant reforms from above were far from being sufficient. The so-called “Octobrists” (*oktobristák*) and social democrats involved in Béla Kun’s Soviet Republic felt it more than necessary to enter polemics with the Hungarian variant of the German *Dolchstoß* Legend (Stab-in-the-back myth) which was putting all the blame for an unacceptable peace treaty solely on their shoulders.⁴⁴

Péter Ágoston⁴⁵, political scientist and one of the interesting yet somewhat forgotten protagonists of 1918 and 1919, wrote a long essay (“The War’s Originators”) to analyse the long-term origins and immediate causes of the war which appeared only four days before the declaration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. In the foreword, he made it clear that the Central Powers were more responsible for the war than the Entente (this remark, however, may have easily been a result of the

⁴³ Ulrich Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage: Politische Öffentlichkeit und Kriegsschuldfrage in der Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1983), 116–118., 300.

⁴⁴ Romsics, *Mitosz és emlékezet*, 67–68.

⁴⁵ Ágoston Péter (1874–1925) Socialist publicist, State Secretary for Internal Affairs under Károlyi. Assistant Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, finally Foreign Minister in Gyula Peidl’s six-day trade union cabinet (August 1919). Later arrested and sentenced to death, he was saved by the Soviet Union through the occasion of a prisoner exchange. In the 1920s he lived in Moscow, London, and finally in Paris.

situation, and it should be noted here that Ágoston was a person relatively acceptable for the Entente even in Kun's government). The central idea of Ágoston's essay is the problem of responsibility in all its forms. Towards the end of his lengthy argumentations, he arrives at the conclusion that those on the top of the governmental hierarchy carry the lion's share of the responsibility and ruling parties are to be called to account as well. Nevertheless, the people who are governed, he continued, were not a simple flock of "sheep"; thereby, the question of the responsibility of the masses cannot be evaded as they remained passive and cooperating. Finally, somewhat becoming obsessed with the war guilt issue, he pointed out that he could write a separate book to identify the partial responsibility of the individual layers of society. Notwithstanding, he concluded that there is no need for such a book as the population felt the consequences of bad government which they had tolerated too long anyway.⁴⁶ As for great power policy, Ágoston argued that Austria-Hungary's subordination to the German Reich and the continuous adjustment of the course of foreign policy to Germany's line in Vienna were in vain as the Germans were actually more than hesitant to provide any long-term guarantee to maintain the status quo and protect their ally's territorial integrity.⁴⁷ In fact, the idea of the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy was not entirely unwelcome in Germany.

On the traditional conservative side of the Dualist Monarchy's political elite, there is hardly anyone who would accept the extensive responsibility of Austria-Hungary for the war. József Kristóffy⁴⁸, a former Hungarian Minister of the Interior, was

⁴⁶ Péter Ágoston, *A háború okozói* (Budapest: Népszava Könyvkereskedés, 1919), 232-233.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 190.

⁴⁸ József Kristóffy (1857-1928) Hungarian politician who served as Minister of the Interior (1905-1906) in Géza Fejérváry's cabinet. He was a supporter of universal suffrage, and open towards the idea of a future coalition with the Social-Democratic Party. He was in contact with Franz Ferdinand's political "Workshop" for the objective of the structural reorganisation of the Monarchy. See about him: Győző Bruckner, *Ferenc Ferdinánd trónörökös magyarországi politikai tervei* (Miskolc: Magyar Jövő Nyomdaüzem és Lapkiadó Rt., 1929) 39.

of such kind. He was also one of the rare friends of Franz Ferdinand in Hungary. He labelled the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia as the “greatest political mistake” during the “four hundred years of the reign of the House of Habsburg”. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in his view did not take into consideration how much the international situation was fraught with danger, and went far beyond what seemed to be wise, so the “false step” resulted in “the earth swallowing us” as he expressed very dramatically. The Dual Monarchy was thus unwisely put to the test because the leaders did not realize that it was not one of the Great Powers any longer.⁴⁹ Kristóffy found that Vienna was playing *va banque* at the expense of others, including the masses living in an empire without political emancipation.

Kristóffy did create a detailed and documented survey of all the explanations for the decline, the thoughtless entry into the war and the final collapse from the point of view of Franz Ferdinand’s former adherents. According to his argumentation, the two “most burning” questions of the Monarchy, namely the nationality problem and the electoral reform, were left unsolved which made a war simply too hazardous. Interestingly, Jenő Horváth in his study presented above also found that “the tragedy of the Central Powers” ensued because their societal and constitutional Hinterland was not at all firm, and their respective political and social foundations were further impaired by the war. Meanwhile, leaders of Austria-Hungary were more preoccupied with their own ambitious plans. He emphasised that they failed to listen to public opinion because they governed “for their own sake” and never applied to the masses, nor did they seek communication with them in their mentality. This was a major cause of the defeat in Horváth’s opinion, while he admitted that at the beginning of the war, a

⁴⁹ József Kristóffy, *Magyarország kálváriája: Az összeomlás útja – Politikai emlékek 1890–1926* (Budapest: Wodianer, 1927) 725.

certain common denominator for the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy was still present.⁵⁰

Summary and conclusions

It is widely agreed that the Monarchy's entry into the war came largely because of its need to preserve its Great Power status and to counter the challenges of its own nationalist political movements. For historians as well as many contemporary observers, Austria-Hungary after 1900 seemed to be a "failed state" even before World War I due to its frequent and sometimes paralysing internal crises. In an interesting study published in 2007, it was pointed out that in this perspective, the Monarchy's participation in the war was not a "purely exogenous factor" that led to its final demise. All this was combined, as contemporaries clearly observed, with the intransigent attitude of the Hungarian political elite and especially Tisza who hoped to strengthen central government authority in the face of challenges rather than to open ways towards a more democratic system of government.⁵¹ All this is often touched upon in post-war memoirs and analyses in addition to the problem of responsibility, war guilt, bad leadership and the traumatic changes after the war. Even if the various authors accepted some of the lessons of history, the trauma seemed to be very serious. In this context, illusions and myths were easily revived.⁵² New information or the discovery of documents still fostered ideas that the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the end of pre-Trianon Hungary with its thousand-year-old

⁵⁰ Kristóffy, *Magyarország kálváriája*, 799., Horváth, A háború politikája, 44-45. and 47-48.

⁵¹ Gary B. Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 241., 275.

⁵² Peter Hanák, "Ungarn im Auflösungsprozeß der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie: Grundlagen und Folgen," in *Versailles - St. Germain - Trianon Umbruch in Europa vor fünfzig Jahren*, ed. Karl Bosl, 37-48. (München U. Wien: R. Oldenbourg, 1971), 46-47.

borders could have been avoided by more composure or a strong leader's well-timed actions.

This paper intended to provide an overview of the central questions concerning the origins, the outbreak and the end of the First World War as it was discussed by Hungarian authors who were mainly active political participants of this great historical transition and by their approach were more or less unique as well. The character of Tisza, his role in the July Crisis, his attitude towards reform, his personal charisma and responsibility seem to put him into the centre of discussion. In general, personal failures of politicians and the description of the internal problems dominated the Hungarian historical discussions.

As part of the digestion of an eventful and undoubtedly tragic past, writing memoirs and interpreting recent history in Hungary, although very much influenced by European currents, had unique characteristics. Interwar memorialisation was to a large extent influenced by the unprecedentedly severe consequences and thusly the notion of war guilt. As it is pointed out in Jay Winter and Antoine Prost's survey on World War One historiography, quoted earlier at the beginning of this paper, "over time" the notion of war guilt "became less acute", and it became more obvious that states, governments as well as all peoples shared some responsibility for the catastrophe which they had been unable to prevent; "even worse", the argument continues, "the Treaty of Versailles was unable to prevent its recurrence", and what "had been deemed a crime had become a collective error, the elements of which had to be disentangled in order to comprehend how it had come about".⁵³ This collective error, however, as it was (and still is) widely felt in Hungary, had disproportionately grave consequences for Hungarians. The breakup of the Hungarian state of St. Stephen remained unacceptable for most. 1918 with its upheaval kept haunting Hungarian decision-makers during the Second World War which ironically reinforced their wait-and-see policy considerably. As

⁵³ Winter-Prost, *The Great War in History*, 56.

an important official of the Foreign Ministry emphasised, and let us read his words here instead of a closing remark, in an article written under a pseudonym in 1942: "...it is dangerous if the maximal effort is about to be made when the necessity of changes appears with the greatest emphasis. If at this moment the claim for change gets the upper hand, the opportunity for self-defence gets overwhelmed by catastrophe. As Gyula Illyés defined, in 1918, the freedom of the people did not mean the freedom of the nation."⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Pál Szegedi (Aladár Szegedy-Maszáék), "A magyar politika néhány eleme," *Magyarságtudomány*, no. 4. (1942), 469., see also: Gyula Juhász, *Magyarország nemzetközi helyzete és a magyar szellemi élet 1938–1944* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987), 56–57. Szegedy-Maszáék became Head of the Political department of the Foreign Ministry, had a key role in Hungarian peace-feelers. He was sent to the Dachau concentration camp in 1944.

Ivan Hrštić

Croatian Historiography of World War I

– How to win a war by losing it?

The research on World War I in Croatian historiography was analysed in the first part of this paper in the context of extreme twists and turns of dominant narratives and public paradigms in Croatia in the period from 1918 to 2015. In accordance with these changes, approaches to the research on the topic were changing also. Thus, four main periods in Croatian historiography, coinciding with the changes of the state frameworks that Croatia was a part of, can be determined: 1918-1941 (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia), 1941-1945 (Independent State of Croatia), 1945-1991 (Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia/Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and the period after 1991 (Republic of Croatia). In the second part of the paper, trends in research on World War I in Croatian historiography during the past hundred years were compared with the dominant trends in Western European historiographies (England, France and Germany). They showed great similarities, but no direct influence of foreign historiographies on Croatian could be confirmed. Therefore, a thesis was posited that these similarities have largely been the result of general social circumstances in Europe.

Historiography always reflects the moment in which it is created, because the politics of history, which is dominant in a specific society and at a specific moment, inevitably impact its development. Therefore, when speaking of Croatian, Slovenian, Serbian, Hungarian, German, American or any

other historiography, we can expect that their interpretations of certain events will differ or there will be differences in the dominant topics of research. In other words, even though historiography is a science in the strict, modern sense of the word, given the differences in interpretations between various traditions – both between states and within a single state in the course of its history – one cannot expect its complete uniformity. With that in mind, it should be noted that Croatian historiography from WWI to the 1990s and the proclamation of the Republic of Croatia, perhaps with the exception of the period during WWII and the historiography of the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945), cannot be regarded as an independent one because it was a part of Yugoslav historiography, either during the first (1918-1941) or the second Yugoslavia (1945-1991). Each of these changes of the state framework facilitated a radical change of the dominant national narrative, which changed not only the approach to the research on topics related to WWI, but also the inclusion or exclusion of those subjects in particular periods in history.

Accordingly, we can determine four main periods in the Croatian historiography of WWI which correspond to the changes of the socio-political frameworks and the changes of dominant narratives (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia 1918-1941; Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945; Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia/Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1945-1991; Republic of Croatia 1991 –). However, it has to be noted that the quality of papers and studies on WWI, as well as on any other topic, must not be automatically belittled simply because of the impact of the dominant narratives despite their totalitarian and authoritarian character throughout most of the 20th century. In general, they represent studies on topics of real interest and most of them were prepared according to the standards of the time, based on archival sources. The impact of the dominant ideologies on historiography was reflected mainly in the selection of topics in which historians were interested – which is what Bogumil Hrabak, a Serbian historian, noticed as

early as in 1964.¹ As a result, World War I as a topic of research in Croatian historiography was neglected to a certain extent for a long time, particularly topics on participation of Croats in Austro-Hungarian army. That is why the second part of the title of this paper reads “How to win a war by losing it?” – for after the analysis of Croatian historiography of World War I a relatively unusual question can be asked: “Were the Croats winners or losers?”. It is a result of the fact that the outcome of the First World War has been interpreted in Croatia as a victory practically since 1918, despite the fact that the Croats, at least the great majority of them, fought on the losing side.

In the context of the dominant narratives in both the first and the second Yugoslavia, it was not clear what the research on pro-Habsburg actions of Croats during the war would ideologically legitimize. As a consequence, the topic was avoided in Croatian historiography. Greater attention was given to these topics after 1991. However, by stressing the importance of the formation of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in October 1918 – which later became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – the Croats remained, in a way, victorious in the interpretations of WWI. So, along with the classic question of who is to blame for the outbreak of WWI, in Croatia the question of ‘who won’ can be asked as well. This is confirmed by the analysis of all four main periods of Croatian historiography of the First World War.

The main goal of this paper is to analyse Croatian historiography of World War I in the context of extreme twists and turns of dominant narratives from 1918 until today (2015). In the context of these strong changes, Croatian historical experience provides an extremely interesting case study in the research on the relationship of historiography to the topic of World War I. The second goal is to analyse the influence of dominant Western European historiographical trends on

¹ Bogumil Hrabak, “Austro-ugarski zarobljenici u Srbiji 1914–1915. godine i prilikom povlačenja kroz Albaniju”, *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije* 1 (1964), no. 2: 107.

Croatian historiography regarding the study of the First World War, or at least the compatibility between the Croatian and Western European historiographies in this matter. For that purpose, I used the classification made by British historian Jay Winter and French historian Antoine Prost who, despite differences in historiographical schools and traditions, managed to identify three generations of historians of the Great War in French, English and German historiography.²

Given the totalitarian and authoritarian nature of the states Croatia was a part of until 1991, the influence of public paradigms on historiography was much stronger than in Western European democracies. As a result, the choice of research topics in Croatian historiography was in a way self-censored – unlike the historiographical trends in democratic societies in which, despite the existence of the dominant narrative, authors more freely chose research subjects that were not in accordance with that. Papers published in Croatia had to be in accordance with the public paradigms and the dominant national and historiographical narratives in practically every aspect. The differences between the national and foreign historiographies came to the fore particularly during the second half of the 20th century. Thus, a widespread claim that World War I is overshadowed by World War II in historiographies in general is even more valid in the case of Croatian historiography. This trend became even more pronounced at the end of the century due to the strong interest of Croatian historians in the *Homeland war* (1991-1995) topics, which emerged almost immediately after the war had ended and which in turn decreased the popularity of the First World War as a research topic even further.³

A direct impact of Western European historiographies on Croatian historiography cannot be detected. Nevertheless, the two share some general characteristics. Similarities regarding

² Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

³ Filip Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa: hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat* (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2013), 177.

the dominant choice of research topics in specific periods of time during the past hundred years are obvious. Those, however, are more a consequence of general social circumstances in Europe during this period, than the direct influence of Western historiographies on Croatian historiography. That is evident from the differences in interpretations of certain events (about which more will be said later).

Periodization of Croatian Historiography of World War I

Croatian Historiography of World War I from 1918 to 1941

The most important consequence of WWI on the South Slavic territories was the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929). Consequently, the war and its interpretation were of great importance for the new state during the entire time of its existence (1918-1941). That importance was additionally emphasized because of the great sacrifices that the Kingdom of Serbia suffered throughout the war, the participation of South Slavs from the Monarchy in the Austro-Hungarian army complicating the situation even further. That was one of the main reasons why the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia was widely perceived as the enlarged Kingdom of Serbia within which the Croats were subordinated to the Serbs.⁴

In this period, historiography focused on the creation of the state after the war and its justification. Thus, the topics of research were mainly related to the political aspect of the Kingdom's foundation.⁵ At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian

⁴ John Paul Newman, „Croats and Croatia in the wake of the Great war“, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 24 (2014): 165-181.

⁵ See: Branko Lazarević, *Jugoslovenski dokumenti – pregled narodnog pokreta u domovini i inostranstvu za vreme Svetskog rata* (Zagreb, 1919); Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1914.–1919.* (Zagreb, 1920); Ferdo Šišić, *Jadransko pitanje na Konferenciji mira u Parizu* (Zagreb, Matica Hrvatska, 1920); Milovan Grba, *Gledišta austro-ugarskih generala i državnika na pitanje o aneksiji Srbije, Crne Gore i Albanije*

Monarchy was often labelled as a “prison of nations”, which was automatically reflected in the view historiography had on all topics related to it, including the participation of the Croats in the Austro-Hungarian army, as well as the political efforts of the pro-Habsburg Croatian politicians during the war. Those topics were neglected, unlike research on the pro-Yugoslav and anti-Habsburg Croats. Special attention was given to the actions of the Yugoslav Committee which led the volunteer movement for the Serbian army among the South Slav diaspora. As the key people in the Yugoslav Committee were Croats, the publication of studies, monographs and memoirs on this and similar issues served the purpose of spreading the idea of the unified Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav national paradigm. This enabled the Croats to be included among the war victors, although in reality only a part of the Croatian political elite could be considered victors.⁶

te o riješenju (!) jugoslavenskog problema (Zagreb, 1920); Milada Paulová, *Jugoslavenski odbor* (Zagreb, 1925); Franko Potočnjak, *Kobne smjernice naše politike spram Italije* (Zagreb, 1925); Pero Slijepčević, *Naši dobrovoljci u Svetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Nova Europa, 1925); Hinko Hinković, *Iz velikog doba. Moj rad i moji doživljaji za vrijeme Svjetskog rata* (Zagreb, 1927); Bogumil Vošnjak, *U borbi za ujedinjenu narodnu državu* (Ljubljana: Tiskovna zadruga; Beograd: Izdavačka knjižara Gece Kona; Zagreb: Izdavačka knjižara Z. i V. Vasića, 1928); Alfons Hribar, *Jugoslavensko-talijanski odnosi (Od sarajevske tragedije do Društva naroda)* (Zagreb, 1928); Stanoje Stanojević, ed., *Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka*, vol. 1-4 (Zagreb: Bibliografski zavod: 1926–1929); Filip Lukas, *Hrvatsko pitanje i Londonski ugovor* (Zagreb: Tisak Tipografija, 1937); Petar Jelavić, ed., *Hrvati u borbama za oslobođenje sjevernih krajeva Jugoslavije: Međumurja, Prekomurja, Koruške i Štajerske* (Zagreb: Izdanje Udruženja ratnih dobrovoljaca Međumurja, Prekomurja, Koruške i Štajerske, 1940).

⁶ See: Ivo Jelavić, *Iz pregažene Srbije* (Sarajevo, 1919); Petar Grgec, *Jugoslavenski argonauti. Istinita slika iz talijanskoga ropstva* (Zagreb, 1919); Marcel Kolin, *Jugosloveni u Južnoj Americi u radu za svoj narod* (Zagreb, 1920); Dane Hranilović, *Iz zapisaka jugoslavenskog dobrovoljca* (Zagreb: Tisak i naklada knjižare Kr. sveučilišta i Jugoslavenske akademije St. Kugli, 1922); Lujo Lovrić, *Suzna jesen* (Zagreb, 1922); Lujo Lovrić, *Kroz snijegove i magle* (Zagreb, 1923); Ante Kovač, *Impresije iz jedne epohe. Kroz zemlje i gradove* (Zagreb: Komisiona naklada Hrvatskog štamparskog zavoda, 1923); Franko Potočnjak, *Iz emigracije*, vol. 1-4 (Zagreb, 1919-1926); Paulová, *Jugoslavenski odbor*; Slijepčević, *Naši dobrovoljci*; Hinković, *Iz velikog doba*; Oskar Tartaglia, *Veleizdajnik. Moje uspomene iz borbe protiv crno-žutog orla* (Zagreb–Split: C.

Croatian Historiography of World War I from 1941 to 1945

The second period of Croatian historiography was the one during World War II, after the dissolution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941. On part of its territory, the Independent State of Croatia was formed, an ally of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Consequently, both the dominant historical narrative and the perception of World War I in historiography changed completely. Due to the war, and unlike in the previous period, special importance was given to the Croatian military heritage, including the First World War. However, as the historiography of the Independent State of Croatia developed only for a short period of time and in war circumstances, the total number of papers dedicated to the First World War was quite low. In this context it is interesting to note that the Isonzo/Soča Front was an undesirable topic until 1943 due to the alliance with Italy.⁷ In short, this series of battles continued to be neglected by historiographers. Even in the interwar period, it was of secondary importance, particularly in comparison with the war path of the Serbian army – not only because the Isonzo Front was not a part of the war for the unification of Yugoslavia, but also because of the complicated relations between the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia and the Kingdom of Italy during the whole interwar period.

Albrecht, 1928.) Slavko S. Diklić, *Putničke bilješke jugoslovenskog ratnog dobrovoljca. Od Dobrudže do Soluna preko Dalekog istoka* (Osijek, 1932); Joso Defrančeski, *C. i kr. ratni logori 1914– 1918.* (Osijek: A. Rott, 1937); Jovan Korda, *Odesa–Arhangelsk–Solun. Iz života ratnih dobrovoljaca* (Osijek, 1937).

⁷ See: Ljudmil Hauptmann, “Povijest Austrije” in *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, vol. 1, ed. Mate Ujević (Zagreb: Tipografija, 1941), 779-780.; Slavko Pavičić, *Hrvatska vojna i ratna povijest i Prvi svjetski rat* (Zagreb: Hrvatska knjiga, 1943); Slavko Pavičić i Franjo Perše, “Hrvati u Prvom svjetskom ratu” in *Naša domovina*, vol. 1, ed. Filip Lukas (Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog ustaškog stana, 1943), 199.-200.; Slavko Pavičić, *Jugozapadno (talijansko) bojište u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, vol. 1 (Zagreb, 1944); Vilim Bačić, *Povijest Prvog svjetskog rata na Jadranu*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Hrvatski izdavački bibliografski zavod, 1945); Slavko Pavičić, “Domobranstvo” in *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, vol. 5 ed. Mate Ujević (Zagreb: Tipografija, 1945), 192.-193.

Croatian Historiography of World War I from 1945 to 1990

After the Second World War, Croatia became part of the Socialist Yugoslavia. Again, the change of the state framework meant the introduction of a completely new public paradigm and dominant historical and national narrative which was reflected in the stance of the historiography on the World War I topics. In general, these topics were rather neglected, especially in comparison with the Second World War. Because the latter resulted in the creation of the second Yugoslavia, the works on WWII served as confirmation of the new system. World War I was just a step toward this ultimate goal. But, regardless of its secondary importance, a totalitarian socialist state could not allow research on such an important historical event to develop in opposition to the dominant ideology. Thus, the influence of the dominant narrative on WWI research remained strong.

One of the main determinants that shaped the socialist narrative of the socialist Yugoslavia was anti-imperialism. Accordingly, colonialism and imperial expansion were considered to be the main causes of World War I. The Monarchy was thus automatically viewed negatively, while any kind of Yugoslav-like solution was favoured.⁸ Consequently, the participation of the Croats in the Austro-Hungarian army was overshadowed by the pro-Yugoslav oriented compatriots once more, just like during the interwar period. Actually, this tendency became even stronger after WWII due to the association of the Croatian military tradition with the World War II experience and the army of the Independent State of Croatia which was, according to the public paradigm, one of the main enemies of the newly formed socialist state.⁹ The emphasis in research on the First World War was again on the activities of the Yugoslav Committee and its volunteer movement. At the same time, interest in the research on topics like mutinies within the Austro-Hungarian army and the phenomenon of "Green Cadre" grew, all of which helped the

⁸ See: Tomislav Markus, „Demonizacija Habsburške monarhije kao metoda historijskih istraživanja“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 26 (1992), no. 1: 81-98.

⁹ Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa*, 180

inclusion of the Croats among the war victors.¹⁰ Basically, the narrative created in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia was largely retained in socialism, but with a strong note of communism. Therefore, special attention was given to the research on volunteers from the Russian captivity who were spreading communism among the South Slavs as part of the revolutionary movement after 1917.¹¹

¹⁰ See: Bogdan Krizman, "Građa o nemirima u Hrvatskoj na kraju g. 1918.", *Historijski zbornik*, 10 (1957), no. 1-4: 111-129.; Benjamin Stulli, "Prilozi građi o ustanku mornara u Boki Kotorskoj 1.-3. februara 1918.", *Arhivski vjesnik*, 1 (1958), no. 1: 174-248.; Dinko Foretić, "Antiaustrijski pokreti u ratnoj mornarici u Šibeniku 1917/1918.", *Radovi Filozofskoga fakulteta u Zadru*, 6 (1964-1967), 195-214.; Benjamin Stulli, "Prilozi građi za historiju revolucionarnog pokreta mornara na našoj obali 1918. god.", *Arhivski vjesnik*, 9 (1966), no. 9: 7-109.; Vaso Bogdanov, ed., *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu u povodu 50-godišnjice osnivanja* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1966); Benjamin Stulli, "Revolucionarni pokreti i pobune u austrougarskoj mornarici tijekom 1917. i 1918.", *Jugoslavenski istorijski časopis*, 6 (1967), no. 1-4: 46-63.; Benjamin Stulli, "Novi prilozi građi za historiju revolucionarnog pokreta mornara na našoj obali 1917-1918.", *Arhivski vjesnik*, 10 (1967), no. 10: 1-51.; Bogdan Krizman, "Predaja austrougarskog ratnog brodograđarstva u Puli 1918. godine", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, 18 (1967), no. 2: 239-266.; Ivan Čizmić, "Dobrovoljački pokret jugoslavenskih iseljenika u SAD u Prvom svjetskom ratu", *Historijski zbornik*, 23-24 (1970-1971): 21-43.; Bogumil Hrabak, "Pojava tzv. disidentskog pokreta među Jugoslovenima u Rusiji 1917. godine", *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije*, 13 (1976): 1-114.; Dragoslav Janković, "O odnosima Jugoslavenskog odbora sa srpskom vladom u 1916. god.", *Historijski zbornik*, 29-30 (1976-1977): 455-468.; Bogumil Hrabak, "Konceptije federativne i konfederativne Jugoslavije među Jugoslovenima u Rusiji (od aprila 1916. do aprila 1918. godine)", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 21 (1989), no. 1-3: 1-28.

¹¹ Drago Škorić, "Uloga povratnika iz ruskog zarobljeništva u razvoju događaja u Hrvatskoj potkraj godine 1918." *Starine JAZU*, 46 (1956), 7-21.; Ferdo Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* (Zagreb: 27 srpanj, 1957); Josip Vidmar, "Prilozi građi za povijest 1917-1918 (s osobitim osvrtom na razvoj radničkog pokreta i odjeke Oktobarske revolucije kod nas)", *Arhivski vjesnik*, 1 (1958), no. 1: 11-173.; Dragovan Šepić, "Oktobarska revolucija i jugoslavensko pitanje u Austro-Ugarskoj 1917/18", *Historijski zbornik*, 11-12 (1958-1959): 7-47.; Bogumil Hrabak, "Dolazak organizovanih povratnika iz Sovjetske Rusije u Jugoslaviju 1918-1919. g.", *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije*, 4 (1966): 239-282.; Ivan Očak, *U borbi za ideje Oktobra. Jugoslavenski povratnici iz Sovjetske Rusije (1918-1921)* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1976); Ivan Očak, *Jugoslavenski oktobarci. Likovi i sudbine* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1979)

The biggest change from the interwar historiography was made regarding the aftermath of World War I and the question of the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Its legality and legitimacy was problematized, i.e. the nature of the unification of the Kingdom of Serbia with the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs in the context of its neglect of the Geneva and Corfu Declarations was brought into question.¹² That could not have been discussed during the interwar period. However, in socialism it was still not possible to argue that the Monarchy could have survival chances, not even in a renewed, tripartite form. Additionally, the Monarchy was often criticized, according to the socialist background of the dominant narrative not only because of the unresolved national issue of South Slavs who were a part of it, but also because of the class issue.¹³

It should be also mentioned, as Filip Hameršak noted, that the participation of Josip Broz Tito in the Austro-Hungarian army during the Great War represented an additional hindrance regarding the research on World War I topics.¹⁴ Tito was the absolute ruler of Yugoslavia, to the point that his influence on social life turned into a proper cult of personality. Articulation of his participation in the war, particularly in the Serbian campaign, was contrary to the publicly proclaimed national idea of unified Yugoslavia, so this topic became something of a taboo. As a consequence, all the other topics related to World War I became quite unpopular, too. Hameršak detected one more negative circumstance regarding the research on the

¹² See: Bogdan Krizman, „Ženevska konferencija o ujedinjenju 1918 godine“, *Istorijski glasnik*, 3-4 (1958), no. 1-2: 3-31.; Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1961); Ferdo Čulinović, *Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968); Bogdan Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske i stvaranje jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1977); Ferdo Čulinović, *Državnopravni razvitak Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Pravni fakultet, 1981); Bogdan Krizman, *Hrvatska u prvom svjetskom ratu: Hrvatsko-srpski politički odnosi* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989); Neda Engelsfeld, *Prvi parlament Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Zagreb: Globus, Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Centar za stručno usavršavanje i suradnju s udruženim radom, 1989)

¹³ Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa*, 183.

¹⁴ Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa*, 187.

role the Croats played in the First World War: the fact that the analysis of the war as well as other topics on military history was to a great extent left to the *Vojnoistorijski institut* [Military History Institute] in Belgrade which was not too interested in the research on the Austro-Hungarian army and focused mainly on the successes of the Serbian army. Therefore, some of the most significant studies in this period were written by the Croatian diaspora where research on World War I as well as on other topics was continued on a significantly different basis than in Yugoslavia, often using a diametrically opposed approach.¹⁵

Croatian Historiography of World War I after 1991

The introduction of democracy in Croatia in the 1990s was followed by the reinterpretation of numerous historical topics in its historiography due to the earlier socialist approach. At the same time, a radical change of public paradigm resulted in strong interest in more recent history, like the Second World War and events from the period of socialist Yugoslavia, because such research was previously under the extremely strong influence of socialist narrative. Accordingly, the research on World War I was overshadowed again, only this time it was even further exacerbated by the strong interest in research on the *Homeland War* and topics from the most recent past.

So, immediately after the breakup of Yugoslavia, there were no significant changes in terms of the popularity of the research on First World War, which lasted practically until the last few years. In recent years, interest in the study of World War I has grown strongly, but there is still no systematic analysis of the entire Croatian territory during the war. Many scientific works have been published, studies, proceedings, memoirs, diaries and a number of monographs, from which Filip Hameršak's monograph *„Tamna strana Marsa – Hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat“* [Dark Side of Mars – Croatian Autobiography and World War I] has to be singled out due to its significance and complexity.

¹⁵ Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa*, 181.

Unlike before, in the papers published after 1991 great attention was given to prominent pro-Habsburg oriented individuals¹⁶, distinguished military commanders in the Austro-Hungarian army¹⁷ and Croatian units¹⁸ within it. However, the most common topics became local and regional ones as forms of micro-historic studies.¹⁹ More memoirs and diaries of

¹⁶ Ivan Bulić, „Ivan Skerlec Lomnički 1913.–1917. kraljevski komesar i hrvatski ban“ (PhD diss. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2011); Ivan Bulić, „Miroslav Krleža o Hrvatskoj u Prvome svjetskom ratu. Između kronike i interpretacije“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 39 (2007), no. 3: 687-704.; Andrej Čebotarev, „Prvi svjetski rat u očima grofa Stjepana Erdödyja“, *Gazophylacium*, 2 (1995), no. 1-2: 33-58.

¹⁷ Ornata Tadin, „Osobni fond generala Stjepana Sarkotića – analitički inventar“, *Arhivski vjesnik*, 37 (1994): 221-262.; Nikola Batušić, „Ratni dnevnik Branka Gavelle“ in *Krležini dani u Osijeku 2002.*, ed. Branko Hećimović (Osijek: Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Osijeku, 2003), 132-157.; Milan Pojić, *Vojskovođa Svetozar Borojević 1856–1920* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2006); Drago Roksandić, *Svetozar Borojević od Bojne (1856–1920) – lav ili lisica sa Soče?* (Zagreb: Vijeće srpske nacionalne manjine grada Zagreba, 2007); Branko Stapar-Agramer, „Neki nepoznati detalji i dopune o feldmaršalu Svetozaru Borojeviću, barunu od Bojne“, *Petrinjski zbornik*, 10 (2008): 184-185.; Dinko Čutura, „Stjepan Sarkotić. Časnik, strateg i političar“ (PhD diss. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2012)

¹⁸ Ivan Balta, „Zapisi o osječkim vojnim jedinicama u Prvom svjetskom ratu“, *Analiz Zavoda za znanstveni i umjetnički rad u Osijeku*, 17 (2001): 67-89.; Dinko Čutura, „Hrvatske postrojbe u Prvom svjetskom ratu i vojni raspad Austro-Ugarske“ (MA thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2003); Željko Pleskolt, ed., *Ratni dnevnik C. K. Varaždinske pješačke pukovnije br. 16. 26. srpnja 1914.–29. siječnja 1915.* (Bjelovar: Državni arhiv u Bjelovaru, 2004); Željko Pleskolt, ed., *Ratni dnevnik C. K. Varaždinske pješačke pukovnije br. 16. 30. siječnja 1915.–23. lipnja 1918.* (Bjelovar: Državni arhiv u Bjelovaru, 2004); Ivan Balta, „Slavonija i slavonske vojne jedinice u Prvome svjetskom ratu“, *Polemos*, 8 (2005), no. 15-16: 205-219.; Ivan Balta, „Vojne jedinice iz Hrvatske (Slavonije) u I. svjetskom ratu“ in *Dani Franje Tuđmana*, vol. 1, ed. Nenad Piskač (Veliko Trgovišće: Općina Veliko Trgovišće, 2008); Katarina Pcedić, Davor Mandić, ed., *Za cara i domovinu 1914–1918.* (Pula: Povijesni muzej Istre, 2008); Filip Novosel, „Hrvatskoslavonske postrojbe u sastavu austrougarske vojske za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata“, *Scrinia Slavonica*, 10 (2010): 267-289.; Jelena Borošak Marijanović, „*Dadoh zlato za željezo*“ 1914.–1918. *Hrvatska u vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata* (Zagreb: Hrvatski povijesni muzej, 2011); Mladen Houška, *XII. zagrebački korpus u I. svjetskom ratu* (Sveti Ivan Zelina: Muzej Sveti Ivan Zelina, 2014)

¹⁹ Due to their large number it is not possible to cite all, so as an example see: Damir Agičić, „Civil Croatia on the Eve of the First World War (The Echo of the Assassination and Ultimatum)“, *Povijesni prilozi*, 14 (1995): 301-317.; Vijoleta

common soldiers were analysed and published in comparison with previous periods, too.²⁰ Also, a number of papers were written on the structure and work of the state apparatus in war circumstances²¹ and the Austro-Hungarian army in general, with an emphasis on the navy. The navy was of special importance to Croatia, located on the Eastern Adriatic coast, and Croats constituted a great part of the Monarchy's navy.²²

Herman Kaurić, „Funkcioniranje zdravstvene službe u Požeškoj županiji tijekom Prvog svjetskog rata. Primjer Kraljevske zemaljske bolnice u Pakracu“ (MA thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2002); Ante Bralić, „Zadar u doba Prvog svjetskog rata“ (PhD diss. University of Zadar, 2005); Vijoleta Herman Kaurić, „Za naše junake... Rad dobrotvornih humanitarnih društava u gradu Zagrebu 1914.–1918.“ (PhD diss. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2007); Hrvoje Čapo, *Povijest Požege i njezina stanovništva od 1910. do 1921.* (Jastrebarsko: Naklada Slap, 2009); Andrej Bader, *Zaboravljeni egzodus 1915.-1918.* (Medulin: Denona, 2009); Nikola Anušić, „U sjeni Velikog rata: utjecaj pandemije španjolske gripe (1918/1919) na sociodemografske promjene u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj“ (PhD diss. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2011); Davor Mandić, *Istra u vihoru Velikog rata–sudbina evakuiraca 1914.-1918.* (Pula–Zagreb: Povijesni i pomorski muzej Istre–Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 2013); Željko Pleskolt and Mladen Medar, ed., *Bjelovar u Velikom ratu: 1914-1918.* (Bjelovar: Gradski muzej Bjelovar, 2014); Branko Ostajmer, *Đakovo i Đakovština u Prvom svjetskom ratu: 1914.-1918.* (Đakovo: Muzej Đakovštine, 2014); Filip Škiljan, *Prvi svjetski rat u Dalmaciji: (1914.-1918.)* (Split: Vijeće srpske nacionalne manjine Splitsko-dalmatinske županije – Vijeće srpske nacionalne manjine Dubrovačko-neretvanske županije, 2014); Stjepan Damjanović, ed., *Varaždin i sjeverozapadna Hrvatska u Velikom ratu 1914.-1918.* (Varaždin: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 2014)

²⁰ Meri Kunčić and Zoran Ladić, “Prilog životopisu Milana Japunčića”, *Biobibliographica*, vol. 1, ed. Trpimir Macan (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2003), 69-90.; Frane Dubravčić, *Živ sam i dobro mi je. Uspomene iz Prvog svjetskog rata 1914.–1918.* (Otočac: Katedra Čakavskog sabora pokrajine Gacke, 2002); Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa*; Branimir Knežević, *Gledanje u viđeno: ratovanje u Srbiji 1914. godine* (Strmec Samoborski: Fortuna, 2014); Pero Blašković, *Sa Bošnjacima u svjetskom ratu* (Strmec Samoborski: Fortuna, 2014); Juraj Oršić-Slavetički, *Na konju i u rovu* (Strmec Samoborski: Fortuna, 2014)

²¹ Ivan Bulić, „Vojna cenzura u Trojedinj kraljevini Hrvatskoj, Slavoniji i Dalmaciji za vrijeme Prvog svjetskoga rata“ (MA thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb, 2007)

²² Davor Mandić and Marijan Orlić, *Austrougarski bojni brod klase “Tegetthoff” “Szent Istvan”* (Pula: Povijesni muzej, 1998); Dieter Winkler et al., *Carska i kraljevska mornarica u Puli* (Pula: Sveučilišna knjižnica-Društvo Viribus Unitis, 1999); Stjepan Lozo, *Alexander Kircher. Portreti brodova* (Split:

All these issues were quite unpopular and much neglected in both the first and the second Yugoslavia due to the Yugoslavian national paradigm that both states shared. On the other hand, in this last period of Croatian historiography of the First World War, the interest in research on the volunteer movement for the Serbian army among the Croats dropped considerably – as did in research on pro-Yugoslav oriented individuals and groups in general.²³

However, it is important to note that the Croats basically remained victors in these interpretations for, as has been particularly emphasized, they managed to form the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs before the unification with the Kingdom of Serbia. The year 1918 has often been researched as an epochal moment because it represented the accession of Croatia to the South Slavic state – an experience which marked the 20th century as a rather traumatic period for Croatia, and an experience that is still reflected in everyday social and political relations.²⁴ In a way, it resulted in a kind of self-victimization,

Hrvatski pomorski muzej, 2000); Zvonimir Freivogel, *Austrougarski bojni brodovi I. svjetskog rata* (Rijeka: Adamić-Digital point, 2003); Dario Petković, *Ratna mornarica Austro-ugarske Monarhije. Brodovi u K. u. K. Kriegsmarine s prijelaza 19. u 20. stoljeće do kraja Prvog svjetskog rata* (Pula: C.A.S.H., 2004.; Bruno Dobrić, ed., *Mornarička knjižnica (K. u. K. Marinebibliothek) i austrijska/austrougarska mornarica u Puli* (Pula: Sveučilišna knjižnica, 2005); Bojan Pešl, *More i brodovi Johanna Seitsa* (Split, Hrvatski pomorski muzej, 2005); Zvonimir Freivogel, *Austrougarske podmornice u I. svjetskom ratu* (Rijeka: Adamić-Digital point, 2007); Zvonimir Freivogel, *Austrougarska vojska u Prvome svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Despot infinitus, 2014)

²³ Ivan Hrstić, “Dnevnik Ivana Čovića – prilog istraživanju dobrovoljačkog pokreta među Hrvatima u SAD-u u vrijeme Prvoga svjetskog rata”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 42 (2010), no. 1: 157-177.; Ivan Hrstić, „Položaj dobrovoljaca iz iseljeničtva u srbijanskoj vojsci prema dokumentima iz ostavštine dr. Ante Trumbića“, *Društvena istraživanja*, 21 (2012), no. 1: 239-258.

²⁴ Ljubo Boban, „Kada je i kako nastala Država Slovenaca Hrvata i Srba“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 187-198; Hodimir Sirotković, „O nastanku, organizaciji, državnopravnim pitanjima i sukcesiji Države SHS“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 199-208.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Gospodarsko-socijalni rad Narodne vlade Narodnog vijeća Države SHS 1918. god.“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 209-218.; Branka Boban, „Stjepan Radić i Država Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 219-236.; Hrvoje Matković, „Svetozar Pribičević u danima

the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes often being perceived as a fatal mistake or an anti-Croatian conspiracy. Linked to this myth are issues on the necessity of Croatia becoming a part of the Yugoslav state, as well as speculations on other possible scenarios after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. However, as the role of historiography is not to ask what could have been, speculations such as these will not be discussed in this paper.

Croatian historiography of World War I in comparison with Western European historiographies

Regarding the comparison between trends in the Croatian historiography of World War I with the Western-European historiographical trends, as it was already noted, I used the analysis of Jay Winter and Antoine Prost who argue that three different generations interpreted the war within “three historiographical configurations”.²⁵ These authors identified 1935, 1965 and 1992 as milestone years. According to them, the first generation of World War I historians dominated in historiography up to the 1960s. They call those historians the Generation of 1935 because that was the year *the first public encounter of French and German historians* who dealt with World War I topics was organized. According to Winter and Prost, a common characteristic of historians of this generation was that they interpreted the war and everything that preceded

postojanja Države Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 237-248.; Ante Sekulić, „Hrvati iz južnougarskih područja od 1918. do 1920.“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 249-254.; Petar Strčić, „Funkcioniranje Države Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba na primjeru otoka Krka“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 255-262.; Franko Mirošević, „Prilike u južnoj Dalmaciji za vrijeme postojanja Države Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba“, *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 26 (1993): 263-268.; Marina Štambuk-Škalić, *Narodno vijeće Slovenaca Hrvata i Srba u Zagrebu 1918.-1919.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2008); Zlatko Matijević, ed., *Godina 1918. Prethodnice, zbivanja, posljedice* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2010); Željko Holjevac, ed., *1918. u hrvatskoj povijesti* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2012)

²⁵ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 31.

it as the culmination of 19th century international policies. The concept of “nation” was of vital importance to them, and war events were reduced to individuals and their decisions. Accordingly, the role of diplomats, generals and politicians was (over)emphasized, while practically no attention was given to “ordinary” people, soldiers or civilians. The key issue for this generation of historians was “war guilt”, all of which resulted in papers employing a top-down approach, focusing on political and military history. Social history as well as economy, micro-history and everyday history topics were to a great extent neglected.²⁶

The second generation of historians of WWI changed this. Winter and Prost call them the Generation of 1965 because they think that the year 1965 is a symbol of the change of generations. Winter and Prost argue that, due to the traumatic impact of World War II, not only this generation of historians’ perception of WWI, but also the perception of war in general has changed. It was no longer seen as a strictly military conflict but as a total war which included civilians, women, children, etc. Meanwhile, due to the rapid development at all levels of education, interest in historical research as well as the number of historians grew considerably. Consequently, the style of historical works changed, too, for it had to adapt to a wider audience and market, which was in turn reflected in the choice of research topics. It should also be noted that at the time, the strong impact of Marxism on historians was noticeable across Europe. Accordingly, as studies on experiences of common soldiers and civilians, unlike previously, became more and more frequent, a bottom-up research started to evolve. Class conflict and social stratification as well as the impact of social groups as *collective actors* (soldiers, workers, and civilians) became important topics, with an emphasis on social unrest and the socialist revolution at the end of the war. It was all a consequence of a general world state of affairs after the Second World War, strongly marked by the Cold War and the struggle

²⁶ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 200–202.

for decolonization, which showed that the real power lies in society itself and not in the hands of individuals. Instead of war guilt, the key issues in Western European historiographies became aims and origins of war.²⁷

The third generation of World War I historians was named by Winter and Prost the Generation of 1992 because that was the year when the Museum of the Great War in Peronne was opened and the influential scientific conference on “war and cultures” was held. However, the key event in the creation of this generation was the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc. At the same time, a type of smooth transition happened among historians from labour movement history to social and cultural history of war as well as to micro-history. It must be noted, however, that those branches of historiography already existed at the time, so no actual change of generations occurred. The main result was a reduction of the impact of Marxism on historiographies. Accordingly, studies on the role of collective actors and the economy have become scarce and historians started to avoid making conclusions on the level of entire societies. Simultaneously, the interest in research on everyday life has grown. Key issues relate to cultures, while key topics have become “outcome of the” and its influence on the interwar period as well as its role in the outbreak of the Second World War.²⁸

That said, it has to be clear that, considering these generations and historical configurations, it is not possible to talk about exclusivity and absolute dominance of one type of research over others. It is a matter of general characteristics and emphasis. In the first configuration, the emphasis was on military and diplomatic history. In the second period, it was on social history, while in the third, it was on cultural and micro-history. However, all these branches of historiography were present in each generation.²⁹

²⁷ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 202-203.

²⁸ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 203-205.

²⁹ Prost and Winter also recognized dominant trends within each branch of historiography and in each one of the three periods, but it is not possible to

These dominant trends can be recognized, to a certain extent, in Croatian historiography as well. However, because the total number of papers on the Great War is rather small, it is relatively difficult to identify the trends. In that sense, each paper can be indicative. During the interwar years, the dominant topic of research was related to the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the role of prominent politicians in that process. Like in other European countries and in accordance with the first generation of historians of WWI, immediately after WWI a relatively large number of documents were published in the Kingdom as well in an attempt to justify the national role in the war and influence the non-resolved issues after the war.³⁰ As for the war itself, the focus was, primarily on the actions of the Yugoslav Committee and the volunteer movement among the Croatian emigrants for the Serbian army. During the Second World War, in the historiography of the Independent State of Croatia, there were no significant changes in the methodological approaches to the study of the Great War despite the complete ideological change. Due to the short duration of the state and the war circumstances, however, the number of papers in general was small, which makes reaching any significant conclusions difficult.

In the socialist Yugoslavia, immediately after the Second World War research on political ideas and national issues continued to dominate the historiography like they did during the interwar period.³¹ However, in line with the main Western European trends and the second generation of Western European

comment on this further in this paper.

³⁰ See: Lazarević, *Jugoslovenski dokumenti*; Šišić, *Dokumenti*; Grba, *Gledišta austro-ugarskih generala*; Lukas, *Hrvatsko pitanje*

³¹ See for example: Ferdo Čulinović, 1918. *na Jadranu* (Zagreb: Glas rada, 1951); Ante Mandić, *Fragmenti za historiju ujedinjenja* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1956); Bogdan Krizman and Dragoslav Janković, *Građa o stvaranju jugoslovenske države (1. I–20. XII 1918)*, vol. 1-2 (Beograd, 1964); Josip Horvat, *Prvi svjetski rat* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1967); Dragovan Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje 1914–1918*. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970); Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*; Krizman, *Hrvatska u prvom svjetskom ratu*; Vladimir Kapun, *Međimurje 1918*. (Čakovec: Zrinski, 1982); Vijoleta Herman Kaurić, „Bibliografija radova o Prvom svjetskom ratu

historians who were under the strong influence of Marxism, the interest in research on social unrest and the spread of revolutionary ideas at the end of the war grew significantly. Actually, considering that Yugoslavia was a socialist state, this change happened even faster than in Western Europe. While the change in Yugoslavia came “from above”, under the impact of the dominant political narrative, in democracies it came largely “from below”, as a historiographical trend. So, a number of papers on topics such as the spread of socialist ideas, especially among Yugoslav volunteers and prisoners in Russia, mutinies in the Austro-Hungarian army and navy, desertion (Green Cadre), etc. appeared.³² Also, significant interest was shown in the research on economic issues, but such studies focused mainly on individual cases on the local or regional level as case-studies, lacking a broader synthesis of the economic development of the entire Croatian territory.³³

objavljenim u historijskim časopisima u razdoblju 1945-1998 godine“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 32-33 (1999-2000): 491-498.

³² See footnotes no. 12 and 13

³³ See for example: Igor Karaman, „Privredni položaj Slavonije u Habsburškoj monarhiji pod nagodbenim sistemom (1868.-1918.)“, *Zbornik Hrvatskog instituta Slavonije*, 4 (1966): 283-374.; Zoltan Sárközi, „Prilog historiji južnoslavenskih putujućih poljoprivrednih radnika (1805.-1914.)“, *Historijski zbornik*, 18 (1967): 239-243.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Križa taninske industrije u Hrvatskoj i položaj radništva“, *Zbornik Hrvatskog instituta Slavonije*, 6 (1968): 39-60.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Osvrt na slavonski dio izložbe ‚Počeci industrije i radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj 1848-1919. god.‘“, *Zbornik Hrvatskog instituta Slavonije*, 7-8 (1970): 533-535.; Igor Karaman, „Dva priloga pitanju agrarnih odnosa na području Hrvatske u kasnofeudalnom i kapitalističkom razdoblju (do 1918.)“, *Historijski zbornik*, 25-26 (1972-1973.): 377-385.; Dragiša Jović, „Izkaz poduzeća u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji pred kraj I. svjetskog rata koja su otpadala pod nadzor kraljevskog zemaljskog obrtnog nadzornika (I. dio)“, *Zbornik Hrvatskog instituta Slavonije*, 10 (1973.): 243-297.; Dragiša Jović, „Izkaz poduzeća u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji pred kraj I. svjetskog rata koja su otpadala pod nadzor kraljevskog zemaljskog obrtnog nadzornika (II. dio)“, *Zbornik Hrvatskog instituta Slavonije*, 11 (1974.): 183-224.; Rene Lovrenčić, „Ekonomska problematika u Supilovom ‚Novom listu‘ 1906-1914“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 6 (1974): 129-272.; Tereza Ganza-Aras, „Pokušaji kapitalističke preobrazbe sela i zadružni pokret u austrijskoj Dalmaciji od razdoblja liberalizma do 1918. god.“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 19 (1986): 133-178.; Igor Karaman, „Razvoj stanovništva i privrede u urbanom sustavu grada Rijeke od revolucije 1848/49 do raspada Habsburške monarhije

However, unlike in the Western European historiographies, in Croatian historiography political history continued to dominate the research on World War I. This continued even during the 1990s due to the extreme turn of the dominant narrative in Croatia – the latter in accordance with the previously mentioned need for the reinterpretation of some historical topics in relation to the socialist historiography. In the case of World War I, this need resulted in the stronger emphasis on issues regarding the process of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, particularly the creation of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Therefore, the emphasis on social, cultural and micro-history which is in accordance with the third generation of Western European historians of World War I could be noted in Croatian historiography only in recent years.³⁴ It is interesting that even now mainly younger historians are dealing with these issues, while the older generation of historians is still primarily interested in politics, especially in the very beginning of the war and its aftermath.³⁵ Also, a group of the older generation historians has continued to be engaged with economic issues.³⁶

1918. god.“, *Historijski zbornik*, 34 (1986): 79-130.; Bernard Stulli, „Varaždinska regija u željezničkom sustavu Hrvatske (1825-1918)“, *Historijski zbornik*, 34 (1986): 1-78.

³⁴ See footnotes no. 24 i 27

³⁵ Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa* 190-191.

³⁶ See for example: Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Utjecaj Prvog svjetskog rata na kretanje stanovništva i stočarstva na području Hrvatske i Slavonije“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 24 (1991): 41-56.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Hrvatsko-slavonsko gospodarsko društvo kao središnja zadruga (1907-1925)“, *Povijesni prilozi*, 11 (1992): 252-290.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Presjek kroz rad Zagrebačke pivovare d.d. do 1945.“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992), no. 2: 149-168.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Zagrebačka tvornica kavinih proizvoda Franck d.d. do 1945. god.“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992), no. 2: 169-192.; Kolar Dimitrijević, „Gospodarsko-socijalni rad“, 209-218.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „O zagrebačkom gospodarstveniku Vjekoslavu Heinzelu 1871-1934“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 26 (1994), no. 2: 257-276.; Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „O osnutku i radu zagrebačke burze do 1945. god.“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 28 (1995): 190-211.; Zdenka Šimončić Bobetko, „Mijena strukture podiobe zemljišnih gospodarstava u Hrvatskoj 1895-1931. god.“, *Povijesni prilozi*, 12 (1993): 229-282.

To sum up, after comparing the Western European historiographical trends and Croatian historiography on World War I, it can be concluded that they were relatively compatible. However, it has to be highlighted (again) that the total number of papers in Croatian historiography is quite modest and it is difficult to posit final and irrefutable conclusions because the border between different historiographical configurations is sometimes blurred. This is consistent with the observation made by Winter and Prost that this is primarily a question of emphasis. When the number of papers is small, it is difficult to differentiate “generations”. Nevertheless, certain differences between the “generations” can be found even in Croatian historiography, and they were principally in line with those in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Therefore, we can speak about the compatibility between research trends on World War I in Croatia and Western Europe, but does that imply a direct influence of foreign historiographies on the national one, or was it more a result of the general social circumstances in Europe?

This issue remains open and subject to dispute. However, in reference to the initial thesis and based on thorough analysis of the Croatian historiography of World War I, it can be concluded that it was largely a result of wider social circumstances. Research on topics which were opposed to the dominant narrative in totalitarian and authoritarian states, as was the case with the pre-1990s Croatia, was not possible – the mere attempt to do such a research could have serious consequences. Unlike in Croatia, the rise of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes all over Europe from 1918 to 1945 as well as the influence of Marxism on Western European historiographies after 1945 enabled the previously noted similarity in dominant trends regarding the research topics. However, in the Western European historiographies topics in opposition to the dominant narrative were also researched. Therefore, it is difficult to speak about the direct influence of Western European historiographies on Croatian historiography. On a symbolical level, this can

be proven by the fact that citations of foreign literature were very rare in Croatian historiographical studies of World War I, although the knowledge of Croatian historians about general trends should not be underestimated. However, given the most recent research results on World War I in Croatian historiography, particularly among younger authors, as well as an increase in the availability of historiographical studies from all over the world through modern media, a growth of the mutual influence between historiographies can be predicted, which should ensure a gradual reduction of the impact of narratives and public paradigms on their future development.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Croatian historiography of the First World War in the context of extreme twists and turns of dominant narratives showed that these have been primarily reflected in the choice of topics that have been studied by historians. Considering that the Croats fought on the losing side, which was opposite to the interpretation of WWI in the dominant narrative in both the first and the second Yugoslavia, their engagement during the war was not a particularly popular topic up to the 1990s. However, even after 1991 and the formation of the Republic of Croatia, this topic remained relatively neglected due to the renewed interest in the Second World War. In the meantime, yet another war broke out in Croatia which attracted much attention also. Thus, the widespread claim of Western European historiographies that there was less interest in World War I compared to World War II is even more valid in the case of Croatia.

This comparison leads us to the second part of the paper and the conclusion, where the question of the impact of general historiographical trends on tendencies in Croatian historiography, or at least the question of the compatibility between Croatian and Western European historiographies,

was raised. Regarding the study of the First World War, it is evident that the changes in dominant trends in Croatian historiography were at some point compatible with the changes in Western European historiographies. I believe that this compatibility has been more a result of general circumstances than of the influence of foreign historiographical trends on Croatian historiography. However, even this limited knowledge about similarities between trends is important, for Croatian historiography has usually been compared only to other historiographies of the former Yugoslavia, especially to the Serbian – and it should be noted that interpretations of certain topics in these historiographies are often quite contradictory. Comparing Croatian and Serbian historiography exclusively, a broader context is often missing – which is why the impression of their isolation and distance from the dominant world and European trends has been further emphasized.

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“The Truth Wins”: Interpretations of World War I in School History Education in Slovakia from 1918 until Present

(A History Textbook Narratives Analysis)

The article seeks to explore the ways of interpreting World War I in school history textbooks used since 1918 until today in Slovakia, during different political regimes. School textbooks, which are reflecting official historiography, are powerful tools. The narratives presented in them contribute, next to family, media and public spaces and ceremonies, to forming the way students perceive the world around themselves. History education and school history textbooks are instrumental in creating collective identity and collective memory. Undoubtedly, the meaning of history education, as perceived by the state authorities, does not lie only in presenting “how it really is or was”; but its aim is also to culturally integrate the students within their society. In the following text, the patterns of constructing historical narratives on World War I in Czechoslovak and Slovak history textbooks published within changing political regimes will be analysed and presented. The article is divided into four parts, and each section deals with history textbooks for primary and secondary schools published in different political regimes: history textbooks employed in school education in the interwar Czechoslovak Republic in 1918-1939; history textbooks used in schools during the times of World War II in the Slovak Republic in 1939-1945; history textbooks issued in Czechoslovakia during the times when it was ruled by the Communist Party in 1948-1989; and history textbooks distributed to schools after 1989, and especially after 1993, when the Slovak Republic was

established. The main research questions are: which events from World War I were presented as the main themes in national history in different political regimes, and who were the in-group (us) and who were the out-groups (Others) in national history master narratives in different socio-political contexts? How did the interpretations of World War I develop throughout time and how did the images of us and the Others change in different political contexts?

World War I, one of the most crucial events in the history of the twentieth century, has been a contested subject of memory and memorialization. Competing master narratives were produced by different national historiographies depending on the current political situation and on the character of political regimes in particular countries, as well as on contemporary international relations. However, as time was passing by, the remembrance of World War I gradually faded away from official memory. It became less present at the ceremonies held in public space, it slowly became less targeted by historiography – and it was substituted by commemorating other politically loaded events and processes of the twentieth century such as World War II, the Holocaust, the Cold War, Communism and Post-Communism. And World War I also slipped away, bit by bit, from family memory, because there has been a large time gap since it took place a century ago, and there is not anymore the possibility for the transfer of testimonies and memories from the generation of survivors to the younger age groups. However, the last two decades have been marked by an increased political and public interest in war commemorations and thus the academia has responded by producing a significant number of studies on history and memory, including also case studies on commemorating World War I. Two main streams have developed within the research on war memory and commemoration in general, one focusing on the politics of memory (referring to identity construction theories) and the other one being connected with psychology and memory (referring to collective

and individual mourning processes).¹ The presented research emphasizes the changing politics of memory in Slovakia and, therefore, it will be developed within the framework focusing on official commemorative practices (the article specifically deals with official school history textbooks narratives) aiming at constructing the collective memory and collective identity of citizens. The psychological aspect of the mourning processes connected with the war remembrance will not be taken into consideration in this study.

The narratives presented in school history textbooks have quite often been influenced by stereotypes—generally shared impressions, images, or thoughts existing within certain groups of people about the character of a particular group of people and their representations. Stereotypes are common social phenomena; they help us orient ourselves in the society in which we live, and they save our time and energy when trying to establish the mental map of the world around us. In times of conflict, however, stereotyping and labelling the Other can become especially prevalent and harmful.² The scientific research of stereotypes boomed mainly in the periods following the two major conflicts of the twentieth century—WWI and WWII. The aim of the research on stereotypes was to uncover biased views some groups of people had towards other groups of people. Researchers have proved that stereotypes are spread in society through families, school education, mass media, and public ceremonies as well as through contact with members of other groups. These biased views were to be, consequently, modified through education. The Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig was founded in 1975 with the aim of promoting international scientific research on textbooks which are one of the media of transmitting the images of the self and the Other. During the Cold War, the study of stereotypes flourished

¹ T.G Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, eds., *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2000).

² Daniel Bar-Tal, *Intractable Conflicts: Socio-Psychological Foundations and Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

again. Urie Bronfenbrenner's *mirror-image hypothesis*³ was the dominant concept at that time, according to which the important factors that influence the creation of the content of stereotypes about other groups of people (about the members of other nations or states) are mutual political and economic relations existing between different groups of people. Though the politics of the Eastern and the Western bloc were characterized by principally different ideologies, the members of both blocs had similar positive perceptions of themselves (the in-group) and similar negative perceptions of the members of other bloc (the out-group). The population of allied countries was perceived as friendly and supportive. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the countries that were in conflict with the country of observers were perceived as aggressive and immoral. At the end of the 1960s, focus in the research of stereotypes shifted from the content of stereotypes to the process of their creation. Today, there are several theoretical explanations for the production of negative stereotypes. Mutually conflicting interests of particular groups and competition between the groups are some of the motivational factors. According to the *social identity theory*,⁴ negative stereotypes about the Other are the outcome of efforts to present one's own group as the exceptional one. *Realistic group conflict theory*⁵ emphasizes the fact that negative stereotypes are the outcome of the competition between particular social groups. *Scapegoating theory*⁶ explains the process of the formation of negative stereotypes about other groups of people as based on economic or social instability. *Frustration-aggression-*

³ Urie Bronfenbrenner, "The Mirror Image in Soviet-American Relations: A Social Psychologist's Report," in *Journal of Social Sciences*, no. 17 (1961): 45–46.

⁴ Henry Tajfel and John Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. Stephen Worchel and W. Austin (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986), 7–24.

⁵ Muzafer Sherif, *Group Conflict and Co-Operation: Their Social Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967); Robert A. Levine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories and Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes and Group Behaviour* (New York: Wiley, 1972).

⁶ John Duckitt, *The Social Psychology of Prejudice* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1994).

*displacement theory*⁷ highlights the idea that frustration (which can be caused for example by worsening economic conditions) leads to aggression. However, this aggression cannot react to the real source of the tension (for example on the international economic situation). Instead, it is directed against other social groups (for example against the members of other nations). In other words, if we identify some other group of people as the cause of a worsening situation, our own social identity will not suffer. As noted above, the dissemination of stereotypes can be politically motivated and one of the ways of spreading auto-stereotypes and hetero-stereotypes is through public state education. In this respect, history education and history textbooks are instrumental in creating the image of the us/self (in-group) and the Others (out-group). Therefore, all of the above-mentioned theoretical concepts will be taken into account when analysing the narratives and discussing the problems of images and interpretations of World War I in school history textbooks.

Interwar History Textbooks (1918-1938)

World War I brought immense changes into the Slovak national development. Prior to its beginning, Slovaks within Austria-Hungary lacked their own administration; and their cultural and political elites had to fight against the massive Magyarisation in order to maintain the essential attributes of the nation: the language and the culture. This had a significant impact on the situation of Slovaks within Czechoslovakia after 1918 as well. The absent tradition of continuous national schooling, institutions or administration emasculated their entrance to the newly-formed state where they held from the very beginning the position of the “younger brother” of the Czech nation. After a rather thorough removal of the staff labelled as Hungarian or pro-Hungarian from the state administration,

⁷ John Dollard, ed., *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

public service and official education positions, there was a serious shortage of these professionals in Slovakia which was solved by transferring personnel from the Czech Lands. The mission of these “imported” professionals was to fulfil, at least for the first couple of years following the establishment of the republic, the gaps that occurred after eliminating professionals suspected of pro-Hungarian feelings from the public life. It was also believed that Czechs would contribute to the formation and strengthening of the collective Czechoslovak identity among Slovaks.⁸ Concerning the new Czechoslovak identity, Czechs identified generally more readily with the official centralist state ideology than Slovaks. The so-called *Czechoslovakism* promoted the idea that Czechs and Slovaks were one nation composed of two tribes. The more exaggerated form of this conception claimed that Slovaks were actually Czechs, just historically less developed. There was almost no opposition to this concept from the Czech side.⁹ Slovak response to this idea was not unanimous. Representatives of the liberal wing, supported mainly by the Slovak Lutherans, were in their views most consistent with the ideas of the Czech founders of the state, which also guaranteed them an easier access to the leading positions in the country. Regardless of how strong the centralist inclinations among the Slovak liberal intelligentsia were, since the establishment of Czechoslovakia they had had to face a growing opposition in the autonomist movement whose representatives showed increasing dissatisfaction with the imposition of Czech political and cultural superiority on the Slovaks, and this movement was getting more prominent during the 1930s. The political reason lying behind the promotion of the concept of Czechoslovakism was to numerically strengthen the state-forming nation and to

⁸ For more on life of Czech teachers in interwar Slovakia see Pavol Matula, *Čechoslovakizmus na slovenských stredných školách 1918 – 1938* [Czechoslovakism in Slovak high schools 1918–1938] (Bratislava: Goralinga, 2013).

⁹ Bakke, Elizabeth, “Čechoslovakizmus v školských učebniciach, 1918 – 1938” [Czechoslovakism in history textbooks, 1918–1938], *Historický časopis* 47 (1999): 250–266.

counterbalance the two largest national minorities in the new country – Germans and Hungarians.

World War I brought about significant geo-political changes. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the establishment of the successor states after its end was the key moment in the interpretation of the war in both Czech and Slovak historiographies. Since the very first moment of the existence of Czechoslovakia, the narrative of World War I has been officially presented as a story of victory – as a significant landmark in the history of both Czechs and Slovaks when they finally reached independence in their own democratic nation-state.¹⁰ The need to present the establishment of Czechoslovakia, a joint state of Czechs and Slovaks, as the overall desire of both nations was widely pursued by the Czech and some Slovak political elites, and the contemporary interpretations of World War I were also used for these purposes. Historical narratives were produced at the time mainly as the testimonies of heroic deeds of Czech and Slovak politicians who had merit in the establishment of the new state.¹¹ Significant attention was paid to the activities of volunteer armed forces composed of Czechs and Slovaks operating together with the Entente powers during World War I (later, after the end of WWI, they were named *Czechoslovak legions*).

¹⁰ Gabriela Dudeková, “Stratégie prežitia v mimoriadnej situácii. Vplyv Veľkej vojny na rodinu na území Slovenska” [Survival strategies in the extraordinary situation: Impact of the Great War upon Family in Slovakia], *Forum Historiae* 1 (2009): 1, accessed 17th November 2015, URL http://www.forumhistoriae.sk/FH1_2009/texty_1_2009/dudekova.pdf

¹¹ For example: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Světová revoluce* [World revolution] (Praha 1925); Karol Anton Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat I-IV* [Slovak revolution I-IV] (Trnava 1929-31); Edvard Beneš, *Světová válka a naše revoluce. Vzpomínky a úvahy z bojů za svobodu národa, I-III* [World war and our revolution. Memories and reflections from the fights for the freedom of the nation] (Praha 1927-1928); Milan Hodža, *Články, reči, štúdie I-III* [Papers, speeches, essays I-III] (Praha 1930-31, 1934); Štefan Osuský, *Služba národu* [A service for the nation] (Liptovský sv. Mikuláš 1938); Vavro Šrobár, *Boj o nový život* [Fight for a new life] (Ružomberok 1920); Anton Štefánek, *Slovensko pred prevratom a počas prevratu* [Slovakia before and after the coup] (Praha 1923).

All these tendencies were also present in the school history education in the given period. Regarding the politics of textbook production, it has to be mentioned at this place that during the interwar period, a number of different history textbooks were available for usage at schools, and generally we can distinguish three types used in Slovakia: textbooks written by Czech authors, the so-called *Slovakized* textbooks (i.e. textbooks written by Czech authors with some passages added to reflect Slovak national history), and the textbooks written by Slovak authors. WWI was represented in the interwar history textbooks published in Czechoslovakia as a clash of civilizations, as a fight between us (the in-group) where in a narrow sense Czechs and Slovaks belonged, and all the Triple Entente powers and their supporters in a broader sense – i.e. *“all of the educated world”*,¹² described as superior in civilizational, cultural and moral sense; and the Others (the out-group) composed of Germans and Hungarians who were depicted as villainous, sophisticated, immoral and wrongful: *“Austria-Hungary and Germany were later aided also by Turkey and Bulgaria. Otherwise, almost all the world stood up against them, against the German lust for the control of the world... The truth wins. Germany had big successes in the battlefields, since it had been long preparing for the war. But justice was not on its side.”*¹³

The narratives about the beginning of the war in the analysed textbooks attributed the origins of the conflict to German imperialism and Austro-Hungarian sycophancy, while significant attention was devoted to portraying the hopeless situation and persecution of non-German and non-Hungarian nations in Austria-Hungary prior to and during WWI: *“Hungarian and German expansionism, linked with hatred to anything Slavic... was manifested not only in the domestic*

¹² Karol Hlavinka, *Stručné dejiny národa československého pre nižšie triedy slovenských stredných škôl* [A concise history of Czechoslovak nation for lower grades of secondary schools] (Košice: Tlačou Slovenskej knihtačiarne, 1922), 100.

¹³ Antonín Reitler and J. S. Touc, *Dejepis pre meštianske školy. Diel I* [History for civic schools. Part I] (Praha: Komenium, 1933), 40–41.

*policy of the Monarchy – by oppressing Slavic (and Romanic) nations – but also in its foreign policy...This approach caused that Slavs were internally more and more growing apart from the Habsburg Monarchy. The situation, though, did not allow for their overt break-up with the Monarchy. It was only the World War, caused mainly by Germans and Hungarians, which put the nations of the Habsburg Lands into new conditions.*¹⁴ Similarly: *”Austria-Hungary was more and more becoming just a pendant to Germany, carrying out the wishes of Germany, though half of its 52 million population were Slavs – and they felt on their shoulders German and Hungarian burden and in vain were calling for the equality in the empire they themselves supported by their work and blood (as soldiers).*¹⁵ Apart from the clear identification of the two war sides with *us* and *Others* based on the winners and the defeated (i.e. the moral and rightful vs. the vicious and abusive), the analysed textbook also subtly elaborated an image of the in-group based on belonging to a larger Slavic ethnic group: *“Our state is Slavic, Slavs are our closest brothers, we want to know them and maintain solidarity with them, and we also want to live with other nations in peace and harmony.*¹⁶

Political and social reasons of the war were not explained in the analysed textbooks thoroughly, as the main point of the narratives was to represent the whole issue as the triumphant historical victory of Czechs and Slovaks, their path from the “prison of the nations” to their righteously deserved independent and democratic state. The break-up of Austria-Hungary was represented as the key result of the war: *“The World War became the right moment for Czechs and Slovaks to accomplish their independence. For that, they worked at home as well as abroad. In Prague, a secret society named Maffia was established at the beginning of the war, the aim of which was to liberate the nation.*

¹⁴ Josef Pekař, *Dějiny československé.Pro nejvyšší třídy škol středních* [Czechoslovak history. For the highest classes of secondary schools] (Praha: Historický Klub, 1921), 145.

¹⁵ Hlavinka, *Stručné dějiny národa československého*, 96–97.

¹⁶ Hlavinka, *Stručné dějiny národa československého*, 108.

*Austria-Hungary cruelly persecuted Czechs and Slovaks already from the beginning of the war, mainly their national leaders.*¹⁷... *“The National Council was the highest authority and the official representative of all Czechoslovaks living abroad. Its aim was to direct coherently all the actions aiming for convincing the Triple Entente statesmen about the idea of dissolving Austria-Hungary and establishing nation-states. An effective tool of the Council’s propaganda was the fact that it could point to the ideological affinity between the Czechoslovak efforts and the proclamations of the Western democracies and to the identical visions of the future organization of the world order, endangered by the imperialism of Germany and its allies.”*¹⁸ ... *“Our new state is called Czechoslovak, which means that Czechs and Slovaks, two branches of one nation, have after a long period of separation again unified in this state and they wish to be together forever; so that neither Germans nor Hungarians could again split them in two, or oppress them. Czechs and Slovaks are one and the same, and who imagines separating them would need to divide their common independent home, the Czechoslovak state.”*¹⁹

The image of the in-group in a narrower sense, i.e. the image of Czechs and Slovaks, was created also through descriptions of the character of their newly established state, referring to it as an extraordinary achievement. The interwar Czechoslovak republic was depicted as a personification of its citizens (Czechs and Slovaks), reflecting their moral qualities and pioneering spirit: *“Our state is democratic. All its citizens are equal; all have the same rights and the same duties, there are no privileges based on origin or wealth; and everybody, according to their own talents and skills, can achieve the highest positions... The head of the state is not a hereditary king, but a democratically elected president, chosen because of his deeds and skills. The state is us, the citizens, old and young, poor and rich; the state looks like we do. Our state is a peaceful state; our army serves to defend*

¹⁷ Reitler and Touc, *Dejepis pre meštianske školy*, 40.

¹⁸ Pekař, *Dějiny československé*, 148.

¹⁹ Hlavinka, *Stručné dejiny národa československého*, 107–108.

our country... our army will never attack others and usurp from them, but it will not allow others to take from ours. Our state is fair and impartial towards the rich and the poor alike, towards the small and the big, towards Germans and Hungarians; it protects the rights of everybody, but it deserves their loyalty”.²⁰

Main topics presented in the textbooks were, similarly to the official historiography, themes from political and military history. The deeds of the great men, the triumvirate of Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik who were described as the founders of the state, were an important part of the history textbook narratives. Especially when considering Masaryk's role in the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state, the textbook authors would write in line with the contemporary Masaryk cult which was massively produced and spread by a group of intellectuals, writers, journalists and publishers in order to promote “the vision of the Castle” in Czechoslovakia as well as abroad.²¹ In their narratives, the textbook authors would not hesitate to employ even Biblical tone when presenting his profile to students, such as: *“Masaryk was given to us by Providence itself to compensate for our past losses and he led us into our promised land”²²*; and they promoted a sort of messianic image of his deeds: *“Professor Masaryk was the leader and the head of our revolutionary resistance movement...When he saw how repulsed our soldiers went to the war and when he saw what kind of persecution was initiated against the great-hearted Czech people, he left on 20th December abroad, so that there he could in person start the fight against the Germans and the Habsburgs. And for this work, Masaryk was ready as no one else; and no one else could have done it as Masaryk did... Since his youth, Masaryk was devoted to work and great ideals, to humanity: truth, godliness, and knowledge... Apart from that, Masaryk is the ideal character – he is a direct, fearless, truthful*

²⁰ Hlavinka, *Stručné dejiny národa československého*, 107–108.

²¹ Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe 1914 – 1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²² Hlavinka, *Stručné dejiny národa československého*, 104.

and brave man, persistent in his work and extremely selfless (the embodiment of Comenius and Hus in one person). He never sought for profit or wealth, all he wanted was to serve his nation and justice."²³ Similar comparison of Masaryk to other great men – heroes from the Czech past – was present in different history textbooks as well: *"In December 1914, the professor of the Prague University T. G. Masaryk left for abroad, so that he could work there for our freedom. He wanted to persuade foreign countries that Austria-Hungary was an unfair state and that it had to be destroyed. Masaryk will always belong to the greatest sons of our nation... He really wanted to have from us the nation of Hus and Comenius, and he worked for this idea tirelessly and fearlessly."*²⁴

From military history, the achievements of the Czechoslovak Legions – units made up of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war or deserters from the Austro-Hungarian army – and their impact during WWI were paid the most attention in the textbooks. This was a particularly important aspect since the interpretation of these activities would help create the image that Czechs and Slovaks actually stood in the conflict on the right side (i.e. the winning one): *"From the beginning, the foreign operatives showed that Czechoslovaks wanted to fight for their freedom, and they devoted a lot of energy into building their own military units which could support these efforts by the concrete acts."*²⁵ When describing the acts of these armed forces, the authors of the textbooks would often employ references to the heroic Czech Hussite past and draw parallels between the two movements as the two rightful fights for freedom against foreign oppressors: *"The World War made it clear that Germans had decided to conquer the world with arms and to forever silence our resistance and our calls for freedom and equality. Thus, we had no other chance than taking the guns and fighting against the violence with violence. Our common soldiers were the first to understand*

²³ Hlavinka, *Stručné dějiny národa československého*, 104.

²⁴ Reitler and Touc, *Dejepis pre meštianske školy*, 40.

²⁵ Pekař, *Dějiny československé*, 149.

this when they deserted the Austrian army in the battlefield and they let Russians, in whom they saw their Slavic brothers, to capture them... However, the prisoners of war were not allowed by the Russian government to join the army and to fight against the enemy. Only after the fall of the Tsar's reign they achieved more freedom, and a number of Czechoslovak regiments were established, bearing the names of famous men from our past: Jan Hus, John Zizka of Trocnov, Prokop the Great, George of Poděbrady.²⁶ An independent Czechoslovak army was formed, famous legions, which achieved a great victory on 2nd July 1917 in the Battle of Zborov, and they drew the attention of the whole world to their valour. Old Czech Brethren spirit and Hussite discipline ruled the legions.”²⁷

History textbooks published in interwar Czechoslovakia were utilized mainly to provide such an interpretation of World War I which would portray it as a step of Czechs and Slovaks towards their joint nation-state. Thus, those aspects of the war were highlighted which proved that Czechs and Slovaks were standing on the right side in this battle of civilizations: here belonged the deeds of the émigré intellectuals and the efforts of the volunteer armed forces. The in-group was pictured in a narrow sense as Czechs and Slovaks²⁸, described as wrongfully

²⁶ John Zizka of Trocnov, Prokop the Great and George of Poděbrady were leading figures in the Hussite movement, a 15th century political, social and military campaign based on the teachings of Czech reformer Jan Hus, often described as a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation. Apart from its religious aspects (challenging the papal authority and asserting of national autonomy in ecclesiastical affairs), Hussitism has been often interpreted as a Czech national movement, and it acquired anti-imperial and anti-German associations (for example in the works of Palacký), and became an important symbol frequently employed during the times of Czech nation-building.

²⁷ Hlavinka, *Stručné dějiny národa československého*, 101–102.

²⁸ Interwar history textbooks were concurrently developing Czech, Slovak and Czechoslovak identity. Czechoslovak identity was constructed mainly through presenting the medieval principality of Great Moravia as the first Czechoslovak state. Some textbooks would even employ such concepts as the Czechoslovak tribes in prehistoric times or the Czechoslovak language in the Middle Ages. Generally, the relations between Czechs and Slovaks were portrayed as the relation between the older and the younger brother, or the two nations were presented as two branches of one stem, which was

oppressed martyrs, yet people of strong morals and pioneering spirit; and in a broader sense, the in-group was composed of all Entente powers, characterised as the civilized world. On the other hand, the out-groups were represented by the Germans and Hungarians, depicted as wrongful expansionists and aggressors which was the reflection of both the international diplomatic relations Czechoslovakia pursued during the interwar period, as well as its internal domestic situation where it needed to cope with high numbers of national minorities of Germans and Hungarians.

History Textbooks Produced During WWII (1939-1945)

On the eve of World War II, Czechoslovakia was dissolved. The so-called Sudetenland was annexed by Germany, the Czech and Moravian regions became a part of Germany in the form of the Protectorate; while Slovakia, which lost its Southern strip to Hungary (that also annexed Ruthenia) became a country under a strong German political influence. A significant internal change occurred on the Slovak political scene: previously dominant Slovak Lutheran and pro-Czech oriented intelligentsia leading the state was replaced by a rival political elite, partly coming from the Catholic clergy and promoting a radical, communitarian nationalism, easily reconciled with Fascist or Nazi ideas, too.²⁹ Within this political context, the

the continuation of the early 19th century conception developed by Ján Kollár. For a more detailed discussion, see Slávka Otčenášová, *Schválená minulosť: kolektívna identita v československých a slovenských učebniciach dejepisu (1918-1989)* [Approved past: Collective identity in Czechoslovak and Slovak history textbooks (1918-1989)] (Košice : UPJŠ, 2010). For other discussions on developing Czechoslovak identity through interwar school education, see Elisabeth Bakke, "Čechoslovakizmus v školských učebniciach (1918-1938)" [The Czechoslovak nation project in the textbooks (1918-1938)], in *Historický časopis*, no. 2 (1999): 233-253 and Július Alberty, "Nad prvou učebnicou československých dejín [On the first textbook about Czechoslovak history], in *Acta historica neosoliensia*, no. 1-2 (2015): 286-325.

²⁹ See James Mace Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

official historiography took a new course, and new history textbooks were written, reflecting the current political agenda of the newly-formed state, dominantly promoting independent Slovak statehood and Catholicism as opposed to the atheism and anticlericalism of the Czechs. Important aspects in this political and social context that influenced the development of history education policies were the *Slovakization* of the official schooling (i.e. removal of Czech teachers and professors from Slovak schools, withdrawal of Czech history textbooks that were previously used in Slovak schools along with the Slovak ones, and publishing new textbooks which would “reflect and apply in the best possible manner the Slovak attitudes”³⁰), as well as the creation of stronger links between official education and the Church (there was an increase of schools founded by the Church, and the religious aspect of secondary education was formally embedded in the characteristics of the function of the schooling: “*The role of secondary schooling is to educate a moral student on a religious basis, who will be a loyal citizen of the Slovak state*”³¹, while teachers were encouraged to “*actively participate in national and religious associations*”.³²

Historian František Hrušovský, a graduate of the Jagellonian University, professor at the Slovak University in Bratislava and Member of the Parliament, became the leading representative of the official historiography. His monograph and concurrently a high school textbook on Slovak history entitled *Slovenské dejiny* (Slovak history)³³ was a sort of summarizing overview of the Slovak national history. Six consecutive editions of the monograph in two years (1939–1940) showed how vigorously

³⁰ František Neupauer, “Školská politika v období Slovenskej republiky 1939 – 1945” [School politics in the times of the Slovak republic 1939–1945], in *Slovenská republika 1939 – 1945 očami mladých historikov IV* [Slovak Republic 1939–1945 as seen by young historians IV], ed. Michal Šmigel and Peter Mičko (Banská Bystrica: Katedra histórie FHV UMB – Ústav vedy a výskumu, 2005), 74–88.

³¹ Neupauer, “Školská politika”, 77.

³² Law no. 244/1941 Sl., § 32. See Neupauer, “Školská politika”, 84.

³³ František Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny* [Slovak history] (Martin: Matica slovenská, 1939).

this book was promoted among the public and the widespread popularity it achieved during WWII. The textbook departed, due to new political circumstances, from the interwar ideas promoting the Czech–Slovak unity, centralisation and Czechoslovakism, and it fully supported the contemporary inclinations of the political elites – Slovak nationalism, Catholicism and political subordination to Germany.

And these values were fairly reflected in the narratives interpreting WWI. Contrary to the interwar history textbooks which openly described German imperialism as the reason of the conflict, the origins of the war in the textbook of Hrušovský were addressed only very generally and vaguely, considering the contemporary international relations and strong dependence of Slovakia on Germany, thus avoiding any negative references to German politics whether in the past or in the present: *“The World War was the outcome of a general international tension which had been already for a couple of decades dividing big European states into two hostile blocks that were competing for political power in Europe and for economic superiority in the whole world. This tension, accompanied by feverish arms race on both sides, was growing every year, so only a tiny spark was needed to cause a huge fire. This spark was the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne on 28th June 1914 in Sarajevo.”*³⁴

The analysed textbook did not employ narratives on the progress of WWI or on its outcomes and consequences in the international context, but focused on using WWI exclusively for framing the national master narrative, emphasizing the Slovak political and military activities leading towards the independence from Austria-Hungary. Hrušovský highlighted the role of the Slovak diaspora in the United States in their state-building efforts aiming at the establishment of the future Czechoslovakia: *“But in the times when the World War rammed down all Slovak national life and made it impossible for the Slovak patriots to raise their voices for their nation at home, an*

³⁴ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 354–355.

opportunity came for the Slovaks living abroad, out of Hungary. These Slovaks living abroad became conscious of their Slovak nationhood and far away from home they did not give up loving their Slovak homeland; they understood that the time came so that they would fulfil their historical role. Being overseas, untouched by the power of the Hungarian government, they many times remembered how Budapest had been refusing all of the rightful demands of the Slovak nation, and how it ruled out any Slovak attempts for a fair agreement with the Hungarians, and therefore, they now openly declared war against Hungary, so that they could liberate their nation from the Hungarian rule.”³⁵

A great importance was ascribed in the textbook to Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Slovak politician, diplomat and a General of the French army during WWI, in the fight for Slovak independence during WWI, thus replacing Tomáš Masaryk who was the most celebrated hero in the interwar history textbooks, but almost completely disappeared from Hrušovský’s narrative: “[Slovaks] had only two MPs in the Hungarian Parliament, so they did not have any means to demand their national rights. Slovaks wanted to separate from Hungary in order to secure all of these rights. The cooperation of Slovaks and Czechs in the resistance movement abroad was aiming at securing an independent Slovak national development... In February 1916, the Czech–Slovak National Council was established, which organized the revolutionary activities, and was firmly directing the resistance movement. This National Council was established because of the insistency of a young Slovak scholar, Dr Milan Rastislav Štefánik, who had lived in France from before the war and had excellent contacts with the representatives of public life.”³⁶... “To support the diplomatic and political activities of the National Council, it was necessary to organize a Czech–Slovak army, which would stand behind the programme of the revolution abroad. Štefánik had a significant role in this revolutionary work since he had connections, possessed a distinguished social

³⁵ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 357–358.

³⁶ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 359.

culture, and his whole great personality made it possible for the other representatives of the National Council to approach the statesmen who were deciding about the new order of Europe.”³⁷

There was also a shift in the in-group and out-group representation paradigm. Now the in-group was exclusively made up of Slovaks who had retained the qualities of martyrs and heroes: *“The Slovak nation whose only aim was to live freely and in peace under the Tatra Mountains became involved in the whirl of war. Slovaks were leaving their families so that they would fight in the Austro-Hungarian army for a king who did not recognize them. Tens of thousands of healthy Slovak men went to the front to fight and die for the interests of others, for the power interests of their persecutors. And they fought and died bravely, since their oath of enlistment bound them and they did not want to break it; and because they were convinced that they were fighting mainly for their villages and for their Slovak families who were praying for their homecoming.”*³⁸... *“Slovaks fought in all battlefields and thousands of them were dying far away from their homeland. The Austro-Hungarian regiments which consisted mainly of Slovak soldiers were known for their heroic bravery, but Slovak soldiers, under the burden of wartime hardships, started to realize the pointlessness of the fight for the interests of others and they decided to revolt. And so Slovak soldiers of the 71st Austro-Hungarian infantry regiment (from Trenčín) rioted in Serbian Kragujevac and 44 of them paid for their courage with their lives.”*³⁹

On the other hand, changes also occurred in the construction of the out-group which was the outcome of contemporary political demands and promoted values. As it was mentioned before, Germans and German politics were treated with great respect in history narratives produced during WWII. Hungarians and Hungary remained depicted, as before in the interwar textbooks, as wrongful powers preventing Slovaks from exercising their

³⁷ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 360.

³⁸ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 354–355.

³⁹ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 366.

right for an independent national life. A new interpretative approach was applied in the representation of the Czechs who from the previously “fraternal nation” became also an out-group. This was the reflection of the formerly accumulated frustration of (mainly Catholic) Slovak political elites stemming from the interwar centralism and Czechoslovakism. Thus, the narratives regarding the Czech–Slovak relations were marked by emphasizing the images of mutual mistrust existing between Slovaks and Czechs in their joint efforts during WWI, and the representations of Czechs in Hrušovský’s textbook employed the messages showing them as acting with a sense of superiority towards Slovaks and preventing them from achieving and fully exercising their nation-building efforts. It was important to depict Czechs as the opponents of Catholicism, which was interpreted as a clear breach with Slovak worldview and values: *“American Slovaks were ready for any sacrifice in order to win their fight for our Slovak language. However, the collaboration between the Czechs and Slovaks was difficult, and Slovaks were doubtful, because they did not believe that Czechs would keep their promises, and Czechs only aided this mistrust by their performance. Czechs, not only in America but also in France and Russia, spoke about the great Czech state; they called the emerging legions the Czech army; they did not want to allow the creation of independent Slovak regiments; they regarded Slovaks to be less competent people and they applied everywhere only the Czech language at the expense of the Slovak one. This approach raised resistance among the Slovaks, their national pride was offended and it aroused the concerns that Slovaks would be in the future Czech–Slovak state, for which they had worked so hard, offering their properties and lives, again only second-grade citizens and that Czechs would be superior to them. These misunderstandings boomed also because Czechs would connect their fight for the national freedom with the fight against Rome, they would revive the Hussite traditions and*

*offend religious feelings of Slovaks who did not correspond with the Czech hatred of the Church.*⁴⁰

Similarly as it was in the interwar textbooks, the meaning of the war was explained as the efforts of the nation (but now concentrating exclusively on the role of the Slovaks) to achieve the independent state: *“Slovaks were fulfilling their national commitments in each sense; in huge numbers they entered the legions in which they excelled due to their valour, and they were helping in financing all the actions of the fights for the liberation, so that they would be able to consider the future state as the outcome of their sacrifice. In October 1917, the Slovak League in America decided to collect one million dollars for the liberation activities... this project united all the American Slovaks in their fight for the Slovak freedom.”*⁴¹... *“The war was lasting already for three years, and the resistance activities of Czechs and Slovaks abroad led towards the significant accomplishments both in diplomatic and military fields; however, the question of the mutual relations of Czech Lands and Slovakia in the future Czech–Slovak state was raising mutual mistrust and arguments. American Slovaks... demanded that the relation between the two nations was to be clear and that it was to be solved in order to achieve a successful resistance movement; and that the constitutional position of Slovakia in the future state was to be guaranteed in advance. All the Slovak patriots who were caring for the secure future of the nation and for the independent political, economic and cultural development of Slovakia agreed with this necessity. All these Slovak rights could be guaranteed by the chair of the National Council T. G. Masaryk who ... assured Slovaks that in Slovakia everything will be Slovak, because Slovakia will not be ruled from Prague, but from Slovakia itself.. Crowds of thousands of American Slovaks accepted this assurance as a guarantee that it would be Slovaks themselves who would be in charge of deciding about Slovakia. However, far-seeing Slovak patriots were not satisfied*

⁴⁰ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 364–365.

⁴¹ Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 365–366.

with such a pledge and they demanded a written confirmation that Slovakia will have a full autonomy with its own parliament in Czechoslovakia.”⁴²

Narratives on WWI presented to students in Slovak schools during the period of 1939-1945 were fulfilling the same social tasks as it was the case in the history textbooks presented in the interwar period. The international context of the war was not explored almost at all, and all the attention was paid to presenting it as a milestone in the historical development of Slovaks on their way towards reaching their own independent state. The apologetic narratives on the unfortunate fate of Slovaks in Austria-Hungary remained a frequently repeated topos. The Czech-Slovak relations during WWI were depicted as damaging for the Slovak national identity. This caused certain shifts in the representations of historical events: great men and their deeds remained important; however, only the Slovak émigré intellectuals were celebrated in the textbooks (apart from Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Hrušovský significantly propagated Slovak Catholic intelligentsia in the United States who were rather unrepresented in the textbooks published in the interwar period), while WWI Czech leaders were depicted as untrustworthy. The in-group (exclusively Slovaks and preferably those of Catholic denomination) was represented as stout-hearted, loyal, determined people fighting for their historical right for independent political development. The out-group was constructed of the forces preventing them from accomplishing their historical rights: Hungarians and Czechs.

History Textbooks Issued During the Rule of the Communist Party (1948-1989)

History education as well as historical research and historiography were in the period between 1948 and 1989 under the control of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. There

⁴² Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny*, 367–368.

was no public debate questioning the interpretation of the past, and no public discussions took place on the content or form of history education. The forty years of communist rule were marked by strong ideological pressure, party censorship, and self-censorship in each sphere of public life, including historical research and historiographical production. Closed borders prevented access to western historiographies for decades.

In 1948, the school system in Czechoslovakia became fully centralized, all the alternative forms of education were forbidden, and the state took over all the schools as their exclusive founder. The state monopoly over the institutional schooling was characterised by the unified and uniform education – this meant introducing singular curricula and ideological indoctrination in all spheres of public education. At the beginning of the 1950s, a number of history textbooks were translated from the originals used in the Soviet Union, as historical science was generally not yet prepared to react quickly and prepare the ideologically satisfactory sources for school history education.⁴³ Later on, history textbooks were produced, usually in collaboration by Czech and Slovak historians from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Academy of Sciences, didacticians and teachers. There was always one textbook for each particular grade of a particular school type, and one edition was published in the Czech language and one in the Slovak language.

The construction of narratives on WWI in history textbooks produced during the rule of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia was fully in line with the Marxist approach to the interpretation of historical development. The authors of the textbooks centred the WWI narratives around the revolution and class conflicts as the moving forces in history, and they employed a romanticising concept of a rightful fight of the oppressed nationalities against the aggressors: *“In this period,*

⁴³ Marek Havrila, *Vybrané kapitoly zo vzťahov slovenskej historiografie k inonárodným historiografiám v rokoch 1945 – 1968* [Selected chapters on the relation of Slovak historiography to foreign historiographies in the years 1945–1968] (Košice: Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika, 2009).

*the conflicts sharpened especially regarding the two political-military blocs, the class struggle of the workers against the ruling classes, and the nation liberation struggles of enslaved nations against their oppressors. It was the German imperialist and military circles that had the biggest interest in starting the war, since they believed it would bring them power all over the world. Except for the self-defending Serbia, all the other participating countries were leading an unjust imperialist war.*⁴⁴

One of the most elaborated topics in the textbooks was the critique of the contemporary reactionary imperialistic and colonial policies of the countries in general which were described as the main cause of the war: *“colonialism and imperialism of everybody (of small and big, of those who had enough as well as of those who did not have anything)”*⁴⁵, with an accent on the German guilt in the whole issue, specifically designating German aristocracy and bourgeoisie (the out-group) and German nationalism as the principal culprits of the war: *“The most aggressive imperialism was the German one. German imperialists planned to capture all the colonies, to annex Belgium and the Netherlands and border zones of France. They even wanted to attach Austria-Hungary to the German Empire. Even more daring plans it had in the East. Germany wanted to divide Russia, seize the Baltic region, Ukraine and the Caucasus, and from there, it wanted to expand through Iran to India. In collaboration with the Junkers (aristocratic class that was mainly winning recognition in army and high offices), the German capitalists and their monopolies were the main initiators of these aggressive plans. They would spread them through*

⁴⁴ Vratislav Čapek, Jozef Butvin, Miloň Dohnal, Ján Hučko and Anna Kováčová, *Dějepis II. Pro druhý ročník gymnázia* [History II. For the second grade of grammar schools] (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1986), 317.

⁴⁵ Jaroslav Joza, Jozef Butvin, František Červinka, *Dejepis pre 8. ročník základnej deväťročnej školy* [History for the 8th grade of elementary schools] (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1963), 217.

press, army, schools and they tried to educate the whole nation in line with this spirit."⁴⁶

Contrary to history textbooks used in the schools during the interwar period and during WWII, textbooks published after 1948 paid a lot of attention to the history of the everyday life of the masses and unprivileged segments of society during the war, thus fulfilling the Marxist demand for interpreting the past as the "history of the masses". These narratives would cover mainly the economic aspects of the war and their impact on the everyday lives of common people, as well as war hardships, poverty, and material shortage which enhanced the revolutionary potential of societies. Their main purpose, however, was to develop and maintain the image of the dialectical nature of relation between the in-group and the out-group: *"World War I was from its very beginnings imperialistic and wrongful. It brought immense profit for Capitalists, and to working people it gave nothing but poverty and misery."*⁴⁷ Thus, it is possible to track a shift in the in-group/out-group representation in the analysed history textbooks: in the narratives produced after 1948, they were constructed not exclusively on national (or partially on religious) basis as it was in the textbooks published earlier, but predominantly on the class division of the society.

The pro-Soviet orientation of the Czechoslovak politics penetrated also into the official interpretations of the past which often adopted such optics of the history as those that were spread in the mainstream Soviet historiography. This was manifested in the official Czechoslovak historiography, and thus also in school history textbooks, and the interpretations of WWI were no exemption to this trend: *"The Bolshevik Party in Russia led by V. I. Lenin was the only workers' party in European*

⁴⁶ Jaroslav Kopáč, Miroslav Kropilák, Alois Sosík, Emil Stračar and Alice Teichová, *Dějiny doby nové a nejnovější. Dějepis pro 8. postupný ročník všeobecně vzdělávacích škol* [Modern and contemporary history. History for 8th grade of general schools] (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1955), 46–47.

⁴⁷ Miloň Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník základní devítileté školy* [History for 9th grade of elementary schools] (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1975), 12.

*countries which remained during the World War I loyal to the idea of the socialist revolution. It did not betray the revolutionary programme, and it did not subordinate the revolutionary interests of workers to the imperialist war adventure as did the right-wing leaders of social-democratic parties in Austria and Germany.”*⁴⁸

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 was portrayed in all the history textbooks published between 1948 and 1989 as an important event and a milestone in the development of WWI, and it often overshadowed the history of the war itself which was a novelty in comparison to interpretations of WWI in history textbooks published in previous regimes, and was the outcome of changed political conditions and international relations of Czechoslovakia after 1948.

The textbooks published between 1948 and 1989 also interpreted WWI in connection with the establishment of Czechoslovakia as it was the case during the previous regimes. Some narratives remained similar to the narratives constructed before 1948; namely, the representations of WWI related to the image of Czechs and Slovaks as oppressed nationalities in the monarchy: *“The First World War affected the population of the Czech Lands and Slovakia very heavily. When the general mobilization was declared on 28 July 1914, hundreds of thousands of men were forced to take part in the war, where they were supposed to fight for the Austro-Hungarian emperor. Immediately after the beginning of the war, the government introduced censorship in the Czech Lands, it restricted personal freedom and each manifestation of national sentiments of non-German nations was punished as high treason.”*⁴⁹ Similarly: *“Brutal persecution was commenced against the Czech and Slovak nation, connected with the national oppression.”*⁵⁰

However, significant changes occurred in constructing the narratives on Czech and Slovak political elites and emigration representatives active in the resistance movement abroad

⁴⁸ Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník*, 17.

⁴⁹ Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník*, 25–26.

⁵⁰ Čapek et al., *Dějepis II*, 317.

during WWI who were portrayed as the heroes, “*the fathers of the nation*” in the interwar and WWII textbooks, and in their relation to the Allied Powers, previously described as “*all the civilized world*”: “*Only a small portion of [Czechoslovak – S.O.] bourgeoisie politicians questioned the future victory of the Central Powers... These started to consider, after the break-out of WWI, how to use the possible defeat of the Central Powers and the victory of the Allied Powers to disintegrate Austria-Hungary and to create an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks... However, the efforts aiming at receiving the support of the Western powers for the nation-liberating fight of Czechs and Slovaks were not successful. The representatives of the imperialist Allied Powers wanted to solve only their own interests through the war and they had no understanding for the national liberation struggle of Czechs and Slovaks. Therefore, they did not consider the break-up of Austria-Hungary even in case of their victory. It was possible to attract the Allied Powers statesmen to this idea only by involving Czechs and Slovaks in the frontline fights against the Central Powers, as since 1916, a growing shortage of soldiers was felt. With this in mind, Czechoslovak emigration started to build army units called the legions. These were supposed to actively participate in the fights against Austria-Hungary and act as the army of the future Czechoslovak state. By their active participation in the fights, they were supposed to create a prerequisite for the future establishment of the state...*”⁵¹

Similarly, the acts of the Czechoslovak legions that were portrayed as the flagship of the Czechoslovak resistance movement prior to 1948 turned to be interpreted as following: “*And so the legions were from the very beginnings of their existence incorporated into the fights for the interests of the imperialist powers. The misuse of the legions was fully visible after the Great October Socialist Revolution when the representatives of the foreign resistance movement agreed that the legions would*

⁵¹ Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník*, 27.

*be used in the intervention war against the Soviet Russia and its Red Army.*⁵²

In line with the formerly established tradition of representing WWI within the framework of national history, the textbooks published after 1948 interpreted the war as an important milestone in achieving the independence of Czechs and Slovaks. However, the national aspect was combined with the concept of the class struggle which made a significant shift in the interpretation of the establishment of Czechoslovakia as a product of WWI: *“The importance of the establishment of Czechoslovakia: Gaining their independence, Czech and Slovak nations made a significant leap forward in their historical development. After several hundreds of years of enslavement, an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks was established. Both brotherly nations had their natural base of development in it. The fall of monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic meant the fulfilment of one of the significant demands of bourgeoisie democratic revolution. However, capitalists remained in power. The representatives of Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie claimed the private property to be untouchable... The working people of our lands were able by their vital movement to subvert the Habsburg monarchy; however, they did not succeed – without the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party – to take over the power in the new state.”*⁵³

Unlike school history textbooks used during the interwar period and WWI, textbooks published in Czechoslovakia in 1948–1989 significantly centred their narratives on economic history. The second difference to the formerly published textbooks was emphasizing the dialectical relation between the classes (the in-group: working people vs. the out-group: the bourgeoisie) as moving forces in the events of World War I. Another in-group/out-group construction was based on juxtaposing imperialist countries described as wrongful capitalist expansionists and virtuous Soviet Russia, depicted as the only moral bastion not

⁵² Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník*, 27.

⁵³ Dohnal, *Dějepis pro 9. ročník*, 36.

only as a general supporter of values and ideals of working people, but also as a patron of Slavic nations in Austria-Hungary. There was a removal of great men from the narratives of WWI, as promoting “bourgeoisie” politicians was not in accord with the Marxist demand of representing the history “from below”. One more changed paradigm in the interpretation of WWI was related to the activities of Czechoslovak legions that were portrayed as a misguided venture.

History Textbooks Published after 1989 and 1993

The years 1989 and 1993 brought significant changes to Slovak society. The transition from one political regime to another which started in 1989 and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia followed by the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993 encouraged the reassessment of the past and opened space for new interpretations of history. The fall of the Eastern block at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s brought new challenges for Slovak historiography. For historians, it meant distancing themselves from the ideological constraints of the previous era as well as redefining the new concept, the “essence” of Slovak history, overcoming the limitations exerted on the historical sciences in the past, and exploring and interpreting the national past in new social and political conditions.

Changed political context brought also numerous challenges for history teachers. Although primary schools had been gradually provided with newly written teaching materials and history textbooks since the beginning of the 1990s, it took a long time for historians to produce new textbooks for secondary schools, and teachers were required, in some cases until as late as the beginning of the 2000s when a whole set of new textbooks was finally published, to use the textbooks produced during communism in Czechoslovakia. These old textbooks published in the 1980s in line with the communist interpretation of the past

remained in use in secondary schools in Slovakia throughout the entire 1990s as there were no new textbooks for this type of schools produced during that time. The parts of the texts that were seen as most problematic in terms of Marxist propaganda were simply crossed out and students were expected to learn from the remaining texts.

The mainstream trend of the development in historiography in the changed social and political context after 1989/1993 has been focusing on the implementation of new methods and theories in historical research, and thus trying to overcome long-term isolation from worldwide developments in historical writing which had caused serious deficiencies in the application of current theories and methodological approaches to historical writing, as well as in history teaching. When coming to the history textbook narratives regarding WWI, the authors representing this stream would opt for creating a rather neutral narrative, focusing on political, diplomatic and military history, as well as social history and history of everyday life.⁵⁴ There was undoubtedly a certain impact of narratives that were produced in previous regimes: emphasis on political,

⁵⁴ For example: Dušan Kováč and Ľubomír Lipták, *Kapitoly z dejín pre stredné školy* [Chapters from history for secondary schools] (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1990); Dušan Kováč, Herta Tkadlečková and Viliam Kratochvíl, *Dejepis 4. Svet v novom tisícročí* [History 4. World in the new millennium] (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 1995); Ivan Kamenec, Dušan Kováč and Viliam Kratochvíl, *Dejepis 4. Slovensko v novom storočí* [History 4. Slovakia in the new century] (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 1997); Dušan Kováč, *Dejepis 4. Svet v 20. storočí* [History 4. World in the 20th century] (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 2001); Eva Chylová, Pavol Martuliak, Valéria Chromeková, Vladimír Varinský and Štefan Folkman, *Dejepis pre stredné odborné školy a stredné odborné učilištia III. Slovensko a svet v rokoch 1849 – 1939* [History for vocational secondary schools and for vocational training institutions III. Slovakia and world in the years of 1849–1939] (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 2003); Marcela Bednárová, Branislav Krasnovský, Barbora Ulrichová, *Dejepis pre 8. ročník základnej školy a 3. ročník gymnázia s osemročným štúdiom* [History for 8th grades of elementary schools and 3rd grade of 8-year grammar schools] (Martin: Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej, 2011); Bohuslav Hlava and Viliam Kratochvíl, *Dejepis 4. Pohrajme sa s históriou. Pracovný zošit* [History 4. Let's play with history. Working sheets] (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 2002); Alena Bartlová and Róbert Letz, *Dejepis pre 3. ročník gymnázií –*

military and economic history, focus on the achievements of the Czechoslovak legions, and presentation of narratives on great men. A novel approach was a gradual introduction of more segments from the history of everyday life. Yet, comparing these textbooks to the textbooks produced in previous regimes, it is possible to see the trend signaling that WWI narratives in school history textbooks have been becoming less instrumental in constructing collective identities of students. The stories on WWI presented to students in history textbooks published after 1989 have been less utilized in creating the image of us (the ethical bearers of civilization) and the Others (the immoral traitors) as it was the rule in the textbooks published in different political regimes before 1989, although it is still possible to trace negative connotations in regard to the image of the monarchy and Hungarians in these textbooks.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the establishment of Czechoslovakia lost its previous role of the funding myth of Slovakia in textbooks published after the break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1993. However, there has been a general trend of a gradual marginalization and disappearance of WWI from the public memory, historiography and school history education as it has been largely overshadowed by topics such as the Second World War, the Shoah, the Cold War or the overthrow of Communism.

* * *

For a long time, the history of World War I has been interpreted in school history education primarily from the national perspective. This went hand in hand with representing it within the framework of sentimentality and war propaganda, patriotic certainties such as battle, glory, hallowed dead,

národné dejiny [History for the third grades of grammar schools – national history] (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo 2005).

⁵⁵ See Barnabás Vajda, “Az első világháború a szlovákiai történelem-tankönyvekben” [World War I in Slovak history textbooks], ed. Tamás Peregi, *Az első világháború a szomszédos országok és hazánk történelem-tankönyveiben* [World War I in history textbooks in neighboring countries and at home] (Budapest : Oktatóskutató és -Fejlesztő Intézet, 2015), 96–113.

great men and conventional romanticism. However, in case of history textbooks used in Slovakia since 1918 until the present, WWI has not been depicted solely by the language of grief, mourning and bereavement, but it has always included also a significant positive aspect: it has been depicted as a milestone in the historical development of the nation (be it Czechoslovak or Slovak), as a transition which helped achieve a sort of independence from the others (or at least as a step towards it). As such, it has been interpreted in terms of a system of international relations in which the national and imperial levels of conflict and cooperation were important and the in-group vs. out-group relations were the most significant parts of the WWI narratives.

However, this approach has been significantly challenged, since the process of European integration has rendered nationalist perspectives less relevant, and the recent trends toward global history have influenced the perception and interpretation of World War I as well. The emotional intensity of earlier interpretations has declined due to the greater temporal distance, and the focus of contemporary history has been directed to more recent issues. It is necessary to develop such an approach to interpreting WWI which would take into consideration multiple levels of historical experience, levels which are both below and above the national level. The globalization or at least the “Europeanization” of World War I history still remains a challenging project for both historians and educators.

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Gender, Nation and Memory

- the Case of the Memory of the First World War among Polish Women on the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland, 1918–1939

[...] The National Organization was gaining increasing influence and it started to be joined by all Poles regardless of their political affiliation and previously held views on the Polish question. In 1917, the Organization reached an agreement with all Polish associations and unions in the town and region, with the railmen's union from the Polish Military Organization, and became the regional exponent of Polish goals. [...] Its female section was engaged in humanitarian activity, bringing relief to war casualties, providing bedclothes for soldiers in hospitals and running field kitchens¹.

These words of Andrzej Wondaś, one of the major local ideologists of the National Democracy (right-wing constant opposition to the ruling government since 1926) in Jarosław and influential historian who wrote extensively on regional

¹ Andrzej Wondaś, *Jarosław w czasie wielkiej wojny światowej. 1914–1918*, „Gazeta Jarosławska” Y. 5: 1936 no. 18 of 3 V, p. 2. Andrzej Wondaś (born Oct. 10, 1876 Biezdziezia, died Aug. 28, 1939 Jarosław), was Jarosław High School teacher (since Feb. 2, 1910) and director, historian, journalist and local activist. He was co-founder of Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Dawnego Jarosławia (Association of Lovers of Ancient Jarosław) in 1935. published among others: *Stosunek Ottokara II, króla Czech, do książąt Śląska i Polski*, in: *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji c.k. gimnazjum w Stanisławowie za rok szkolny 1903/1904*, Stanisławów, p. 2–32; *Szkice do dziejów Jarosławia*, vol. 1, 2, Jarosław 1934–1936; *Szkice do dziejów Jarosławia. Szkic uzupełniający*, Jarosław 1938.

history, illustrate a certain way of looking at modern history in the 1930s. Only several years after the Great War had ended, there were attempts to appropriate the memory of that event. That would happen on various levels, from the state to local ones. It was especially Piłsudski's adherents ruling Poland from 1926 that made various, often very successful attempts to instrumentalize the memory of recent history. In the process, certain groups were pushed into the background, others being highlighted during various state celebrations. That policy of the ruling party prompted natural objections from other groups, especially the influential opposition National Democracy which enjoyed strong support among Poles on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland.

Therefore, the analysis of Wondaś's words may be a very good prelude to a discussion on the place of men and women during the First World War in the collective memory of the inhabitants of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. For it often happened that local activists, attempting to influence the identification/self-perception of the residents of a given region, emphasized the attitudes and actions of selected groups or organizations, deliberately ignoring or marginalizing others. What is more, the texts published in local newspapers also show another phenomenon – the order of the sexes desirable from the authors' point of view. The articles published in the provincial press – which I have adopted as a basis for my discussion – tell us more about the standards desirable, stipulated or preferable from the authors' perspective than about actual events that had really taken place. Still, looking – with the help of the local press – at the order of the sexes and the memory of the Poles living between the wars on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, allows us to consider several issues: 1) the reception of Warsaw models, oftentimes adapted artificially and forcibly to local circumstances; 2) showing the specific nature of the struggle for memory, e.g. through creating local heroes and heroines; 3) creating the opposition of “friends” and “foes” – fellow people and strangers – which was by no means limited to just one model,

i.e. the divided Poles and Ukrainians². For the purposes of this article, I have deliberately ignored discussing the memory of local Ukrainian men and women and representatives of less numerous ethnic groups, as they require thorough studies which have not yet been undertaken for the residents of towns smaller than Lviv³.

Some general remarks

Interwar Poland's memory of the First World War in various groups of Polish citizens was at least as diversified as the many national groups within Poland's borders. Southeastern Poland was not an exception. On the other hand, the territory of today's Southeastern Poland and western Ukraine is unique as the place of clashes between the Poles and Ukrainians. The war of 1918-1919 and the failure of the idea of a Ukrainian Independent State caused a lot of troubles and tensions – also in the field of memory.

I am aware of the fact that Polish women at that time did not speak in one voice. The state, the Roman Catholic Church, the ruling and opposition parties as well as the fact of being a ruling minority in the Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish-Armenian corner

² For more, see: B. Melman, *Gender, History and Memory: The Invention of Women's Past in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, „History and Memory. Studies in Representation of the Past” 1993 vol. 5 no. 1 p. 5–41.

³ See e.g.: M. Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women In Ukrainian Community Life, 1884–1939*, Edmonton 1988; O. Маланчук-Рибак, *Жіночі організації Перемищини*, in: *Перемишль і Перемиська земля пртягом віків*, ч. 3 під ред. С. Заброварного, Перемишль–Львів 2003, с. 410–418; J. Hoff, *Mieszkańcy małych miast Galicji Wschodniej w okresie autonomicznym*, Rzeszów 2005; eadem, *Żydzi, Polacy i Rusini w małych miastach Galicji Wschodniej w drugiej połowie XIX w. Sąsiedzi, obcy, wrogowie?*, in: *Spółeczeństwo w dobie przemian. Wiek XIX i XX. Księga jubileuszowa Profesor Anny Żarnowskiej*, ed. M. Nietyksza, DiG, Warszawa 2003. p. 337–344. М. Дядюк, *Український жіночий рух у міжвоєнній Галичині: між гендерною ідентичністю та національною заангажованістю*, Львів 2011. See also: Ch. Mick, *The Dead and the Living: War Veterans and Memorial Culture in Interwar Polish Galicia*, in: *Sacrifice and Rebirth. The Legacy of the Last Habsburg War*, ed. M. Cornwall and J. P. Newman, Beghahn, New York – Oxford 2016, p. 233–257.

– all those were important factors in shaping Polish women's memory of the FWW. What is more, individuals were very often puzzled by the state's official memory policy. Some heroes were installed, others were condemned to vanishing from the public scene. It is especially visible in the comparison of Polish and Ukrainian memory (memorial sites, what censorship allowed to be published, the areas of silence, etc.).

After the 1926 coup d'état, the official state policy focused on the centralization of public festivities. A new political movement was created – *Sanacja* (Sanation). It took its name from Józef Piłsudski's watchword – the moral „sanation” (healing) of the Polish body politics. One of the most important areas of this public healing was creating the new state memory of the foundation of New Poland. The heroization of Piłsudski as the builder of the state as well as the legionary movement (his supporters and comrades-in-arms) was a crucial element of this policy. Many Polish FWW soldiers from the Prussian, Russian and Austro-Hungarian armies were excluded from the common glory. For their wives and daughters, it was a huge problem in interwar relations – being a legionary (as well as the family of the comrades of Piłsudski) gave a lot of privileges in the 1918-1939 Poland (job, money, position, prestige, etc.).

With the *Sanacja* movement also new women's organizations were created. Their role was mainly to support men's activity. It does not mean that *Sanacja* women did not have any say on the political scene. The most numerous and influential women's movement was ZPOK (Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet – Women's Citizens' Work Union). Its branches consisted of wives, sisters, mothers of the leaders of local authorities. Membership helped the male members of the family to be noticed and get promotion – to larger centers as well as to better-paid and more prestigious posts. ZPOK was also a competitor for an older post-legionary, mostly pro-leftist women's organization, Liga Kobiet (Women's League) which was also quite popular, especially during and just after the FWW. On the other hand, still the most popular women's organization among Polish women was

Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet (Women's National Organization), strictly connected with the National Democrats and the Catholic Church⁴. On the one hand, the Warsaw perspective shows the best example of fights in the field of memory between the activists of various parties (not only Sanacja and the National Democracy members). On the other hand, it must be considered that local branches of their organizations were not only mute representations of the ideas of the capital, but very often spoke their own voices. These voices were heard especially in the peripheries of the country where the Poles were not so numerous (Ukrainians outnumbered them), and this is why they wanted to be present in the public sphere even more. The discourse in Southeast Poland (the former Eastern Galicia) was even more specific due to the omnipresent memory of Polish-Ukrainian fights for the region (1918–1919), and the fact that the Ukrainians were not satisfied with the decision of the Conference of the Ambassadors giving the territory of Galicia to Poland. Mistrust and suspicion were not so rare in Polish-Ukrainian relations of that epoch though, even if the Poles were not unanimous in so many political cases. The same divisions are seen in the problem of interpreting women's role during the years of the Great War. Polish women activists during the interwar period were not united in this case. It is seen in Lviv (the capital of the region and the biggest center) as well as in small towns and cities. Because Lviv was the key place of Polish-Ukrainian fights of 1918–1919 and the symbol for both nations of their presence in the region⁵, I deliberately

⁴ For more, see: J. Dufrat, *W służbie obozu marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego. Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet (1928–1939)*, Kraków–Wrocław 2013; *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki...*, vol. 2 *Samoorganizowanie się kobiet na ziemiach polskich po 1918 roku (na tle porównawczym)*, eds. A. Janiak-Jasińska, K. Sierakowska, A. Szwarz, Warszawa 2009; U. Jakubowska, *Kobiety w świecie polityki Narodowej Demokracji*, in: *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918–1939*, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarz, Warszawa 1996, p. 145–160, A. Chojnowski, *Kobiety i polityka w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Słowo wstępne*, in: *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918–1939*, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarz, Warszawa 1996, p. 9–16.

⁵ For more – see: A.V. Wendland, *Semper Fidelis. Lwów jako mit narodowy Polaków i Ukraińców, 1867–1939*, in: Lwów: Miasto-społeczeństwo-kultura,

ignored the case of that city and focused on minor places. I do believe that their inhabitants are better examples for my study as typical representatives of the region⁶.

A small town perspective – the case of Jarosław

They took part, armed, in the defense of Lviv in November 1918 and later battles of the resurrected Poland. [...] A woman brings up future generations – it is on her that the shaping of the child's thoughts and soul depends – she also is the main dispenser of money for the needs of the household and the family⁷.

The anonymous author of the article *The Role of a Polish Woman* in the national "Głos Jarosławski" newspaper tried to bring his readers round to his opinion in a very conventional manner. In the period after the elections to the Parliament and to the local town council, when Jarosław newspapers called for fulfilling "women's roles and tasks", i.e. making use of their suffrage and voting for individual political parties, the journalist's suggestions were merely a repetition of what others had already written about⁸. What was new, though, was the reference to the glorious tradition of Polish women fighting for

eds. K. Karolczak and H.W. Żaliński, vol. 4, Kraków 2002, p. 263-273; eadem, *Post-Austrian Lemberg: War Commemoration, Inter-Ethnic Relations, and Urban Identity 1918-1939*, "Austrian History Yearbook", vol. 34, p. 82-103; eadem, *Nachbarn als Verräter: Nationalisierungsprozesse, Erinnerungspolitik und städtische Öffentlichkeiten in Lemberg (1914-1939)*, in: *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in Ostmitteleuropa 1900-1939. Beiträge zur Entstehung moderner Urbanität zwischen Berlin, Charkiv, Tallinn und Triest*, eds A.V. Wendland and A.R. Hofmann, Stuttgart 2002, p. 149-169.

⁶ I am aware that probably the farmers' perspective would be even better to examine – they were the most numerous inhabitants of the region. Due to the chosen sources (newspapers), I decided to focus on people in small towns and cities as they were the first to be addressed by certain actions (theoretical and practical ones) of political parties and leaders.

⁷ „Głos Jarosławski” Y. 2: 1928 no. 21 of 26 V, p. 3.

⁸ For more, see: A. Chojnowski, *Kobieta i polityka w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Słowo wstępne*, in: *Kobieta i świat polityki. W niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. A. Żarnowska and A. Szwarc, Warszawa 1996, p. 2-16.

Lviv being Polish. It was clear that the Jarosław women hardly had anything to do with that fight; the point was to show an example to inspire local women to act. The past was then supposed to inspire, motivate and indicate the right way.

Interestingly, every time a reference to the memory of the Great War was made, it meant mainly the year 1918 and Poland regaining independence. On the 10th anniversary of that event, on 22 September, 1928, a special body was appointed – a local Committee for Presenting the Events of 1914-1918. The publishing of a memorial book showing the war history of Jarosław was planned. An appeal was published in the press for people to support the initiative by sending their own memories and documents. Among the 18 initiators of the action there were 4 women; however, the group invited for further collaboration was purely male. The initiative, focused around the Polish Gymnastic Society “Falcon” (Sokół) and the local division of the National Democracy, created a storm in local circles. The activists of the local Sanacja movement gathered around the “Wiadomości Jarosławskie” weekly and attacked their political opponents, their main accusation being that the initiative had been directed only at a narrow, selected group and could by no means be treated as representative of the local society. What is more, representatives of both groups went much further in their argument.

On 31 October and 1 November, 1928, on the initiative of the local division of the “Falcon”, a celebration was to take place, commemorating the 10 years of Jarosław being part of Poland. “But something incredible happened. A small group of well-known troublemakers threatened to provoke riots unless the Falcon gave up the celebrations, which were deemed anti-national”⁹. The Society building was occupied by the police and as a result many people withdrew, among them the head of the Private Teacher Training College, local historian and main participant of the underground movement in Jarosław between

⁹ „Głos Jarosławski” Y. 2: 1928 no. 43 of 3 XI, p. 2.

1917 and 1918, Andrzej Wondaś. One day before the planned celebrations he justified his decision as follows:

The episode of liberating Jarosław from the Austrian rule is of such little significance compared to regaining independence by the whole of Poland that a special festivity to commemorate that local event at the time when the Government recommends ceremonial celebrations of the 10th anniversary of regaining independence may be regarded as an anti-government demonstration, diminishing the importance and gravity of the all-state celebrations¹⁰.

Besides the literal fights for the memory of November 1918 (which were not limited only to squabbles in local weeklies), also less controversial elements of local splinters of the Great War were recalled. While the memories and articles tended to emphasize the bravery of men, sometimes the attitudes of local women were also highlighted. Zbigniew Nowosad in his sketch titled *The Participation of the Jarosław Scouts in the Fight for the Independence of Poland* emphasized the role of Halina Łączkowska in organizing a local female scout troop. Under her supervision, the scouts were prepared for courier and charitable service and rendered considerable services equipping the male squad during the military mobilization at the beginning of August 1914¹¹. Another author remembered the role of women focused around the Falcon, who at the same time equipped a Bartosz Squad and the Falcon youth, sewing underclothes, knapsacks and rucksacks for them¹². Also in the following years the women of Jarosław worked for the local irredentists. In 1917 the Female Section of the Polish National Organization started supplying underclothes and food for the legionaries interned in

¹⁰ Ibidem, no. 45 of 17 XI, p. 2.

¹¹ Ibidem, no. 46 of 24 XI, p. 2–3, no. 47 of 1 XII, p. 2–3. On female scout groups in Jarosław and the region at the same time see more in: I. Kozimala, *Lwowska Chorągiew Harcerek ZHP 1911–1939*, Przemyśl 2003; eadem, *Harcerstwo żeńskie w oczach społeczeństwa Galicji Wschodniej*, in: *Historia zwyczajnych kobiet i zwyczajnych mężczyzn. Dzieje społeczne w perspektywie gender*, eds. D. Kałwa and T. Pudłocki, Przemyśl 2007, p. 63–72.

¹² „Głos Jarosławski” Y. 2: 1928, no. 37 of 22 IX, p. 2–3.

the nearby Żurawica¹³. Some of them would even hide escapees from the camp, disguising them as household servants and enabling their escape¹⁴. Between October and November 1918, local Polish women organized a kitchen for the National Guard and cared for the soldiers of the former Austrian Army who returned from the Italian front¹⁵.

The case of Jarosław shows that in small Galician towns there were just a few female activists. What is more, their actions during World War I were rather inconsiderable and limited only to their local region. Even during the actions of November 1918, (the event always overshadowing the interwar memory of WWI) women were seen as extraordinary but not necessary “addition” and not the main players. That is why the memory of local women was constructed not only on what was local, but more on those aspects which were common for all Polish inhabitants of the state (such as the November fight for Lviv or other aspects of shaping the borders of interwar Poland).

Shaping memory in the public space – the case of Przemyśl

[...] God appointed Mrs Tarnawska to achieve great goals, and most of all, to educate Polish women to fulfill their social duties in the free Independent Poland, to be for them a model of womanly virtues and ardent, selfless love for the already powerful homeland. It was her task to instill in the young generation reverence and love for those who had died for freedom defending Polish borders during the uprisings in 1831, 1863 and between 1914 and 1921. It is also she who, with a small group of the members of the Polish Women's Alliance, looks after the graves of the Przemyśl heroes, decorating them on All Souls' Day and on national anniversaries¹⁶.

¹³ For more, see: M. Staroń, *Likwidacja Polskiego Korpusu Posiłkowego w 1918 roku. Losy legionistów po traktacie brzeskim*, Warszawa 2013.

¹⁴ A. Wondaś, *Szkice do dziejów Jarosławia*, vol. 2, Jarosław 1936, p. 96.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 129.

¹⁶ M. Kaflńska, *Cicha bohaterka*, „Wzloty”, Y. 5: 1938 no. 40 of 11 XI, p. 6.

Here is what Maria Kaflńska wrote in November 1938 about Wincenta Tarnawska, the Przemyśl suffragette and guardian of the memory of the Polish fight for independence. Although Tarnawska was already past her prime, in the eyes of Kaflńska – a former alumna and activist of the Polish Women's Alliance – the eighty-year-old Tarnawska remained an educator of successive generations of Polish women, who advises, instructs and encourages them to follow her example. Years go by, generations of young girls change, and Tarnawska stands guard at her post¹⁷.

Jarosław is an example of a small place which did not play a major role during the FWW but was strongly divided as regards the memory of its events. The role of Przemyśl was very different, however. It was a medium-sized town in the interwar period, but as one of the most important European fortresses during the Great War, it was a major point of reference on the map of memory at that time. For the Hungarians, Przemyśl was “the Gate to Hungary” and a symbol of the fight for the idea of Great Hungary shattered by the Treaty of Trianon¹⁸. The town was visited by the English and the French attracted by various stories about the heroic defense of the Fortress against the Russian troops in the years 1914-1915¹⁹. Bernard Newman summarized his talks with the town's inhabitants as follows:

They had rare tales to tell – of hunger, starvation and loot: of the comparative food value of dogs and rats: of the ethics even of cannibalism. No town of the East saw more of the horrors of war than this Przemyśl²⁰.

¹⁷For more on her, see: T. Pudłocki, *Będziemy działać... Wincenta Tarnawska w służbie niepodległości Polski*, Kraków 2013.

¹⁸See e.g.: B. Geőcze, *A przemysli tragédia*, Budapest 1922; D. Nónay, *A volt szegedi m. kir. 5. honv. gy. ezd. a világháborúban*, Budapest 1931; J. Lévai, *Éhség, árulás, Przemyśl*, Budapest 1933.

¹⁹See: A. Bruce Boswell, *The Poland and the Poles*, London 1919, p. 24; H. Baërlin, *No longer Poles apart*, London 1936, p. 224; B. Newman, *Peddalling Poland*, London 1935, p. 151-153; R. Martial, *La Pologne jadis et de nos jours*, Paris 1928.

²⁰B. Newman, *op. cit.*, 153.

Surprisingly, while for foreigners the point of reference in local history was the Russian siege, for the local Poles cultivating the memory of irredentism was much more important during the interwar period. That involved first the actions against the Austrians which gained momentum in 1917 after the so-called “oath crisis” and imprisonment of a large number of Polish legionaries. The second point, strongly emphasized in the memory of the FWW, were Polish-Ukrainian fights for the town in November 1918.

Owing to the many actions undertaken not only by men but also women, shaping a uniform memory of the Great War in Przemyśl was not possible. Polish women were members of the Association of Defenders of Przemyśl (Wincenta Tarnawska, Maria Dekañska, Maria Bielawska, Helena Stieberowa) which was supposed to be open to all Poles fighting against the Ukrainians in 1918; they also ran a lot of actions shaping modern memory. The organizations which led the way here were: the Polish Women’s Alliance, the Women’s League, the Women’s Citizens’ Work Union, and the Women’s National Organization. The problem is that the women’s movement in this region was not homogeneous, thus the actions taken up by individual women’s organizations often competed with each other²¹. The struggle for memory did not occur only along party divisions, however. A good example is the reaction to the popular historical writing of Helena Stieberowa, referring to different aspects of

²¹ For more, see: T. Pudłocki, *„Za silna już do starego życia, a za słaba jeszcze do nowego” – przemyskie inteligentki wobec wyzwań nowoczesności w okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, w: *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki... Samoorganizowanie się kobiet na ziemiach polskich po 1918 roku (na tle porównawczym)*, vol. 2, eds. A. Janiak-Jasińska, K. Sierakowska and A. Szwarc, Warszawa 2009, p. 99–116; idem, *„Naród potrzebuje Twojego czynu!”*. *Kobiety z prawicy polskiej i ukraińskiej południowo-wschodnich ziem II Rzeczypospolitej w dyskursie publicznym*, w: *Aktywność publiczna kobiet na ziemiach polskich. Wybrane zagadnienia*, eds. T. Pudłocki, K. Sierakowska, Warszawa 2013, p. 203–225; idem, *Maria Bielawska – w poszukiwaniu tożsamości kobiety aktywnej na prowincji okresu dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, in: *Historia zwyczajnych kobiet i zwyczajnych mężczyzn. Dzieje społeczne w perspektywie gender*, eds. D. Kałwa and T. Pudłocki, Przemyśl 2007, p. 43–62.

the FWW. Stieberowa emphasized her own role in fighting for the independence of Poland so much that she met with strong opposition not only from the female National Democrats but also the younger Sanacja activists. Strong individualization and self-promotion took on such proportions in Stieberowa that even the ruling party which supported her contributed to her dismissal from the Sanacja women's organizations after being afraid of becoming an object of ridicule²².

Therefore, they acted in favor of social continuity through concrete practices and appealing to emotions, connections and meanings, which at least a certain group of Przemyśl residents found in their lives, thus interfering in communal memory in that town on the river San. Among them were memory meetings with time-witnesses, publishing articles referring to the FWW and the struggle against Austria-Hungary even before 1914, organizing special public events devoted to 1918 anniversaries, as well as historical and arts exhibitions expressing that all 19th century Polish uprisings concluded in the actions of Joseph Piłsudski and his legions. That measure was deliberate and in keeping with the definition of collective memory prevalent at the beginning of the 20th century, which saw deliberate attempts to bring back concrete aspects of the past (Poles owe the independence, which was achieved through opposing Austria-Hungary, Russia and Prussia, the suffering of the nation, self-determination as well as bravery in fighting, to themselves)²³. At the same time there were also attempts to create a certain set of beliefs and ideas referring to concrete events, people and processes from the past, along with evaluative elements which must have been shared by at least

²² For more, see: T. Pudłocki, „*Nie tylko one to robiły...*”. *Helena Stieberowa a dyskurs w międzywojennym Przemyślu o udziale Polek w walkach o niepodległość*, w: *Pamięć historyczna kobiet*, eds. M. Przeniosło and K. Sierakowska, Kielce 2009, p. 53–66; idem, „*W służbie Marszałka*”. *Działalność i pisanstwo Heleny z Hordyńskich Stieberowej*, in: *Jednostka Strzelecka 2009 im. gen. bryg. Andrzeja Galicy przy II Liceum Ogólnokształcącym w Przemyślu. Przeszłość i kształtowanie teraźniejszości*, ed. H. Humnicka, Rzeszów 2014, p. 102–123.

²³ For more, see: J. Nowak, *Společné reguly paměťania. Antropologia pamięci zbiorowej*, Kraków 2011, p. 27–66.

a part of the inhabitants of the town and region, thus carrying important content for them. As Dorota Malczewska-Pawelec and Tomasz Pawelec argue: "Collective historical memory is one of the basic indicators of identity for the community which carries it, and also an important factor of integrating this community in the sphere of values and ideas"²⁴. And even if the effects of those actions might have been different (as collective memory has a dynamic character and undergoes changes²⁵) and have been addressed mainly to the middle class, *de facto* they had a common source. It was possible in bigger centers such as Przemyśl, Stanisławów, Tarnopol or even Kołomyja, because the inhabitants of these places had many institutions organizing the local celebration ceremonies connected with the Great War. Due to the meaning of these places, these "memory activities" were not only focused on the November 1918 Polish-Ukrainian fighting and the regaining of independence by the Poles, but were often much more complex (celebrations of various local actions during the War, connected with the great refuge from Galicia 1914–1915, the Russian occupation of the territory as well as the local resistance against the Austrians at that time)²⁶.

Body and memorial site – the fight for Irena Benschówna

A very interesting example of the fight for creating a local memorial site is Irena Benschówna. She became a legend of the Polish-Ukrainian fights in Przemyśl for, unlike the majority of local women, she did not limit herself to helping the wounded and sick soldiers. Like the female members of the Polish Military Organization and female scouts led by Professor

²⁴ D. Malczewska-Pawelec, T. Pawelec, *Rewolucja w pamięci historycznej. Porównawcze studia nad praktykami manipulacji zbiorową pamięcią Polaków w czasach stalinowskich*, Kraków 2011, p. 14.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 15–16.

²⁶ T. Pudłocki, *Expérience of Mobility Outside Galicia Before and After World War I – War Refugees Example*, "Prace Historyczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego", 2016, 143 (1), p. 107–125.

Izydora Kossowska, apart from the work in hospital, she took on the task of carrying arms and ammunition. She continued it until 13 December, 1918 when she was killed near Niżankowice. Helena Stieberowa²⁷ wrote about her:

Quite heroic deeds were done by the late Irena Benschówna from Poznań, a teacher's daughter, a legionary from the 6th Legions Infantry Regiment. Irena Benschówna often carried the wounded on her own back, tried to raise their spirits, eventually she took up arms herself, to defend Przemyśl with other young people against Ukrainian attacks near Niżankowice. But she was killed by a Ukrainian bullet²⁸.

Benschówna, who was killed in the Polish-Ukrainian fights, became an icon of sacrifice of young Polish women in the fight for independence. She was remembered not only by Stieberowa but also many other memoirists²⁹. Her memory was revived in January 1921 when Teofila Tęczar, one of the Przemyśl women most involved in social life, published an appeal to the residents of Przemyśl in "Ziemia Przemyska". There she quoted the letter of K. Benschowa, Irena's mother, who on 27 January asked for the body of her daughter to be sent back to Poznań. The mother asked to tell the inhabitants of Przemyśl that the Ministry of War had permitted her to have the body transported to the Wielkopolska region but she could not afford paying for the procedure. Therefore, Teofila Tęczar appealed to the people of

²⁷ She used double form of her surname: once Stieberowa, once Hordyńska-Stieberowa.

²⁸ H. Stieberowa, *P.O.W. a obrona Przemyśla*, „Wzloty” Y. 5: 1938 no. 40 of 11 XI p. 7. See also: eadem, *Obrona Przemyśla w roku 1918 (Z pamiętnika)*, in: *Oświata to potęga. Wydawnictwo pamiątkowe z okazji obchodu 15-lecia niepodległości państwa polskiego*, ed. J. Kopeć, part 2, Przemyśl 1933, p. 74–75.

²⁹ See e.g. eadem, *Kobieta – obywatelka*, op. cit., p. 2; M. Dekkańska-Bilińska, *Moje wspomnienia żołnierskie*, „Wzloty” Y. 5: 1938 no. 41 of 26 XI p. 5. See also: Z. Konieczny, *Walki polsko-ukraińskie w Przemyślu i okolicy, listopad – grudzień 1918*, Przemyśl 1993; G. Szopa, *Spór polsko-ukraiński i konflikt zbrojny 1918 r.*, in: *Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona Doktorowi Zdzisławowi Koniecznemu z okazji 70. rocznicy urodzin*, Przemyśl 2000, p. 117–127.

Przemyśl to support the cause “so that the good mother could get the body of her beloved daughter”³⁰.

As it turned out, Tęczarówna’s appeal met with just the opposite response. In one of her texts, Helena Stieberowa, writing about Benschówna, stated that “the women from Przemyśl would not send the remains of the young heroine back to her family in Poznań but they left her in the Przemyśl cemetery to be a model for the posterity”³¹. One of the first to be against sending the body away was Wincenta Tarnawska. Why fight so fiercely for the girl’s remains? Why did the Polish women from Przemyśl emphasize in the public discourse the loss of life or health by women in battle? After all, it was generally believed it was a “male” variant of sacrifice for the home country. The point might have been to emphasize the fact for the public that the ones who fought and died in the defense of the Eastern Borderlands were not only men. Women also defied the Ukrainian attempts to occupy those territories in the same way. They were not only local women; they came from various regions of the renascent state³².

In the memoirs called *Wspomnienia o śp. Irenie Benschównie do wiadomości jej stroskanej matki*, published only two weeks after Tęczarówna’s appeal, Helena Stieberowa explained why Tarnawska treated the issues of Benschówna’s burial in Przemyśl and her appropriate commemoration so personally.

When in the military barracks in Zasanie Wincenta Tarnawska, president of the Polish Women’s Alliance put food in her mess tin, she noticed her feminine curves and said to her, “You’re a woman, I presume?” Irena nodded with a smile. [...]

³⁰ „Ziemia Przemyska” Y. 7: 1921 no. 8 of 20 II, p. 1.

³¹ H. Hordyńska-Stieberowa, *Obrona Przemyśla w roku 1918...*, p. 75.

³² An inspiring chapter for discussions on the significance of a dead body in the memory of generations can be found in *Archeontologia martwego ciała (Argentynscy desaparecidos)* in Ewa Domańska’s book, *Historie niekonwencjonalne. Refleksja o przeszłości w nowej humanistyce*, Poznań 2006, p. 161–194.

When her dead body was brought along with others to the military hospital, the military chaplain Rev. Olejniczak wrote a letter to Mrs Tarnawska that they would like to bury her in women's clothes. Mrs Tarnawska washed the body of the heroine herself, dressed her in white, decorated her head with a white veil and myrtle, and put her in the coffin³³.

Stieberowa wrote that Benschówna had been buried with full military honors, "and crowds of the Przemyśl people saw her off to her grave, where they listened to beautiful speeches about the deceased"³⁴. Most probably Tarnawska also spoke during the funeral. A day later, on the initiative of the Polish Women's Alliance, a ceremonial service was held for the late Benschówna. Her grave was taken care of by the members of the Alliance; "it is kept in order and in the summer decorated with flowers"³⁵. What is more, the members, starting from 1 November, 1919, organized themselves on All Souls' Day at Benschówna's grave, singing patriotic songs and making appropriate speeches.

Stieberowa's memories emphasize the unusual attitude of the ageing Tarnawska to the young girl from Poznań. In the military barracks, in difficult conditions, far away from her family, when her husband and son were engaged in patriotic activity elsewhere, Tarnawska was surrounded by much younger boys and girls. They made her youthful dreams come true. When the January Uprising broke out, she was too young to take part. When Poland regained independence, she was too old to participate actively in resurrecting Poland. Perhaps Benschówna reminded her of her young self? And maybe she accomplished all that Wincenta had not been able to accomplish? After all, Stieberowa writes about Benschówna: "All her work was a sacrifice for Poland". Was that not what Tarnawska's own life looked like? However, unlike the young girl, Tarnawska had never been on the front line; she was always in the shadow – giving ground to others, as a woman or as an

³³ H. Stieberowa, *Wspomnienia o śp. Irenie Benschównie do wiadomości jej stroskanej matki*, „Ziemia Przemyśka” Y. 7: 1921 no. 11 of 13 III, p. 2.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem.

old person at the critical moment. And – as Stieberowa recalls – Benschówna “enlisted in the army [...] and followed the call of a great love for Poland. She distinguished herself with extremely tactful behavior, and she was surrounded with real respect of her comrades who spoke of her as a remarkable woman”³⁶. The young girl must have impressed Tarnawska with her attitude, and their relations were reinforced during the successive weeks of their common work in the barracks. Even the fact that the girl from Poznań used to break the taboo of her sex, wearing men’s clothes and performing men’s tasks, must have had an effect on the elderly woman. After all, Tarnawska also had been struggling all her life with gender limitations imposed on her by the conventions of the era. It was only in her older age that she gained such respect that the many “eccentricities” of her youth were regarded as a sacrifice for the home country. The romantic vision which Tarnawska implemented all her life with a really positivist passion, lacked, however, some tragic ending. Neither Tarnawska nor any of her family or friends had sacrificed their lives for their country. There were years of work, incessant everyday struggle for strengthening the Polish spirit in her closest circles – but it was Benschówna who, through her death, had become a great 19th-century-like Polish heroine. Tarnawska was “merely” a positivist who was supposed to fulfill her mission in successive years. Or perhaps during those several years Benschówna was for Tarnawska the daughter she had never had? For Jadwiga did not show much understanding for her mother’s work. Presumably, they never worked together and despite close family ties mother and daughter did not understand each other well.

Notwithstanding Tarnawska’s reasons, she became the main supporter of the action in favor of a dignified burial of the young girl whose dead body she had prepared for the funeral ceremony herself. No wonder then that only two weeks after Tęczarówna’s text Stieberowa could write:

³⁶ Ibidem.

That body is so dear to us that Przemyśl wants to commemorate it forever, so that younger generations could follow the example of such daughters of Poland. Hence the idea to put up a monument to Irena or endow a scholarship of her name. May she rest in peace³⁷.

Tarnawska wrote herself to Irena's mother who "agreed to the suggestion of the Honourable Missis Tarnawska that her dead daughter's body should remain in our cemetery"³⁸. It turned out, however, that collecting the donations for an appropriate monument took Tarnawska many years. One of the first donations was given by the Women's Political Association led by Teofila Tęczar and Karolina Rawicka. Therefore, after Irena's mother had changed her decision, the associations must have reached an agreement as Tęczarówna, previously supporting the idea to send Benschówna's body back to Poznań, later collected money for her tomb in Przemyśl. In the first installment, 4960 Austrian Kronen³⁹ was transferred to Tarnawska. Eventually, Benschówna's tomb in the Main Cemetery in Przemyśl, funded mostly by the members of the Polish Women's Alliance, was consecrated only on 1 November, 1928⁴⁰. "Ziemia Przemyska" provided an account of that event with a month's delay in the following way:

The unveiling and consecration of the monument took place on 1 November. A priest performed the consecration and then Mrs Tarnawska made a speech in which she thanked those who had contributed to the construction of the monument in any manner.

The construction of the monument cost 929,80 zlotys, and the decoration of the tomb and the posters informing about the ceremony – 42,81 zlotys, which was altogether 972,61 zlotys. We are glad that the people of Przemyśl have at least partly repaid their obligation to that heroic young woman⁴¹.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ „Ziemia Przemyska” Y. 7: 1921 no. 27 of 3 VII, p. 4.

³⁹ Ibidem; no. 25 of 19 VI, p. 4.

⁴⁰ „Tygodnik Przemyski” Y. 2: 1928 no. 51 of 15 XII, p. 3.

⁴¹ „Ziemia Przemyska” Y. 14: 1928 no. 53 of 15 XII, p. 5.

The promise was kept then, though no-one expected it would take so much time. To what extent the monument to Benschówna was Tarnawska's personal contribution, a result of her stubbornness, persistence and foresight, one cannot possibly establish today. Still, Benschówna must have really touched Tarnawska's heart, if the latter strived for so many years to honor the young woman from Poznań, at least symbolically. Her grave itself became a *sui generis* memorial site, to use Pierre Nora's phrase: "embodiment of memorial consciousness". Its construction and care taken of it by successive generations⁴² was an expression of collective memory; Tarnawska, struggling for its construction, interfered in the present, referring to the past⁴³. Thus Benschówna's grave was not only a burial place but due to its symbolic meaning, it appealed to people's emotions and influenced the sacralization of Benschówna's memory⁴⁴. For the official discourse ignored the fact that her corpse had been defiled – it was found on the Nizankowice battle field, naked and, as medical examination demonstrated, artificially joined with the corpse of a Polish soldier. That was a quite telling gesture – Ukrainian nationalists tried to dehumanize the young woman (not only by profaning her body but thereby trying to ruin her memory). Her attitude, unusual for a woman, in the autumn of 1918 and the fact that she had come all the way from Poznań to fight for the Eastern Borderland to remain Polish must have been inconvenient for them. The Poles had suppressed – at least in the official discourse – the unpleasant context in which Benschówna's dead body had been found, as it did not suit their expectations. The problem seems to have been aptly expressed by Ewa Domańska, who examined the archontology of a dead body:

⁴² NB, the monument is nowadays looked after by other groups dealing with transmission of certain elements of the past, like the scouts, the Association of the Friends of Przemyśl and the Region and others.

⁴³ For more, see: J. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 34–38.

⁴⁴ Official works omitted the fact that Benschówna's body was found naked and, as medical examination showed, artificially joined with another.

The question of a dead body as such and the relation between the dead body and the dead person, is analyzed mostly from the point of view of the discourse of the living, but not the will of the dead themselves. Even the discrimination between the corpse as a thing and the corpse as a person and speaking about the personality of a corpse in the context of its inviolability (the law) and memory (reverence for the dead) is connected rather with the living feeling threatened and the desire to secure social order than with the rights of the dead⁴⁵.

Therefore, Benschówna's dead body in a way became a point of reference in shaping collective memory. For some people (especially rightist Ukrainians) it was inconvenient, as it demonstrated that Przemyśl was not only important for the Poles living in the region, but was also treated by residents of other regions of Poland as an integral part of the renascent Polish state. For others, the fact of defiling the corpse was so embarrassing that it was held back so that the memory of the heroine (the deceased Irena was treated as one) was not violated in any way. Therefore – as Jacek Nowak writes – what was at work there was the mechanism of constructing collective memory and situating reminders of Benschówna in the sphere of sacrum⁴⁶. And since the community of Polish women created a bastion guarding the identity of successive generations – a protected and cherished enclave of the memory of the past – those fragments of Benschówna's biography which did not suit the created myth needed to be removed. And since Irena's dead body became instrumentalized through interference, also her memory became instrumentalized. The Ukrainians attempted to make her look like a slut, the Poles – like a saint. The Poles' demonstrative visits to her grave and cultivating Benschówna's memory were gradually becoming a substitute for her immortality⁴⁷. Cultural behavior of this kind has had a long-standing tradition and dates back to the 18th

⁴⁵ E. Domańska, *op. cit.*, p. 161–162.

⁴⁶ For more on the techniques of constructing group memory, see J. Nowak, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁴⁷ P. Ariès, *Rozważania o historii śmierci*, Warszawa 2007, p. 31.

century veneration of heroes' tombs, which extended from the private sphere to a public cult. That stemmed from the fact that a nationalist society needed – as Philippe Ariès suggested – “a state of the dead” whose live artifacts of existence, i.e. sepulchral monuments, were perceived as visible symptoms of its eternal duration⁴⁸. Moreover, the struggle for the heroine's body and appropriate place of burial resulted from the 19th century process of reinforcing and handing down to subsequent generations the notion that the territorial shape of Poland is based on the belief that our country is where our graves are⁴⁹.

Summary

The case of the struggle for honoring Irena Benschówna's body is not the only one. In Lviv, an example of a heroic woman was Wanda Lechowicz. She was a sergeant major in the Voluntary Legion of Women. Caught by the Ukrainians, she had been tortured for three months and only miraculously escaped captivity. She died after the war in Kraków, though she wanted to be buried in the city she had fought for. Her former superior Wit Sulimirski got involved in moving her body to the Cemetery of “Eaglets” Defenders of Lviv⁵⁰. His efforts were successful – in December 1928, Lechowicz was buried in Lviv and the obsequies were performed by the legendary chaplain of the Legions Rev. Józef Panaś in the presence of the assembled crowds⁵¹.

Although I deliberately omitted Lviv from my discussion – the former capital of Galicia and the then major city of Southeastern Poland – the city itself had become a symbol of Polish-Ukrainian fights. What is more, the Guard of the Graves of Polish Heroes

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 82–83.

⁴⁹ E. Grzęda, *Będziesz z chlubą wskazywał synów twoich groby... Mitologizacja mogił bohaterów w literaturze i kulturze polskiej lat 1795–1863*, Wrocław 2011, p. 15.

⁵⁰ W. Sulimirski, *Kurierka Wanda*, „Słowo Polskie” Y. 22: 1928 no. 324 of 23 XI, p. 9.

⁵¹ „Słowo Polskie” Y. 22: 1928 no. 359 of 30 XII, p. 7.

was appointed to watch over appropriate burials of the Poles who were killed fighting for Lviv to be Polish. The very concept and scale on which the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv was founded show that the matters of honoring the dead and shaping the memory of the future generations were treated very seriously. The cemetery was supposed to be a tangible proof of not only Lviv but the whole territory being Polish – hence not only the memory of the November 1918 fights but also the attitude to that necropolis was one of the main bones of contention between the Poles and the Ukrainians⁵².

In the memory of the fights in Lviv, women were less objectified than in the case of minor towns. But then, both their direct involvement in the fights and their support for the fighting men were much larger⁵³. Of course, there appeared also such memories as those of Michał Rolle who wrote: “[...] before my very eyes a Ukrainian soldier shot at a ten-year-old girl who was running to the shop to buy very expensive bread”⁵⁴. However, they referred to specific examples and did not have to refer to the general conviction among the Poles about the bravery of Polish children and barbarity of the Ukrainians. While the people of Przemyśl honored the memory of the young men and one woman who were killed in the Polish-Ukrainian fights, on 2 November, 1928, during the celebrations in Lviv, 25 names were read out, of the Poles who were killed while fighting for Lviv to stay Polish. Among them four Polish women were distinguished: Antonina Bieganówna, Zofia Cholewa,

⁵² It was not a new concept in the interwar period – for more, see: H. Binder, *Making and Defending a Polish Town: „Lwów” (Lemberg), 1848–1914*, „Austrian History Yearbook” 2003 vol. 34, p. 57–81; A. V. Wendland, *Post-Austrian Lemberg: War Commemoration, Interethnic Relations, and Urban Identity in Lviv 1918–1939*, „Austrian History Yearbook” 2003 vol. 34, p. 83–102; eadem, *Semper fidelis: Lwów jako narodowy mit Polaków i Ukraińców (1867–1939)*, in: *Lwów. Miasto, społeczeństwo, kultura. Studia z dziejów Lwowa*, ed. K. Karolczak, Kraków 2002, p. 263–271.

⁵³ See e.g. many texts by women in the publication *Jednodniówka ku uczczeniu dziesięciolecia walk o Lwów 1–22 XI 1918 – 1–22 XI 1928* wydana przez Komitet Obywatelski obchodu 10. rocznicy obrony Lwowa, eds. S. Kupczyński, S. Maykowski, J.S. Petry, Lwów 1928.

⁵⁴ „Gazeta Lwowska” Y. 118: 1928 no. 269 of 22 XI, p. 2.

Stanisława Jabłońska and Bronisława Stochówna⁵⁵. And yet the list of men and women killed in battle on both sides (Polish and Ukrainian) was much longer. Perhaps that was why the members of the local Women's Citizen's Work Union led by MP Maria Jaworska, for a whole month gave talks in various places in the city on the participation of women in the fight for independence⁵⁶.

Interestingly, in the reality of the interwar Poland the memory of the FWW was soon largely eclipsed by the fact of regaining independence. Any other aspects of the Polish irredentism from the years 1914-1918 were of much less significance or were shown as mere contributions leading directly to the events of November 1918. During the official celebrations the ones honored were mainly male heroes, which does not mean that the examples of Polish women's contribution to regaining independence were forgotten. It is worth remembering, however, that the memory of Polish women was largely supported by Polish women themselves, who thus wanted to assure society as it were that they had fully deserved to enjoy full rights in the independent Poland. Not always was the memory of women honored. The evidence may be the Lviv celebrations in November 1938 during which the role of women was clearly smaller than ten years before⁵⁷. That illustrates one more thing: that the politics of memory was not homogeneous and that it would change depending on the circumstances. What is more, it should be emphasized that the "operations" on collective memory, carried out quite intensively especially by the Sanacja governments, were not unanimously accepted by all citizens of the Polish state⁵⁸. It was not only the Ukrainians that boycotted them; also the opposition, especially the National Democrats, was against many forms implemented

⁵⁵ „Słowo Polskie” Y. 22: 1928 no. 304 of 3 XI, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, no. 305 of 5 XI, p. 7.

⁵⁷ See: „Gazeta Lwowska” Y. 128: 1938 no. 245 of 27 X, p. 2, no. 259 of 15 XI, p. 2, no. 265 of 22 XI, p. 1-2, no. 267 of 24 XI, p. 2, no. 271 of 29 XI, p. 2.

⁵⁸ For more, see: J. Żarnowski, *Spółeczeństwo polskie*, in: W. Mędrzecki, S. Rudnicki, J. Żarnowski, *Spółeczeństwo polskie w XX wieku*, Warszawa 2003, p. 18-30.

officially in the public space. It turns out then that it is hard to talk about full agreement towards the memory of the events of modern history – the Great War – for the many inhabitants of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. Depending on the nationality, political views and the sex, that memory was often so different that it was too often conflict-generating.

Magda Arsenicz

The Battle of Lviv in November 1918 as “the memory place”¹ for the Polish and the Ukrainian people

Introduction

World War I was almost over in November 1918. Among the many consequences of this conflict was the dissolution of the Russian Empire as well as the Habsburg Monarchy. For the Polish and the Ukrainian people living in Eastern Galicia, it was the key moment for achieving national independence and establishing new nation states – Poland and Ukraine. But their territorial aspirations were in one area mutually exclusive, and it led to an armed conflict. The borders of the newly created Poland and Ukraine were formed in fire.

The best example of the conflict and its effects on Polish and Ukrainian societies is the battle of Lviv² in November 1918. In this paper, I’m going to discuss how the memory of that event has changed since 1918. It had very different meanings in interwar Poland, during Communism, and finally in the independent Ukraine and Poland after 1989/1991.

The battle of Lviv (called in the Polish historiography *Defense of Lwów* and in the Ukrainian *November Uprising*) was the

¹ In that article, I use the expression „memory place” according to the most common definition by Pierre Nora, connected with the place in common identity/collective memory, not just like a place in some territory.

² The name of the city was changing during the history, in Polish language it is Lwów, L’viv – Ukrainian, Lemberg – German, Leopoli – Latin, Lvov – Russian. In this article, I’m using the most common present English version – Lviv.

result of growing tensions between Poles and Ukrainians at the end of World War I. But the conflict was rooted in 19th century history. The process of conflictual nation-buildings started in the middle of the 19th century during the Spring of Nations (1848). It was then when Ruthenians (Ukrainians) demanded the division of the Austrian province of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria into two parts (the Western for Polish and the Eastern for Ukrainians) for the first time. From 1867 when Galicia gained an enhanced autonomy among the Austrian provinces, Polish and Ukrainian cultures enjoyed relative peace that fostered their intensive development. In addition to that, national movements started the process of building the modern national identity in this region. Despite the Ukrainians' loyalty to imperial government during the Spring of Nations, the Poles gained political leverage on Vienna and power in the province. In this period (1867-1914), the main political conflicts between Poles and Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia were their rivalry in the education system (the question of the official language and the language of instruction), the unsuccessful attempts to create a Ukrainian university in Lviv, and the problems of the electoral system that heavily favoured the traditional Polish nobility. The most important debates in the local parliament (*Sejm Krajowy*) dealt with these issues. The most dramatic event of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Galicia was the assassination of Andrzej Potocki – the Governor of the province in 1908, by Ukrainian student Myroslav Sichynsky.³ That, in turn, prepared two nations to their fight for independence. The Polish-Ukrainian conflict and the rule over Eastern Galicia was still unresolved until the end of World War I.

³ Read more about Polish-Ukrainian relations in Galicia, for instance: P. R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine. The Land and Its Peoples*. Toronto 2010, p. 467-488; O. Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History*, Toronto 2000, p. 307-335, J. Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy 1772-1999. Narodziny nowoczesnego narodu*, Lublin 2000, p. 63-100, Cz. Partacz, *Od Badeniego do Potockiego. Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w Galicji w latach 1888-1908*, Toruń 1997, p. 13-248, A. Świątek, *Gethę Rutheni, nazione Poloni. Z dziejów Rusinów narodowości polskiej w Galicji*, Kraków 2014, p. 33-442

Lviv played a symbolic role in Polish national identity because it had been part of Poland for almost five hundred years. Moreover, for Polish people, it embodied heroic and crucial moments of national history: the city was a border fortress against Cossacks, Tatars and Turks, defending the homeland in the 17th century, during the wars so vividly portrayed in Henryk Sienkiewicz's popular historical novels.⁴ The Ukrainian (Ruthenian) national movement created in the 19th century was based on the idea of continuity with the Rus' state which existed in this area in medieval times. The city itself was founded in the 13th century by one of the successor rulers of the Rus', Daniel Romanovych. Ukrainian history, especially the one promoted by intellectuals in Eastern Galicia like the great historian Mychailo Hrushevskyj (working in Lviv since 1894), built its own historical discourse mostly on the basis of this medieval history, and mobilized anti-Polish arguments, characterizing Poles as the occupants and Ukrainians as the victims of violence from Polish nobility⁵. It is needless to say in the light of these opposing perceptions of history that with the end of World War I, historical memories of Poles and Ukrainians living on the same territory were completely different, and Lviv meant something else for the two nations.⁶ It was also the ideological reasons of the Polish-Ukrainian war in 1918-1919.

⁴ A. V. Wendland, *Semper fidelis: Lwów jako narodowy mīt Polaków i Ukraińców (1867-1939)*, [w:] *Lwów. Miasto – Społeczeństwo – Kultura. Studia z dziejów Lwowa*, t. IV, red. K. Karolczak, Kraków 2002, s. 263-273; W. A. Serczyk, *Semper fidelis. Dzieje legendy*, „Niepodległość i Pamięć”, R. XIII, nr 3 (24), Warszawa 2006, s. 11-37; Я. Грицак, *Львів – місто у центрі Європи*, [w:] *Краків і Львів у європейській цивілізації. Матеріали міжнародної конференції, організованої 15-16 листопада 2002 р.*, Краків 2004

⁵ Ł. Adamski, *Nacjonalista postępowy. Mychajło Hruszewski i jego poglądy na Polskę i Polaków*, Warszawa 2011, p. 74-176.

⁶ A. V. Wendland, *Semper fidelis: Lwów jako narodowy mīt Polaków i Ukraińców (1867-1939)* [in:] *Lwów - Miasto-Społeczeństwo-Kultura. Studia z dziejów Lwowa*, vol. 4, ed. Kazimierz Karolczak, Kraków 2002, p. 263-273, W. A. Serczyk, *Semper fidelis. Dzieje legendy*, „Niepodległość i Pamięć”, Vol. XIII, No. 3(24), Warszawa 2006, p. 11-37, Y. Hrytsak, *Lviv – misto u centri Evropy*, [in:] *Krakiv i Lviv u evropejskij cyvyilizacii. Materialy miżnarodnoi konferenciji organizovanoi 15-16 lystopada 2002*, Krakiv 2004, p. 11-32., R. J. Czarnowski, *Lwów. Legenda zawsze wierna*, Łódź 2010, p. 11-448.

Lviv was a city with a large number of Poles who did not want to be part of the newly-created Ukrainian state. According to official statistics, before World War I, 51% of Lviv inhabitants declared Roman Catholic religion, 19% Greek Catholic, and 27% were Jewish.⁷ However, only 11% of the citizens declared using the Ukrainian language on a daily basis, while 86% declared the Polish language.⁸ The number of Poles was certainly much higher than the number of Ukrainians living in Lviv. But the situation was complicated because in Eastern Galicia, especially in the villages, Ukrainians made up 70% of the population.⁹ In the cities, the majority was Polish and Jewish; in the villages – Ukrainian. Thus, it was hard to draw the right boundary that could demarcate national territories in a way that was able to satisfy both sides.

During World War I, Poles and Ukrainians were fighting for national independence on many fronts. Poles were trying to rebuild the country which was divided by Russia, Austria and Prussia in the 18th century; most of the Polish lands were occupied by Russia, and became areas of two national uprisings, in 1831 and 1863. Ukrainians tried to create a country united from lands under Russian control (Central and Eastern Ukraine) and Austrian rule (Eastern Galicia). Most of the Ukrainian territories were under Russian control. They became the scenes of the revolution in 1917, too. That led to the first proclamation of Ukrainian independence in 1917 in Kiev, and raised hopes to unite Eastern Ukrainian lands with Eastern Galicia. As a result, the Polish-Ukrainian war for Eastern Galicia seemed unavoidable.¹⁰

At the end of October 1918, Galician Ukrainian political circles announced the creation of an independent West Ukrainian State in Eastern Galicia led by Yevhen Petrushevych.

⁷ *Ludność nowoczesnego Lwowa w latach 1857-1938*, K. Wnęk, L. Zyblikiewicz, E. Callahan, Kraków 2006, p. 75.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

⁹ M. Klimecki, *Polsko-ukraińska wojna*, p. 14-20.

¹⁰ Read more, for instance: A. Chojnowski., J. J. Bruski, *Ukraina*, Warszawa 2006, p. 22-49, O. Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History*, Toronto 2000, p. 339-379.

At the same time, many Polish cities successfully announced their accession to the newly formed Poland, for instance Cracow on 31 October. In Lviv, such an action was planned by Poles for the beginning of November; however, Ukrainians managed to take control over the city as soon as during the night from 31 October to 1 November, 1918.¹¹

The Battle of Lviv took place from 1 to 22 November, 1918. On the one side, there were Polish civil volunteers, including a lot of young students, often without proper weapons which they had to collect during those struggles; on the other one, there were Ukrainian troops called Sichovy Striltsy who up to that time had been part of the Austrian army. Most of the Ukrainian soldiers came from Eastern Galician villages and they did not know the city very well, but their training, experience and professional weaponry inherited from the Austro-Hungarian army strengthened their position. It was related to the support from the last Austrian General-Governor Karl Huyn who transferred the rule to Volodymyr Decykievych, a Ukrainian politician on 1 November 1918. At the same time, there were only a few Polish military groups in Lviv. The majority of Poles was still on the fronts of World War I. It was the reason why Polish civilians were participating in fighting on such a scale. But it was an enthusiastic and youthful congregation of fighters. According to Polish statistics, among all Polish volunteers (6022 people in total), 67% were younger than 25 years.¹² After three weeks of fighting, the situation has changed. The new Polish state sent regular troops as well as volunteers from Cracow and Przemyśl, and it led to the final Polish victory on November 22. The Ukrainian army withdrew, first to Stanisławów and after

¹¹ M. Klimecki, *Polsko-ukraińska wojna o Lwów i Galicję Wschodnią 1918-1919*, Warszawa 2000, p. 47-66.

¹² *Obrona Lwowa w 1-22 listopada 1918 roku*, t. 3, *Organizacja i stopadowej obrony Lwowa*, *Ewidencja uczestników walk, lista strat*, Warszawa 1994, *Źródła do dziejów walk o Lwów i województwa południowo – wschodnie 1918-1920*, p. 13.

that to the line of the river Zbruch in July 1919, which became the border of Poland in the interwar period.¹³

2. The Polish legend of the battle and its conflicting memory with the Ukrainian one in interwar Poland (1918-1939)

During the November fighting, a famous legend was born: the old Polish city of Lviv was saved by children. The young Polish volunteers were called “Lwów Eaglets” – their name given after the Polish national emblem. What is more, the legend was presented as a kind of continuation of the noble history of the city. In poetry and popular songs written during the battle, there is a clear continuation of the complex idea of “Polish Eastern Borderlands” which included the people in these regions have always defended the country from the “barbarians” (Cossacks, Turks, Tatars and others). We can see these examples in many articles and texts published in “Pobudka”, the newspaper which was an official instrument of the Polish General Command of Defence of Lviv.¹⁴ For instance, at the beginning of the battle, “Pobudka” informed, “Feral barbarians broke into Lviv”¹⁵ or “The history repeats. Bloody times of drunk gangs of *haidamaks* revelling around steppe have come again”.¹⁶ But the Poles were not alone in using historical references for the purpose of propaganda. The Ukrainian side announced in many proclamations the “return to the old Ruthenian city after 578 years of occupation”.¹⁷

¹³ M. Klimecki, *Polsko-ukraińska wojna...*, p. 67-145.

¹⁴ *Obrona Lwowa 1-22 listopada 1918 roku vol. 3. Organizacja listopadowej obrony Lwowa, Ewidencja uczestników walk, lista strat*, Warszawa 1994 p. 336.; „Pobudka”, No. 1-17, November 1918.

¹⁵ “Do Lwowa wdarł się barbarzyńca dziki(...)”, „Pobudka”, No. 3, 08 Nov.1918, p. 2;

¹⁶ „Historia się powtarza. Wracają krwawe czasy, kiedy to po stepach Ukrainy hulały pijane bandy hajdamackie(...)”, „Pobudka”, No. 5, 10 Nov.1918, p. 1.

¹⁷ „(...)Ukrain'ska Nacional'na Rada v našij starij stolyci vziala verhovnu deržavnu vlast' u ruki (...) Po 578 litah nevoli (...). *Vidozva Ukrain'skoi*

In Polish official propaganda, the Battle of Lviv represented Polish “eternal rights” to the city. We can find this idea, for instance, in the main commander’s (kpt. Czesław Maczyński) appeal published on 22 November, 1918, right after Polish victory became clear: “Lviv has just got rid of occupants and given the evidence for the whole world: it was, still is, and must remain a Polish city”.¹⁸

During the interwar period, Lviv was one of the most important cities in Poland – mostly because it was an economic, cultural and educational centre (university, technical university and other science institutions). But its symbolism was rather connected to the living memory of the November battle. For the Poles, Lviv was equal with the sacrifice of young Polish volunteers: children and students who not only fought, but also died for keeping the city Polish. The most popular examples were of two boys: 14-year-old Jerzy Bitschan who ran away from home to fight and died in the struggle at the territory of Lychakovsky Cemetery, and 13-year-old Antoni Petrykiewicz who is the youngest Polish soldier ever to receive the highest military award “Virtuti Militari”. They became examples for subsequent generations, presented in official school books, popular poetry and many songs sang in schools and among scouts.¹⁹

However, the legend gradually infused the perception of the city abroad, too. In 1937, a book was published in Hungary, “Polish Eaglets” (*Lengyel sasfiókok*), written by Jenő Szentiványi.²⁰ It is the story of the Polish defence of Lviv (from 1 November, 1918 to March 1919), and the main characters are children who took part in the battle and risked their lives for the homeland. The author emphasized children sacrifice,

Nacional'noi Rady, Lviv 5 lystopada 1918, [in:] O. Kuz'ma, *Lystopadovi dni 1918*, Lviv 2003, p.1.

¹⁸ „Lwów pozbył się najeźdźców i dał wspaniały wobec świata dowód, że był, jest i pozostać musi polskim miastem.”, Cz. Maczyński, *Boje Lwowskie. cz. I Oswobodzenie Lwowa (1-24 listopada 1918)*. Vol. I., p. 332-333.

¹⁹ Nicieja S. S., *Lwowskie Orleńta. Czyn i legenda*, Warszawa 2009, p. 151-159.

²⁰ Nicieja S.S., *Lwowskie Orleńta...*, p. 64.

difficulties of the life under siege, and presented Ukrainians like cruel barbarians.²¹ Lviv Eaglets appeared in English language books and travelogues, too: Arthur Goodhurt, Ada Chesterton and Henry Baerlein all emphasized this issue in their reports.²²

The main memorial for the Polish heroes was the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów, designed by the young architect Rudolf Indruch who was one of the volunteers himself and participated in the battle. This cemetery was not only a place for soldiers' tombs, but also it was built to demonstrate the meaning of Polish Lviv for subsequent generations, a highly ideological construct.²³ The main gate to the cemetery was modelled on the ancient structure of a Triumphal Arch. The lions sitting before the arch kept plates with the inscriptions “always faithful” and “for you Poland”. The graveyard was the central place of many Polish patriotic celebrations. Those were opportunities to show support for ideas connected with the mythical Polish Eastern Borderlands and their “defence” that was of vital importance in interwar Poland, situated between two arch-enemies, Germany and the Soviet Union.²⁴ The Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów was the most splendid military cemetery in the whole country. In a popular short story from the 1930s about Lviv, written by Kornel Makuszyński, one of the main characters says this about the cemetery: “This cemetery, like no other in the whole world, is like a school (...) here children teach old people (...) that from heroic death life springs up”.²⁵ Moreover, at that time, Lviv was the only Polish city which received the highest Polish military award “Virtuti Militari”. It was granted in 1920

²¹ Polish version of the book, J. Szentiványi, *Orleńta Lwowskie*, Kraków 2013, 272 pp.

²² T. Pudłocki, *Ambasadorzy idei. Wkład intelektualistów w promowanie pozytywnego wizerunku Polski w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1918-1939*, Kraków 2015, p. 69.

²³ Ibidem, p. 79-107.

²⁴ *Przewodnik po Cmentarzu Obronców Lwowa. Orleńtom w szesnastą rocznicę*, Straż Mogił Polskich Bohaterów, Lwów 1934, p.3-18.

²⁵ „Ten cmentarz, jakiego drugiego nie ma na całym świecie, jest jakby szkołą (...)dzieci uczą się swych ludzi (...) że z bohaterskiej śmierci najbujniej wyrasta życie”, K. Makuszyński, *Uśmiech Lwowa*, Kraków 1989, p. 65.

by marshal Józef Piłsudski, commander-in-chief and head of state, for its entire contribution during the battle to save the country. This distinction became part of the city's official coat of arms in the interwar period, which conveyed the importance of the distinction and the event it recalled.²⁶

For the Ukrainians who at that time were still a majority in Eastern Galicia's villages (over 70%), the battle of Lviv was a symbol of their independent country (The West Ukrainian People's Republic) that had existed only for a few months. Lots of Ukrainians never accepted that loss. It was the reason why so many of them treated the Second Polish Republic as the temporary occupying power which sooner or later would be defeated.²⁷ The Polish-Ukrainian conflict has intensified during the interwar period; evidences of the growing passion were, for instance, assassinations of important Polish civil servants by Ukrainian nationalists (Ukrainian Military Organization, since 1929 Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists): superintendent of Lviv's schools Stanisław Sobiński (1926), Minister of Internal Affairs Bronisław Pieracki (1934), and unsuccessful assassination attempts on Józef Piłsudski (1921) and the President of Poland Stanisław Wojciechowski (1924).²⁸ As a response, the Polish government organized the "pacification" in Eastern Galicia in 1930 which was a police and military action against Ukrainians. Many activists were sent to prisons, and some Ukrainian high schools were closed. All in all, these repressions caused the death of 3-30 people.²⁹

The anniversaries of November 1918 were celebrated every single time with the highest esteem, and the program always caused serious troubles in the relations between Poles and Ukrainians. National celebrations, supported by the government, intended to attract all of the citizens. That,

²⁶ Nicieja S. S., *Lwowskie Orleńta...*p. 12-13.

²⁷ A. Chojnowski., J. J. Bruski, *Ukraina*, Warszawa 2006, p. 77-87.

²⁸ A. Chojnowski, J. J. Bruski, *Ukraina (...)* p. 126-127.

²⁹ G. Motyka, *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji „Wisła”. Konflikt polsko-ukraiński 1943-1947*, Kraków 2011. p. 29-31., O. Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History*, Toronto 2000, p. 425-452. The sources differ on the actual number of those died.

of course, was impossible in such a situation. The Ukrainians were demonstrating their rival memory of the events through separate celebrations at their soldiers' tombs (at Yanovsky Cemetery). They were also organising other celebrations in Ukrainian churches (most of them were conducted in St. George Cathedral in Lviv with the support of well-known Greek Catholic archbishop Andrey Sheptytsky).³⁰ In addition to that, Ukrainians displayed their national flags in public spaces, which was forbidden. For instance, in 1928, during the tenth anniversary celebrations, they hung Ukrainian flags at a few places in Lviv (university, Union of Lublin Mound) and painted over a few Polish monuments. Also at that time, Ukrainians organized a manifestation and march around St. George Cathedral which resulted in fights with Polish students and policemen.³¹

Many monuments and memorial plaques memorialized the Polish victory in 1918 in Lviv's public space. Moreover, some events from that battle were marked in other ways too – for instance, in November 1938, during the 20th anniversary celebrations, around 36 street names were changed to commemorate the Defence of Lviv. The previous ones were usually traditional names, not connected with the history of any nation; these were altered to names recalling the Defence of Lviv. For instance, part of *Gródecka* street (old name from the small town near Lviv) was changed to the name of General Michał Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski who was the commander of the Polish army which relieved the city on 22 November. Part of *Green* (*Zielona*) street was renamed to that of General Tadeusz

³⁰ He was the unofficial leader of Ukrainians in Poland in the interwar period, supported Ukrainian culture, language and political life. His figure is controversial in present day Poland because of his suspected support for Ukrainian nationalists who collaborated with Germany during WWII, and his alleged consent to mass murders committed against Polish civilians by Ukrainian nationalists. Nevertheless, the church has started his beatification process that still goes on. More on him: *Metropolita Andrzej Szeptycki: studia i materiały*, ed. A.A. Zięba, Kraków 1994, 274 pp.

³¹ „Gazeta Lwowska”, No. 253, 3 Nov. 1928, „Dziennik Lwowski”, 3 Nov. 1928.

Rozwadowski who was the commander of the Polish Army in Eastern Galicia during the last phase of the Polish-Ukrainian war.³² That, in fact, is a good example of how the Polish legend was nurtured.

The Lviv Eaglets were present in interwar Poland in the education system and in the public space all over the country as an example to follow for future generations. But the official state discourse treated the battle like a fratricidal struggle which must not happen again. This was an attempt to convince the Ukrainian minority to accept Polish control over former Eastern Galicia, something that proved to be almost impossible.³³ The best example of this attempt is the official school reading in interwar Poland "Lviv Children" (*Dzieci Lwowa*) written by Helena Zakrzewska.³⁴ It was a short story about the November battle that featured the story of two siblings, the "good" sister Hela who was fighting on the Polish side defending the homeland and the "bad" brother Jurek who was fighting on Ukrainian side. At the climax of the story, Hela took her brother into captivity which illustrated the dilemma of tragic choice in one family. In the final part, Hela dies from a Ukrainian shot, and Jurek, at her deathbed, switches to the Polish side and swears loyalty to Poland.³⁵ Stories like that were a naively emotional way of educating subsequent generations and could have caused many problems with the Ukrainian minority in the country.³⁶

The problem of conflicting Polish-Ukrainian memories in The Second Polish Republic could not be resolved before 1939. Moreover, the tension was increasing instead of being reduced

³² „Gazeta Lwowska”, No. 265, 22 Nov. 1938, p. 2.

³³ In addition to that, the government not only tried to convince Ukrainians to accept Polish rule in Eastern Galicia. It was also important to counter the Soviet influence and propaganda which were trying to unite Ukrainians in Poland with Ukrainians in the Soviet Union, endangering Poland.

³⁴ *Bibliografia literatury dla dzieci i młodzież y 1918-1939. Literatura polska i przekłady*, ed. B. Krassowska, A. Grefkowicz, Warszawa 1995, p. 528.

³⁵ H. Zakrzewska, *Dzieci Lwowa*, Warszawa 1925, p. 55-160.

³⁶ However, we can also find similar Polish-Ukrainian problems in real life: the most popular example is the Sheptytsky brothers: Andriy was a Ukrainian bishop, unofficial head of Ukrainians in Poland; Stanislav was a general of the Polish Army, fighting for Polish independence in WWI.

in the interwar period together with other political problems inside the country, the danger of war and the rise of nationalist ideologies in this region of Europe.

3. World War II and Communist period: occupations, deportations and changing borders

The situation of Lviv and its inhabitants changed quite often during World War II. From 1939 to 1941, the city was under Soviet occupation; from 1941 to 1944, under German rule; and again, from 1944, under Soviet control. Those events radically changed the ethnic character (structure) of the city. As the result of the territorial settlement at the end of WWII, Lviv became part of the Soviet Union, and Poland was “moved” further to the West, losing the “Eastern Borderlands” with Lviv. Most of its Polish inhabitants were deported to the “new” Western Poland, the territory which Poland took over after the deportation of German people: Wrocław (Breslau), Opole (Oppeln), Silesia. After 1944, people from other parts of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic were moved to Lviv. During Soviet times, Lviv became a city with a Ukrainian majority population.³⁷

The Polish and Ukrainian independence activists in Lviv, although they did not work hand in hand (in fact, often fought against each other), equally became the victims of the Communist persecutions after WWII. Many of them were deported to camps in Siberia or put into prison because of their struggle against German and Soviet oppression during and after World War II. The memory of the November battle was “uncomfortable” for Communist propaganda and was erased from official state historical discourse. It was a symbol of independent national countries and national ideologies in this area and seen as “dangerous” to the new Communist authority. Somewhat paradoxically, the Soviet rule brought Polish and

³⁷ L. Podhorodecki, *Dzieje Lwowa*, p. 205-235, J. Hrycak, *Ukraina. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*, Gdańsk-Warszawa 2009, p. 159-165.

Ukrainian memory closer to each other as it was a symbol of strong traditions of independence for both sides. Soviet propaganda aimed to convince people that only communists could be “good” heroes, and everyone who was not should have been called “evil nationalist” or “fascist”.

This stance affected the post-World War II history of military cemeteries from the time of the Polish-Ukrainian War in 1918-1919. During the Soviet period, in 1971, the Polish Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów was completely bulldozed by the authorities. A stonecutter’s workshop was set up in the chapel and catacombs. The cemetery of Ukrainian Sichovy Striltsy (part of Yanovsky Cemetery) was destroyed simultaneously.³⁸

Poles, who after World War II were in minority in Lviv, tried to commemorate the battle on its anniversaries, but it might have caused serious persecutions. The last pre-war head of the Society of Protection of the Polish Heroes’ Tombs (*Straż Mogił Polskich Bohaterów*) Maria Tereszczakówna, who stayed in Lviv after World War II, tried to save the last remaining tombs. She managed to move some remains of Polish commanders to other graves in Lychakovsky Cemetery during the Soviet destruction in 1971, and sent information about the devastation of the cemetery to Polish veterans’ circles.³⁹ Thanks to her message, two old generals, veterans from November 1918, who were still alive at that time in Poland, Roman Abraham and Mieczysław Boruta-Spiechowicz, addressed a protest against the damage made to the Polish soldiers’ cemetery to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev. Unfortunately, they did not receive a response. Polish veterans’ groups living in Western Europe and in North America also protested against Soviet actions, but again to no avail.⁴⁰

Ukrainian soldiers’ tombs in Yanovsky Cemetery in Lviv were destroyed at the same time in 1971, and it also triggered

³⁸ S.S. Nicieja, *Lwowskie Orłęta...*, p.113-116.

³⁹ A. Fastnacht-Stupnicka, *Zostali we Lwowie*, Wrocław 2010, p. 248-253.

⁴⁰ S.S. Nicieja, *Lwowskie Orłęta...*, p.117-123.

protest in Ukrainian national circles in Western Europe and North America. In the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, Viacheslav Chornovil (who was a Ukrainian opposition activist) tried to protest against the destruction, but also without success.⁴¹

Nevertheless, these attempts show how important the memory of the Battle of Lviv in November 1918 was for the national identity of Poles and Ukrainians, and not only the ones living in the Soviet Union. However, the Battle of Lviv was still a symbol of painful wounds between those two nations, former neighbours. Both sides continued to nurture their legends and myths in the underground, protecting national memories and preserving identities transmitted from the interwar era in totalitarian times. The common enemy, the Soviet Union, was not enough to reconcile Polish and Ukrainian memories; moreover, after World War II and the cruel struggle between both sides, reconciliation was much harder.

4. After 1991: memory of the battle as a modern problem in international relations

In 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of the independent Ukrainian State, the memory of the Battle of Lviv has gained new meaning in present-day Western Ukraine. It is one of the ideological foundations of the modern Ukrainian national identity. On the other hand, in Polish collective memory, it is the symbol of the lost “Polish Eastern Borderlands”, especially Lviv.

After the fall of Communism, this question became vital again for Poland and Ukraine among the new conditions with a reversal of the interwar roles. The destroyed soldiers’ cemeteries were located in Lviv and after 1991, the issue of rebuilding those places and opening them for visitors came to the fore. Polish

⁴¹ Chornovil’s letter from 16 August 1971, [in:] *Viačeslav Čornovil, Tvory v desiaty tomah*, t. 5: *Publicystyka, dokumenty, materialy “Sprawy no 196”* (1970-1984), vol.5, Kyiv 2007, p. 58-60.

public opinion exerted pressure that in a non-Communist state (like Ukraine from 1991 on), all soldiers' tombs should be respected. The Ukrainian soldiers' cemetery was rebuilt without problems, and it offers locus to commemorate and popularise this event among modern Ukrainians in Lviv. The status of the destroyed Polish cemetery was more problematic. The question arose: what would Ukraine (independent for the first time in its history) do with the Polish Cemetery of Lviv's defenders?

From the beginning of the nineties, the Polish government tried to make an agreement with the new Ukrainian government in order to rebuild the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów. At that time, the Polish company "Energopol" working in Lviv on international contract, together with volunteers from the Polish minority in Lviv, started searching the territory of the cemetery. They found and marked the tombs hidden under the debris. However, they were doing it unofficially, in their leisure time. Lviv officials and local authorities rejected plans of rebuilding the destroyed Polish cemetery on several occasions. Moreover, there were some controversies connected to the memorial plaques and inscriptions on them, for example in 1995 and later. At that time, it was the most important political controversy between newborn Ukraine and Poland in their mutual international relations.⁴²

A lot of discussions were conducted between politicians, diplomats and historians from both sides, with different results. Many articles and political actions showed that the problem of the Battle of Lviv was very sensitive for both sides. Moreover, after Communist times, the ideological meaning of this "place of memory" has grown. Ukrainian nationalists' circles saw the Polish Cemetery of Lwów Defenders as a symbol of "Polish occupation" and they could not agree to have it rebuilt on their territory. On the other hand, for many Polish people, the cemetery's restoration was a crucial issue to start normal relations between the two countries.⁴³

⁴² S.S. Nicieja, *Lwowskie Orłęta...*, p.126-138.

⁴³ Ibidem, p.139-143.

It was finally after the Orange Revolution (2004) and Polish support for Viktor Jushchenko when the controversial issue was solved. The official opening ceremony of the rebuilt Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów took place on 24 June, 2005. The President of Poland (Aleksander Kwaśniewski) and the President of Ukraine (Viktor Jushchenko) both attended.⁴⁴

That ceremony symbolically ended the Polish-Ukrainian conflict over the memory of the Battle of Lviv in November 1918 and set a new stage in the relations between the two neighbouring nations. By the entrance to the Polish cemetery, we can see the plaque with inscriptions taken from the presidents' words, “On the turn of the 21st century, we have to remember the past, but we have to look to the future”.⁴⁵ Today, for every Polish tourist group visiting Lviv, it is one of the main stops, and every Polish political delegation to Ukraine visits the cemetery as well.

Conclusions: Anniversaries of November 1918 today

The anniversary of the “November uprising” is still very important for modern Ukrainian identity. The declaration of independence of the West Ukrainian People's Republic in 1918 is solemnly celebrated on this territory; in Lviv Town Hall, a reconstruction of those events takes place every year. For instance, we can see scouts dressed up like Ukrainian soldiers at that time. Also, there are many events connected to the anniversary in public spaces and in arts.⁴⁶

But the fall of Communism saw the revival of the Polish memory of the “Eastern Borderlands” as well. Many organizations nurturing the memory of the area were created. Most of them gather people born in pre-WWII Lviv or their children – all living in Poland. Groups like those organise

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 143-148.

⁴⁵ „Na porozi XXI stolittia pamiatajmo pro mynule ale dumajmo pro majbutnie”

⁴⁶ For example: *U Lvovi 1 lystopada vhid u meriju vartuvatymut' ZUNRivci*, [in:] www.zaxid.net [31 October 2011].

ceremonies in the churches and cemeteries in Poland, they publish many magazines and books about Lviv's history and the "Defence of Lwów". Those circles have not laid any claims to Western Ukraine, their main purpose being the protection of the memory and contact with the Polish minority in Ukraine. For example, thanks to them, many Polish schools and streets gained names after "Defenders of Lwów" or "Lwów Eagles".⁴⁷

For the Polish minority in Ukraine and its organizations that still are in Lviv, 22 November is the anniversary of the Polish victory in 1918. Most of them have their own private feasts.⁴⁸ In addition to that, the Roman Catholic Church in Western Ukraine, which is mostly based on the Polish minority, has its ceremony. It was also symbolic when the present bishop was installed in his seat on 22 November, 2008.

Nowadays, this issue does not cause serious problems, and both sides try to understand their complicated history. They try to reconcile that they were fighting for one and the same territory, and for both sides it was and still is the "holy land". But in today's Lviv, 1 November is the date of common prayer for reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians.⁴⁹ It is always organized around St. Michael's column in Lychakovsky Cemetery. Representatives of the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches and officials from both governments participate in this.

However, it is still a sensitive issue that needs to be approached tactfully. Recently, the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage restored and returned two lions sitting in front of the Triumphal Arch. The lions were reinstalled, but they revived heated discussions about the inscriptions on the plaques – could they be like the originals before WWII with the promise about loyalty to Poland and the Polish national emblem? Ukrainian nationalist circles opposed it and it is still unresolved. But many Ukrainians sided with the view that it

⁴⁷ S.S. Nicieja, *Lwowskie Orłeta...*, p. 292-293

⁴⁸ *Uroczystości jubileuszowe*, „Kurier Galicyjski”, No. 22(218) / 2014, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Lwów – modlitwa pojednania*, <http://info.wiara.pl/doc/170501.Lwow-Modlitwa-pojednania> /access April 2015/

is a matter of historical accuracy without political salience.⁵⁰ Another example of attempts to reconcile the memory of November 1918 is the new Ukrainian documentary “The Legion. The Chronicles of Ukrainian Galician Army 1918-1919” directed by Taras Khymych (2015) which offers a wide variety of perspectives on the conflict, uses original memoirs and memories of Ukrainians, Poles and Austrians. In the concluding section, Poland is presented as the main strategic partner of Ukraine today, supporting Ukraine during Majdan, and the film accentuates the brotherhood of the two nations regardless of many wars.

Nowadays, events during World War II are more significant for the troubled memories of Polish-Ukrainian relations. Memories of the massacre of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia by the Ukrainian nationalists (called the *Volhynian slaughter*) and Polish deportations of Ukrainian people from present areas of Eastern Poland (called: *Operation Vistula*) are still to be resolved.⁵¹

⁵⁰ L. Petrenko, *Cvyntarnyj detektyv Mista Leva. Lohichni, moralni, ta pravovi aspekty vporyatkuvannya Cvyntarya Orlyat, [in] zaxid.net* http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?tsvintarniy_detektiv_mista_leva&objectId=1378004 (access January 2016).

⁵¹ G. Motyka, *Cień Kłyma Sawura. Polska-ukraiński konflikt pamięci*, Gdańsk 2013, p. 6-12.

Gábor Egry – Róbert Takács

Pieces from the puzzle of the memory of WWI in Central and Eastern Europe*

Centenaries of significant events in world history usually generate interest among professionals and the broader public alike. WWI was certainly a defining moment in the 20th century – the starting point of the short 20th century, “Urkatastrophe”,¹ the first manifestation of the totality of modernity,² introduction to the “Age of Extremes”,³ just to name a few of the popular designations of the war that surely has changed the course of history – and as such, it could not evade its fate, either. Since the approach of the anniversary of the attempt in Sarajevo, the war has become the subject of professional and popularizing publications, academic and sensationalist research projects and – not without political connotations – historical debates. Anniversaries are, however, social constructs and conventions, their meaning and significance never entirely detached from a given situation and social context, thus opening the gates for active politics of memory. Furthermore, within the European Union, the number of actors is even larger. Alongside national and/or state-sponsored politics of memory, the goal of the

* This text is a revised version of the Hungarian text published in Nr. 59. of the journal *Korall* (2015).

¹ Stephan Burgdorf and Klaus Wiegrefe, *Az első világháború. A XX. század őskatasztrófája*, Budapest: Napvilág, 2010.

² Modris Ecksteins, *Rites of Spring. The Great War and The Birth of the Modern Age*, New York: 1986

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century*, London, Abacus, 1995.

EU is to actively foster a European memory, too. It is hard to satisfy the demand for a unified memory concerning an event that divides the continent not only into winners and losers, but also into different categories according to the consequences of the war and its intensity, too. Would it really be possible to bundle together the separate social memories of the collapsed Russian Empire resurrected in the form of the Soviet Union, the secularized and modernized Turkey that replaced the Ottoman Empire, the small and often quarrelling nation-state successors of the disappeared Austria-Hungary, the re-emerged Poland with the ambitions of a Great Power,⁴ the revolutionized Germany that nevertheless could have preserved its semi-hegemonic position in Europe,⁵ Italy that has barely escaped military collapse in 1917 but still could pretend to be a winner, or the triumphant France and Great Britain?

But if we turn our attention to Central and Eastern Europe, we must face further questions. How do politics of memory or similar activities aimed at fostering social memory work, and what are their impacts on the societies of the region? Are there any common Central and Eastern European characteristics, or at least points of entanglement, between various national politics of memory in the region? How are these affected by earlier varieties of the memory of WWI? Although the eleven papers presented at the conference 'Memory and Memorialisation of WWI in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: Past and Present' could not offer an overarching evaluation the phenomenon, they gave a series of starting points for further discussion on these issues, too. The talks tackled the political background of anniversaries, peculiarities of the national historiographies, monuments and their contexts, the most common discussions like the responsibility for the outbreak of the war, interwar practices of memory or the content of school textbooks. Without

⁴ Baár, Mónika 'Kis népek a nagyhatalmak árnyékában', 2000, 25 (2014) 6., 55-60.

⁵ István Diószegi, *Bismarck und Andrássy. Ungarn in der deutschen Machtpolitik in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Budapest, München, Wien: Teleki Laszlo Stiftung, 1999.

being exhaustive, the presentations highlighted a series of regional commonalities and differences that are worth exploring beyond merely summarizing the texts.

The most important among them is how the memory of the end of the war and its outcome dominated and still dominates its memory in the region. It does not simply focus on the status of winner and loser states and the memory of this fact. Instead, irrespective of victory or defeat, being born out of the collapse of the empires or just profiting from it, state formation and its territorial aspects form the focus of politics of memory. In most cases, it was also bound together with the legitimization of the state either through the peace settlement or through national revolution at the end of WWI. Even if the content of this memory is highly different in victorious and defeated countries, its focus, and thus its structure, are surprisingly similar. Importance is attributed neither to the events of the four war years, nor the social changes, nor their imprint on the memory of diverse social groups that spent these years in the frontlines or in the hinterland, but to the momentary events of collapse, revolution and state-foundation. The issue of continuity and rupture as well as the relationship with the world before 1914 certainly separate Austria and Hungary on the one hand, and the other successor states on the other. The latter group legitimized their existence in opposition to the monarchy (“the prison of nations”) and instrumentalized the war for this aim, too. However, considering the historiographic attempts to draw a line between interwar and dualist Hungary,⁶ or the uncertainties surrounding the memory of the Monarchy in interwar Austria,⁷ the difference does not seem so significant.

The past hundred years have not left this basic structure entirely unaltered. One of the common points of the presentations (Petra Svoljšak, Barnabás Vajda, Ivan Hrštic) was how the

⁶ Szekfű Gyula, *Három nemzedék. Egy hanyatló kor története*, Budapest: Élet Irodalmi Nyomda, 1920

⁷ Romsics Gergely, *Nép, nemzet. Birodalom. A Habsburg Birodalom emlékezete a német, osztrák és magyar történetpolitikai gondolkodásban*, Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2010

official memory and official memorialisation have changed after WWII. However, it did not mean a turn towards the war years instead of the outcome, but rather a decline in the significance of WWI and the original founding myth for the legitimization of the respective states in the new era. It was especially marked in the case of the second Yugoslavia which henceforward drew its legitimacy from the war of liberation against Nazi and Fascist occupation after 1941, and not from Serbian victory in 1918. To a lesser extent, WWI was devalued as a founding myth in other countries like Czechoslovakia or Poland, too.

The change of regime brought new challenges. This time, it was not the role of the two world wars in the history of the nation that needed to be addressed, but the expectations deriving from the attempt to foster a common European memory.⁸ The Great War was surpassed in importance by the memory of the Holocaust and, in terms of politics of memory, that of the Communist period. As European memory is driven by the European Union, the issue was felt more strongly in countries whose accession prospects were better. However, with the debate of “Western” and “Eastern” memory – the evaluation of the Communist period as a suffering and trauma equal to the Holocaust being at stake – the memory of WWI remained a secondary issue until the anniversary. The question of its relation to these seminal traumatic experiences was rarely tackled. The sole exception was Hungary where the rival politics of memories of right and left integrated the traditional memory of WWI, the one focusing on its outcome, into their overarching constructs. “Trianon”, as it is usually referred to, was connected to the memory of the Holocaust and Communism, although in a mutually exclusive way.⁹

⁸ James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution. Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe*, London, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010, Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (eds), *European Memory?* Oxford, New York: Berghahn, 2009

⁹ Márton Dornbach, Remains of a Picnic. Post-Transition Hungary and its Austro-Hungarian Past, *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2014) 255–291., Feischmidt Margit, ‘Populáris emlékezetpolitikák és az újnacionalizmus. A Trianon-kultusz társadalmi alapjai’, in Feischmidt Margit (ed.), *Nemzet*

It is often simply a recycling of traditional discourses already popular during the interwar period, a focus on the causes of the collapse, or the denial of any Hungarian responsibility for the war. In other cases, like the recent wave of research (and sometimes cult-building) dedicated to the figure of István Tisza, it is a reconceptualisation of these earlier tropes.¹⁰ It is hardly unique, as Erwin Schmidl demonstrated in his presentation, that the first edition of Manfred Rauchensteiner's seminal work on Austria-Hungary's last war criticized Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Berchtold and Chief of the General Staff General Conrad von Hötzendorf for bearing a significant share of the responsibility for the war, while the recent second edition points to Francis Joseph in this regard and shows more empathy for the minister and the general.¹¹ Aleksandar Miletic also pointed out how historical debates concerning responsibility – not least because of the success of Christopher Clark's *Sleepwalkers*, a book that is seen as irreparably revisionist concerning the issue of responsibility for the war – flared up in Serbia (the dominant opinion exonerates Serbia from any share in it), and how it also helped to revive the cult of Gavrilo Princip and the Russian alliance. Taken together with the Czech Republic where the cult of founding fathers Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, whose figures were already central to the interwar founding myth of the republic, still dominates social memory, one could conclude that the revival of interwar models of memory is rather the rule and not the exception in Central and Eastern Europe.

a mindennapokban. Az újnacionalizmus populáris kultúrája, Budapest: L'Harmattan-MTA Társadalomkutató Központ, 2014, 51–81., Trianon, avagy „traumatikus fordulat” a magyar történetírásban, *Korall*, 59 (2015) 1. 82–107.

¹⁰ Maruzsa Zoltán and Pallai László (eds.), *Tisza István emlékezete. Tanulmányok Tisza István születésének 150. évfordulójára*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történeti Intézete, 2011.

¹¹ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod es Doppeladlers. Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, Graz: Styria Verlag, 1994 and Idem. *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie*, Köln, Wien, Weimar: Böhlau, 2013.

It does not mean, however, that different patterns could not be discerned in memory. It is probably safe to conclude that the lack of serious research on the war in the last decades is one of the reasons behind the persistence of the traditional models of remembering. Not that there would have been much serious research done and made accessible when these models were established immediately after WWI, while the strength and success of the myths themselves, based on the insufficient knowledge of the facts, certainly contributed to the one-sided nature of the memory of WWI. The first years following the peace were obviously determined by the first generation of historiography¹² with its interest in military and diplomatic history and, at least in the case of the defeated nations, with its obsession with the responsibility issue accompanied by slightly counterfactual questions: “Would it have been possible for the Central Powers to win the war militarily?” or “Would it have been possible to avoid the war?”

It is important to see, however, that certain founding myths almost necessarily subdued one or other type of social memory. In the case of the defeated, like Hungary, the frequently used “*Dolchstosslegende*” (stab-in-the-back-myth) and the uniform condemnation of the revolutions at the end of the war, grown out of a multitude of deprivations during the war, left little room for depicting the social experience of the war apart from the stereotypical rehashing of the anti-Semitic picture of war profiteer Jews who had exempted themselves from front service.¹³ After all, admitting that the war really had reconfigured society, exhausted the state and empowered new social groups could have led to the conclusion that the collapse had not simply been the result of accidental factors or conspiracy. But even

¹² Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies from 1914 to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

¹³ However, the latter was the product of the war years and not its aftermath. see Bihari Péter, *Lövészárkok a hátszágban. Középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországon*, Budapest: Napvilág, 2008.

in those victorious states where more than one national elite tried to find a place within the new construct, especially if they stood on opposing sides during the war, the simultaneous representation of opposite experiences could have posed a threat to the legitimacy of the new state. It was especially poignant in the new Yugoslavia (Svoljšak, Hrstić) where only the battles of the Serbian army and the volunteers fighting with the Entente powers became part of official memory. The memory of the Soča (Isonzo) front was, for example, completely silenced, an especially awkward development if one considers how Fascist Italy, on the opposite side of the border and ruling over the actual battlefields, tried to remind itself and its Slovenians of the battles, often with monumental constructs. In Yugoslavia, only the veterans of the k. u. k army were allowed to cherish their memories, but only at the price of being legally discriminated, for example with pensions.

But conflictual politics of memory was the natural state of affairs in Poland and in the enlarged nation states, too. Slovaks from Hungary soon reinterpreted how Czechoslovakia came into being (Slávka Otčenášová). They emphasised the importance of Slovak elites in state-founding and referred to the conditional and provisory nature of Czechoslovakia that could not exist against the will of its Slovak constituents who demanded more autonomy.¹⁴ Romanian politics was obsessed with debates over the question whether Transylvanian Romanians had shaken off Hungarian domination alone or Romanians from the Old Kingdom had liberated their kin.¹⁵ Finally, the relationship between Poles and Ukrainians in interwar Poland was strained by the memory of their war at the end of 1918 over the city of

¹⁴ See Slávka Otčenášová's contribution in this special issue.

¹⁵ Gábor Egry, 'A Crossroad of Parallels. Regionalism and Nation-Building in Transylvania in the First Half of

the Twentieth Century', in Anders E. Blomqvist, Constantin Iordachi and Balázs Trencsényi (eds.), *Hungary and Romania Beyond National Narratives. Comparisons and Entanglements*, Oxford, Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2013, 239–276.

Lwów/Lviv/Lemberg, a locality turned into a *lieux de memoire* on both sides.

The gender aspects of the interwar memory of WWI is presented by Tomasz Pudlocki, while Magda Arsenicz portrays the stakes of the Battle of Lviv/Lwów for today's politics of memory.¹⁶ The memory of women who participated in the war was built mainly on their return to their pre-WWI social roles rather than on the changes the war brought for women in society in general. The memory of the Battle of Lviv oscillates today between a Polish, a Ukrainian and a Polish-Ukrainian one according to the political relations between the two countries. But it is hardly a novel phenomenon. Ukrainian-Polish relations (including the memory of WWI) had already been determined by such political considerations in interwar Poland, especially while an influential circle around Józef Piłsudski, the so-called Prometheans, nurtured the idea of a Greater Poland based on an anti-Soviet Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement; in order to appease their potential allies, they were ready to offer concessions to the Ukrainian minority within Poland.¹⁷

The relationship of politics of memory to individual and family memory was already problematic before 1945, as the case of the tolerated but officially not supported Yugoslav veterans has demonstrated. Monumentalisation in Hungary, as Zoltán Oszkár Szóts' paper at the conference demonstrated, was dominated by local memorials, even though some corporations, schools or other institutions also erected their own ones. However, these monuments, the first wave of which was erected already in 1917, soon became places of remembrance for the peace treaty of Trianon and the "injustice" that befell Hungary at the end of WWI. It was probably one of the reasons that monumentalizing efforts stopped in 1945 and were not renewed after 1989, either.

The meaning of these memorials is not necessarily fixed but often dependent on local or broader social contexts or individual

¹⁶ See Tomasz Pudlocki and Magda Arsenicz in this special issue.

¹⁷ Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War. A Polish Artist's Secret Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

interpretations. The cemeteries of the fallen soldiers in Lviv/Lwów/Lemberg are a case in point, as their accessibility and meaning for the social memory is usually defined by politics. Recently, after the millennium, the Polish cemetery was renovated due to the Polish-Ukrainian political rapprochement. In less exposed localities, however, the situation was reversed, and local customs or memory prevailed over official politics of memory. One such example is provided by Romania. There, communities of the “defeated”, mainly that of Transylvanian Saxons, were permitted to erect their own monuments, although to do so, they were required to integrate into the nationwide framework organisation for monumentalizing and remembrance.¹⁸ Even though the state pursued its own memorialisation policies, and in this effort attempted to prescribe most details of local monuments (often even the ornaments and aesthetics), its efficiency was limited. Local communities, especially the Orthodox and Greek Catholic ones, could attach their traditional rites of burial and mourning to the modern, nationalist monuments, transforming their meaning at once.¹⁹ The official politics of memory still left significant marks on the landscapes with its signs, but just as it was the case with Czechoslovakia and its Czechoslovak Legions or the Yugoslav volunteers, memory was bifurcated. The state cherished the memory of the smaller group of “official” heroes (often also privileged materially), while remembrance for ordinary soldiers of all armies was diffused into the generalised memory of the unknown soldier. Nevertheless, it was probably able to hide the fragmentation of memory due to opposing loyalties during the war (Slovene, Croat vs. Serbian from Serbia; Slovak, Czech vs. Legionaries).

¹⁸ Bernard Böttcher, *Kontinuität des Ersten Weltkrieges im Frieden? Kriegerdenkmäler und Heldenkult bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen nach 1918.*, in Harald Roth and Mariana Hausleitner (eds.) *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf den Minderheiten in Ostmittel und Südosteuropa*, München: IKGS, 2006. Franz Sz. Horvath,

¹⁹ Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims. Remembering War in Twentieth Century Romania*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008

The 100th anniversary is obviously a conjunctural period of historiography, but the growing attention did not necessarily mean interest in a new interpretation or new aspects of WWI. School textbooks, analysed at the conference by Péter Bihari, Barnabás Vajda and Slávka Otčenášová, suggest that the significance of WWI in national curricula, and consequently in social memory that slowly turns from a communicative to a cultural one, remains limited all over Central and Eastern Europe. Even though the latest textbooks in Hungary devote more space to the social aspects of WWI, including the experience of the hinterland, the focus still lies on military events. However, without a new wave of historical research, the content of the textbooks is hard to change.

The position and social role of historiography is another similarity of the countries of the region. All three generations of WWI historiography – even if less markedly than in the Western historiographies²⁰ – left their mark on historical writings from the Czech Republic to Croatia, from Poland to Serbia. The appearance of these generations was somewhat belated due to the limitations imposed by official Marxism before 1989 on the one hand, and to accommodation to the new national frameworks following the dissolution of some post-WWI successor states afterwards on the other. That said, the social impact of the war became just as important a topic for research as military operations, although the outcome of WWI still dominates its memory over the war experience. The hiatus in national historiographies is often the result of limited resources rather than the lack of openness, or the still existing agendas of politics of memory that used to reignite old debates.

However, the results of the enthusiasm around the anniversary are diverse. The old issues came to the fore in Serbia and to a certain extent, although for different reasons, in Croatia and Romania, too. Serbian historiography refuted Christopher Clark's thesis about Serbian co-responsibility for the outbreak of the war, and most of its proponents returned to

²⁰ Jay Winter, Antoine Prost, op. cit.

the traditional view: Serbia was an innocent victim of unjustified aggression. The dismemberment of the Monarchy, thus, was the judgement of history. The debate had some reverberations in Croatia, too, but Croatian historians engaged with it with significantly reduced enthusiasm compared to their Serbian colleagues.

In Romania, the well-known revisionist historian Lucian Boia, who has already been deconstructing with gusto the mythical constructs of the Romanian national historiography, published an essay on the reinterpretation of the war.²¹ In this work, he proposed a middle-of-the-road position concerning the responsibility for the war, revising Fritz Fischer's thesis of exclusive German responsibility due to their ambition to become a world power, and critically reassessing the role of Serbian and other nationalist tendencies. His disturbing news for Romanians was his assessment that the emergence of Greater Romania was no historical necessity but an accidental event.

Polish historiography chose another way forward, and some of the works published joined important recent trends in international historiography. Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny²² consciously based on these approaches. Research on the Eastern Front and its hinterland gained significance only recently vis-à-vis the Western theatre of the war, for a long time dominant in historiography. Occupation regimes, their social, economic and cultural aspects have also started to figure only relatively recently in the focus of historical studies, just as it is the case with the subsequent "small world war" in the East and the paramilitary violence.²³

²¹ Lucian Boia, *Primul Război Mondial: paradoxuri, controverse, reînterpretări*, București: Humanitas, 2014.

²² Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, *Nasza Wojna. Europa Środkowo-Wschonia 1914–1918*, vol. I. Imperia 1912–1916, Warszawa: WAB, 2014

²³ Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on The Eastern Front. Culture, National Identity and Occupation in World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (eds.), *War in Peace. Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012; Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished. Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923*, London: Penguin, 2016; Jochen Böhrer,

The results of research in other countries have not yielded significant monographs so far. Instead, research projects, popularizing activities and conferences show where interest is turning to. It usually includes local social histories that – probably unconsciously – coincided with the German attempts around the anniversary.²⁴ Another popular research field is the reinterpretation of the end of the war.²⁵ It does not simply mean the extension of the chronologic boundaries of WWI in Eastern Europe to the end of the Russian civil war or the presentation of paramilitary violence sweeping through societies. The main goal is the analysis of transition (from war to peace, from empires to nation states) in order to reveal continuities and ruptures. Their focus could shift from local to institutional or to certain social groups, like the military,²⁶ economic organisations²⁷ or the aristocracy. These also offer a new scale of analysis because it is possible to incorporate such attempts into regional histories as well, as it happened with Upper-Silesia earlier.²⁸ It is important to note that in most cases, professional historians deliberately

Włodzimierz Borodziej and Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.) *Legacies of Violence. Eastern Europe's First World War*, München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2014

²⁴ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Roger Chikering, *Freiburg im Ersten Weltkrieg. Totaler Krieg und städtische Alltag 1914–1918*, Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2009; Ivan Hrstić, *Vrijeme promjena: Makarska 1918–1929.*, Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, Grad Makarska, 2013; Birgit Hellmann and Mathias Mieth, *Heimatfront. Eine mitteldeutsche Universitätsstadt im Ersten Weltkrieg*. Jena: Jenaer Stadtmuseum, 2014.

²⁵ Harald Heppner and Martin Švorc, eds. *Veľká doba v malom priestore. Zlomové zmeny v mestách stredoeurópskeho priestoru a ich dôsledky (1918–1929)/ Große Zeit im kleinen Raum. Umbrüche in den Städten des mitteleuropäischen Raumes 1918–1929*, Prešov–Graz: Universum, 2012.

²⁶ Irina Marin;

²⁷ Máté Rigó, *Imperial Elites after The Fall of Empires. Business Elites and States in Europe's East and West 1867–1928*, A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Cornell University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Ithaca: Cornell University, Department of History, 2016

²⁸ T. Hunt Hooley, *National Identity in Weimar Germany. Upper Silesia and the Eastern Borders*, Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1997, Andrzej Michalczyk, *Heimat, Kirche und Nation. Deutsche und polnische Nationalisierungsprozesse im geteilten Oberschlesien 1922–1939*, Köln, Wien, Weimar: Böhlau, 2014

attempt to popularize their results with broader projects of dissemination.²⁹

Most of these trends are present in Hungary, too. But apart from a few focused research projects³⁰, official politics of memory and its new institutions offer only limited support for such attempts despite significant resources invested in activities. Ad hoc subsidies could not help the institutionalisation of ongoing projects that would be necessary to broaden and deepen their reach within society, contributing to permanent active engagement of citizens with the memory of WWI. The small scale events, projects, venues, whatever their individual merits are, do not form one, two or three strategic research directions. They could still yield quite a few important works until the end of the anniversary years, but without more coordination and conscious cooperation, they risk to result in widely diverging outcomes (also in terms of quality). Instead of presenting a new, broad interpretation of WWI that could generate interest beyond the country's borders, only fragments of a history will emerge.

²⁹ International Encyclopedia of the First World War, <http://www.1914-1918-online.net/>

³⁰ Trianon 100, "Negotiation Post-Imperial Transitions 1918-1925. A Comparative Study of Local Transitions from Austria-Hungary to the Successor States", www.elsovh.hu

Expert questionnaire on the memory of WWI



German soldiers exercise gymnastics at the Western Front
Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv, Bildersammlung

The Institute of Political History, an NGO and independent, not-for-profit research institute in Hungary, started a four-year project last year, with funding from the Citizens for Europe – European Active Memory program of the European Commission, in order to help develop, facilitate and strengthen the memory of WWI. The project is composed of a website (www.elsov.hu, www.elsovh.hu/english) and a series of events aimed at the larger public and the scholarly community. The intention of the institute is also to foster contacts and cooperation across Europe among organisations engaged in similar activities. The aim is to learn more about these processes in Europe, to facilitate discussion on topics of historiography and, first and foremost, on issues of memory, reflecting upon each other's experiences with remembrance and social memory. Beyond a mere overview and classification of the commemorations, we hope to collect and help to distribute good practices, innovative methods, enable the building of a network of institutions with compatible aims and projects, to develop a pool of committed organizations that can draw upon each other and build consortia for common projects and, last but not least, to help transmit new methods and knowledge into education. As a first step, we would like to ask you, as an expert in the field [...], to reflect upon three large topics: the commemorations on the 100th anniversary, the current historiography of WWI, and the methods to influence social memory of the war, with the help of a series of orientating

questions. We intend to publish the answers on our website and an evaluation of the answers in an issue of our journal *Múltunk*, and to use it to foster further cooperation.

Commemorations on the 100th anniversary

Few people would contest that WWI was a crucial event in the history of the modern world. After the long period of stability in Europe, it was the beginning of a new era and as such the starting point of social and political processes that are still reshaping Europe and the world. But the meaning and understanding of the war has changed in many senses since it ended, and societies today look at it differently than people did even a few decades ago. These changes not only give a taste of how our societies changed since WWI, but they also reproduce to a certain extent how social memory and the politics of memory have changed in Europe. Once a founding myth for a whole “New Europe” and the largest traumatic event in European history, WWI is overshadowed by later events which had a more lasting impact on European memory. Therefore, even if the anniversary brought attention to WWI, its role and place of the Great War in national and European memories is uncertain. It is not easy to see what it offers for societies nowadays in terms of identification, cohesion and mobilizing power.

How would you typologise the commemorations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of WWI in your country and in Europe? How are official and unofficial practices related to each other and shaping the memory of WWI? What was novel in the commemorations and what remained solidly on the traditional ground? How much interest did the anniversary generate among the public? How was it manifested, what appealed the most to the public? How much did these commemorations bring transnational aspects of WWI and its memory to the fore? What could be the place of WWI in European memory?

Historiography

Since Jay Winter and Antoine Prost famously identified three generations of historians and historiography of the Great War, it has been common to situate scholarship in this framework. One of the most common observations is how national historiographies in Eastern Europe lagged behind the West in terms of the emergence of these generations, and after 1989 how easily they returned to interpretations which were already part of the national imagery of these states right after WWI. Nevertheless, the 100th anniversary not only brought about a new wave of interest in the events between 1914 and the early twenties, but it also contributed to the emergence of new trends and approaches to the war which are not necessarily easy to frame with the model of generations, and which show not only an interest in a more detailed understanding of how the war affected societies and people, but also in repositioning it in global history. The new focus on the Eastern front, the integration of the fate of empires into post-colonial histories, the growing attention to the non-state-organized violence as a determining feature of the post-WWI social and political landscape in Eastern Europe are only a few notable ones among these new approaches. Meanwhile, one can also speak of a revival of old tropes and interpretations, most notably in the discussion around responsibility and in the attempts to challenge what is seen as de-heroisation in national historiography.

What are the most important debates on the anniversary? How did discussions of international salience affect debates in your country? What are the significant new trends in research on WWI? What should the broader public expect in terms of new interpretations or new perspectives on the war? Do you think WWI needs a reconceptualization? If yes, in what sense? How would you position the actual national historiography in the history of a global WWI? What do you think would be desirable in this respect? Do you think there is a specific Eastern European

history of the war? How should we relate the Eastern part of the continent to Europe as a whole or the World in historiography?

Methods of dissemination, best practices, cooperation

Historians have enjoyed for a long time a quasi-monopoly of historical knowledge in the form of power over determining national historical canons. But other actors' contribution to the development of social memory, a genre usually summed up as public history, has gained traction and nowadays it is hard to underestimate its influence on the historical consciousness of European societies. Historiography, not the least due to its changing self-understanding following a series of epistemological revelations, is only one of many actors trying to influence the public. In this competition, traditional genres of historical writing have disadvantages, and to reach the public, even historians try to revert to new methods. However, our understanding of how social memory comes into being has changed profoundly, too. Alongside the generation of grand narratives, practitioners of memory (who actively engage in discovering, preserving and mobilizing memory) are keen to integrate individual, family, local and regional memories into broader social memory in a way that reflects the past and present diversity of societies. These processes are also part of what is usually referred to as European memory which was mainly based on the memory of the Holocaust, but since the accession of the Eastern European countries, it has also been a contested field. So far, it has mainly been the deviating memory of the Communist past which had to be integrated into European memory, but the anniversary of WWI can pose another challenge.

What are the most important books published recently in your country concerning WWI? What were the most notable scientific venues? What do you consider the best methods to reach the larger public with results of scholarly research on WWI? What topics are people the most interested in? How could

a more nuanced view of WWI be developed? What is the role of less traditional means of dissemination? In what respect do you think transnational cooperation is possible regarding the memory of WWI? How could you and/or your institution contribute to such an endeavour?

Dr. sc. Filip Hameršak

Miroslav Krleža Lexicographic Institute (Zagreb, Croatia)

ANSWER: *Speaking in terms of politics of memory, the Croatian case is – I dare say – among the more complex ones. Therefore, as very few contributions on the subject are available to the non-Croatian-speaking readers, I have taken the liberty to answer the questionnaire at large, in a single, continuous text.*

Not surprisingly, the events of WWII and its aftermath both marked not only by intense fighting and destruction on the territory of today's Croatia, but also by mass killings of civilians and surrendered combatants as well, have to a significant degree overshadowed the experiences of the more distant 1914-1918 conflict. Suppressed for decades by the ideological hegemony of the Communist Party lead by Josip Broz Tito (of ethnic Croat father and Slovene mother, which will reveal to be of some importance later in the text), the scholarly and public debate on these topics started only in the late 1980s, resulting in a whole new range of research in the 1990s and 2000s. Although it can be said that the area of common scholarly opinion on WWII is slowly but steadily broadening, as far as public discourse is concerned, it still remains a heated, omnipresent theme, significantly interwoven with contemporary left-right divisions of the political spectrum.

In that aspect, I think, several analogies could be drawn between Croatia and a number of Central or East European countries, but there is also a notable distinction stemming

from the fact that the rule of the Communist Party in the former Yugoslavia was to a higher degree of domestic origin, comparatively enjoying more legitimacy, and somewhat less dependent on direct repression, at least since the 1960s. As a result, neither its chequered legacy, nor its proponents were systematically subjected to lustration-like practices, and have therefore remained present in various fields of public activity.

Yet another important distinction is the impact of the 1991-1995 Croatian War of Independence. First of all, because of the »national reconciliation« policy, even those debates on WWII »crime and punishment« have been practically frozen until it was over. Secondly, as far as opposed views are concerned, discussions on some of its aspects tend to equal – if not surpass – those on the 1941-1945 period.

Within that context, it can hardly be a surprise that WWI has generally been getting only scratches of scholarly and media attention. But to get a wider picture of the politics of memory in Croatia, one should start the story all the way back in 1914.

Expectedly, at that time the vast majority of the Croatian political elite was not satisfied with the organization of the Habsburg Monarchy. In spite of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia being proclaimed on several occasions, it was a kind of virtual non-entity, as in reality no closer administrative ties existed between the Transleithanian Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia, and the Cisleithanian Kingdom of Dalmatia. Also, ethnic Croats did form the majority of population in Istria (belonging to Cisleithania) and a significant proportion of that in Bosnia and Herzegovina (under a dualistic condominium) which had been occupied in 1878 but annexed to the Monarchy only in 1908. Although among them the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia enjoyed the highest degree of autonomy, in the final instance, all of these lands were governed from Vienna or Budapest without serious possibility of their representatives to influence crucial decisions. However, the dominant approach of the Croatian political elite was that of gradual reform »within the confines of the law« which entailed

cooperation with one of the interest groups within the Monarchy against the other.

The outright idea that the South Slav parts of the Monarchy should – and really could – depose the Habsburgs, secede (violently, if needed) and join the Kingdom of Serbia under the rule of the Karađorđević dynasty either just enlarging it, or forming a new state of Yugoslavia, was gaining more serious momentum only on the eve of WWI. Overtly or secretly sponsored by the official organs of Serbia, it was increasingly popular among younger intellectuals, but not evenly distributed according to particular land or ethnic groups; the Habsburg Serbs, especially those in Southern Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina, percentually being more inclined to the simple enlargement of their already independent nation state.

Therefore, romantic ideas of unconditional South Slav unity, realistic concerns about the possible domination of Serbia, and loyalist perceptions of high treason were present simultaneously in Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian-Istrian-Bosnian-Herzegovinian societies of the day, interwoven either with some sort of modern nationalism, or a kind of traditional unquestioned allegiance to the King and Emperor.

Interethnic relations additionally deteriorated with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand by the Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip, as he –if anybody – was perceived to be the figure that could restructure the Monarchy along the so-called trialistic lines, more favourable to a significant part of the Croatian political elite. In fact, contrary to the position of other »non-dualistic« peoples, since 1868 the autonomy of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia has already been to a degree reflected in the armed forces, namely in the status of a singular Domobranstvo (Honvédség, i.e. Home Guard) district coinciding with their territory. Although the uniform name of Royal Hungarian Home Guard had prevailed over the combined Hungarian-Croatian or even singular Croatian attribute, apart from Croatian being its official and command language, it had a different flag, a customized oath, and its commander was

prescribed to be of Croatian-Slavonian domicile. Although not much, this was more than pure symbolism, and was rather effectively used to corroborate the claims that serving in the army supports the Croatian national goals, bringing closer the reward of trialisation.

All in all, among the South Slav population of the Monarchy, the declaration of war on Serbia was seen as a just crusade as well as a brutal aggression against brotherly people. Be it either way (and other motives like strict discipline or personal sense of honour are also not to be underestimated), during Potiorek's campaigns of 1914, the core of his Balkan Army, consisting of South Slav soldiers (that is, the 13th, 15th and 16th corps, seated in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Dubrovnik, respectively), fought loyally. Of course, there were defections – its rate among ethnic Serbs was larger when compared to that among Croats – but not on a drastic scale. Impregnated with both real and fabricated stories of »barbarous« ways of waging war in the Balkans, on a number of occasions, the soldiers of Franz Joseph behaved in analogous manner, showing no mercy either to the surrendered enemy or to the civilians, which left a deep imprint on the memory of the Serbian population.

Initially, it seems, the South Slav soldiers of Austria-Hungary were not an exception, but after several weeks of closer contact, the instances of such brutal behaviour were reduced in number. Anyway, in the first half of 1915, the majority of South Slav units were transferred to the Russian or Italian front, and their participation in the 1915-1918 occupation of Serbia was of lesser consequence apart from that of several officers whose language skills and cultural versatility were needed by the military government.

Generally speaking, because of the »irredenta« and the language barrier, soldiers from today's territory of Croatia were more intensely and more durably motivated to fight on the Italian than on the Russian front. In fact, similarly to the Czech legion, thousands of South Slav prisoners of war joined the volunteers' units, formed as part of the Serbian army on the

territory of Russia. But there was also a difference – the majority of anti-Habsburg émigré South Slav politicians, since 1915 organized in a London-seated Yugoslav Committee, envisaged the end of the war to bring a creation of a new, possibly federal Yugoslav state, not just an enlargement of the Kingdom of Serbia. As a result, their relations with the Serbian government were strained, coming through several ups and downs until an uneasy compromise was reached in 1917. Up to that time, because of a perceived inequality, a large number of volunteers, mainly ethnic Croats and Slovenes, did resign, preferring to join the Russian army or even to return to the POW camps.

On the other hand, the Serbian army proper did also start several offensives in 1914, aimed at the Eastern regions of Slavonia and Bosnia. Although part of the ethnic Serbian population welcomed this as national liberation, a general uprising which was hoped for did not happen, and these exploits were soon repulsed. In fact, although large regions in the South Eastern part of the Habsburg Monarchy were considered to be »ancient Serb lands« by the pre-war Serbian textbooks, it was left rather unclear which ethnicities inhabit those lands, even more so in the light of their zealous fighting in the »Swabian army« of 1914 and after.

On that basis, the Yugoslav unification of 1918 – a conflict-laden process in itself, reaching a partial and short-term stabilization only in 1939 when Banovina Hrvatska was organized as an autonomous Croatian unit – had been mirrored by a highly dissonant politics of memory.

First of all, the official view promoted mostly by the King and the armed forces tended to look at WWI through the eyes of the old Kingdom of Serbia. Not surprisingly, practically all the regulations, titles, symbols and decorations were taken over from the Serbian army, including the calendar of historic battles. True, several thousand active or reserve South Slav Habsburg officers were admitted, but only up to the rank of major, those of higher ranks being strictly selected (the situation in the navy was somewhat different as pre-1918 Serbia was a

landlocked country). The blending was not a success, many of them quitting after a few years or at least feeling continuously neglected.

In that scope, as it seems, apart from several minor instances, during the 1918-1941 period no public memorial attention was given to those fallen in the ranks of Austria-Hungary, be it on the Serbian, Russian or Italian front. One of the exceptions concerns the activity of the war veteran's union Udruženje rezervnih oficira i ratnika. Including also a number of former Habsburg officers, it had taken part in the building of at least two ossuaries containing thousands of earthly remains of those killed on both sides, the one on the Gučevo mountain in the 1920s, and the other in the Zagreb Mirogoj cemetery in the 1930s. Furthermore, several local or religious communities on today's territory of Croatia did erect memorial plaques listing their fallen members in a politically neutral manner.

As far as private popular press and memoir literature is concerned, there was a significant production in the former Habsburg parts of the pre-1941 Yugoslavia. However, within the Croatian cultural circle, the WWI memoirs of anti-Habsburg agents as well as those of former Serbian (since 1917, Serbian, Croatian and Slovene) volunteers were overrepresented. Book-length apolitical or even implicitly Habsburg-loyalist memoirs did start to appear only in the 1930s, confining their recollections to the internally not so sensitive Russian or Italian front. The first implicitly loyalist account of a short-term personal experience on the Serbian front was published within a book in 1939 in Belgrade, not Zagreb. Although it did not enter into the question of war guilt and condemned the Austro-Hungarian treatment of Serbian civilians, its author Pero Blašković was severely attacked in the Serbian press. Most promisingly, several former anti-Habsburg ethnic Serb and Croat intellectuals had risen in his defence, stating it was high time to hear the other side representing hundreds of thousands of common people that had willingly or forcibly been fighting for the Central Powers.

WWI was treated in Croatian works of fiction along these lines, but in an even less polyphonic manner. There the domination of the renowned Miroslav Krleža was already established in the early 1920s. Belonging to the younger, radical pro-Yugoslav generation and owing much to his personal wartime experience (quitting the Ludoviceum military academy in 1913, it is still a dubious point if he had ever been to the trenches), in his novellas and dramas, Austria-Hungary was presented as an irreformable »prison of nations«, requiring the absurd human sacrifice of Croatian intellectuals, workers and peasants alike. Interestingly, Krleža's narrative dealt mainly with distant battlefields in the Carpathians, Galicia and Bukowina, but not with those of the Drina, Kolubara, Isonzo or Piave where it was easier to find rational motivation, at least for some time, and for part of the Croatian political spectrum.

To conclude, the public politics of the WWI memory of the first Yugoslavia did not (sufficiently) reflect the experiences of more than a half of its population, and the early signs of possible change were interrupted by the outbreak of WWII hostilities in 1941.

In 1941, the Axis-allied Independent State of Croatia was founded, naming its regular army Domobranstvo after the one founded in 1868. Apart from re-introducing its regulations, titles and symbols (not entirely, to be clear), the core of the new army consisted of former Habsburg officers, including those that were found inappropriate for or had declined service in the Yugoslav army (some of them would soon get into conflict with more radical members of the Ustasha militia). As a more symbolic gesture of continuity, the WWI decorations of Austria-Hungary were once again proclaimed suitable to be worn. Before the demise of that short-lived state, the special Croatian military museum and archive was founded, retrieving a great deal of WWI-related artefacts which have survived until our days, albeit within other institutions. Also, Slavko Pavičić, an amateur military historian, managed to publish two volumes treating the 1914-1918 Croatian units under Habsburg command

(because of the WWII alliance, the Italian front was bypassed in the 1943 volume), and Vili Bačić, a naval officer, the one on the Adriatic sea skirmishes. Finally, the 1941 memoirs of Mile Budak combined his opinion of Greater Serbian imperialism bearing a lion's share of the responsibility for the outbreak of the war with a sort of sympathy towards a common Serbian soldier.

The 1945 renewal of Yugoslavia turned the clock back in many aspects concerning WWI. First of all, a number of Domobranstvo officers were either summarily executed or imprisoned. Because of the aforementioned elements of continuity, the negative aura of the WWII-era Independent State of Croatia was extended to the WWI Domobranstvo, making it an additionally undesirable theme, always prone to be associated with real or putative Croatian nationalism. Secondly, doing military history in general was assigned to the Belgrade-seated Institute of Military History and the adjoined Military Press Institute, both under direct auspices of the federal Yugoslav army. WWII and the Communist-led »national liberation struggle« have been set as its research priorities, but a significant amount of energy was also dedicated to the WWI exploits of the Serbian army. The history of the Habsburg army, including its Southern Slav component, was treated mainly in the general-type reference works and overviews published by these institutions, e.g. the multivolume Military Encyclopaedia and Petar Tomac's *The First World War*. Although containing a rather limited amount of information, apart from unavoidable political one-sidedness, these texts, some of them commendable even today, were frequently more accurate than those published by the Zagreb-seated Lexicographic Institute founded and led by none other than Krleža. Interestingly, several among the most notable contributors of the Institute of Military History were also former Habsburg and WWII Domobranstvo officers, ethnic Croats as well as Serbs.

Otherwise, post-1945 Croatian academic historians did not practice standard military history of the WWI, focusing

instead on deserters, rebellions, anti-Habsburg politicians, the dubious 1918 Yugoslav unification, and the painful post-war delimitation with Italy (such themes had already been opened in the 1920s by Ferdo Šišić and Milada Paulová). Consequently, the experience of the Serbian army continued to be the central point of the WWI politics of memory in post-WWII Yugoslavia, duly appropriated by the new federal army; but it was again obvious that the Western parts of the country – as ever, fearing the unitaristic tendencies – did not share that view.

Within that scope, while several high-budget movies were filmed about WWI from the Serbian perspective, not even the Isonzo battles – generally judged to have been the righteous defence of ethnic Slovene and Croatian territory – were given adequate treatment. All in all, they were addressed by several independent Slovene and just one Croatian publicist (within a general WWI overview). Even the Croatian war memoir production was more narrow than before, producing only one apolitical (de facto loyalist) book of recollections written by a Catholic clergyman and edited by his fellow priest, in a low-key circulation. To clear things out, it seems that even as of today, directly pro-Habsburg or at least initially loyalist memoirs and diaries constitute the majority among the yet unpublished manuscripts.

As a result, contrary to the persistent Serbian victorious heroism, and similarly to the influence of Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*, the representations of WWI in the Yugoslav Republic of Croatia were once again predominantly characterized by the seemingly unproblematic exploitation of Krleža's work, depicting the imposed futility of fighting over distant lands and for »foreign interests«. To my knowledge, there was just one minor exception, a popular article published in 1970, during the short-lived Croatian Spring reform movement; focusing on the 1868-1918 Domobranstvo, it reminded the readers about its use of the Croatian language, symbols, and the peacetime service near one's domicile, and was obviously meant as a critique of contemporary Yugoslav army practice.

Incidentally, collecting the whole catalogue of other charges, including espionage, the author, otherwise a historian, was soon sentenced to four years imprisonment.

In a way, contrary to Slovenia where gradually more differentiated attention started to be given to the WWI phase of national history, the sort-of Croatian silence continued during the 1970s and well into the 1980s. For instance, in a national history reference book published in 1980 in Zagreb, only the WWII Domobranstvo was given an entry, while WWI military history was treated mainly on the global scale, certainly even less »nationally« than in the aforementioned Belgrade-published Military Encyclopaedia.

In fact, the next turn will come from a part of the Serbian public in which the dismantling of Josip Broz Tito's personality cult (associated with the disputed 1974 constitutional framework) started soon after his death in 1980. Namely, Tito's official biographer Vladimir Dedijer admitted he had been advised years before not to mention Tito's fighting on the Serbian front in 1914, in order to evade evoking the aforementioned negative popular memories; and that Tito, while in Russian captivity, declined to join the Serbian volunteers. On that basis, as the years passed by, several radical Serbian authors devised a whole narrative about the centuries-long Croatian genocide against the Serbs, former Domobranstvo NCO Tito being allegedly one of its agents already in 1914, conveniently under the command of Major Stanzer, a future WWII Domobranstvo general, sentenced to death in 1945.

Among other late 1980s and early 1990s allegations, and through the ensuing armed conflict, the ones concerning Tito and WWI in general were not judged to be the most important ones by Croatian historians. However, after the introduction of political pluralism in 1990, a more pluralistic picture of the past started to be devised, switching the focus of attention to the loyal, pro-Habsburg, anti-Yugoslav and clerical ideological options. Notwithstanding the co-operative phases of Serbo-Croat relations, it was also noted that the contemporary conflict had

traits of historic continuity from the pre-1914 period. According to that, the prevailing 1918-1941 view that the WWI Entente Powers (with the exception of Italy) were good guys, while the Central Powers were bad guys (without any exception), which was only partially relativised by the post-1945 Marxist-Leninist introduction of »opposed imperialistic aims« (with the exception of Serbia), started to be more openly questioned, especially in the light of the territorial ambitions of the Kingdom of Serbia.

In a way, the traditional post-colonial type of view on the Habsburg Monarchy, with the Kingdom of Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee competing for the title of the most deserving national liberator (and for the optimal internal organisation of Yugoslavia), has by now been supplemented by a double one, regarding the results of the 1918 unification even more as a kind of colonization. Comparing their relative impact on the Croatian national identity, rule of law, economic growth, etc., historians have reached a variety of conclusions (some of them qualifying as Habsburg nostalgia), reaching consensus anywhere near only on the topic that in the chaotic circumstances of the downfall of Austria-Hungary, there was probably no other choice but to join Serbia on the best terms possible.

However, these new approaches were seldom expressed in rounded, groundbreaking monographs, opting instead for collected papers, scientific magazines, popular press and television. An analogous limited, yet more superficial revival of interest was shown in the WWI Domobranstvo and the Habsburg Common Army as well as the Navy, resulting primarily in a re-discovery of Pavičić's work, and only gradually in that of the Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg 1914-1918 series; meanwhile, the aforementioned Belgrade-published sources have for some time been cited less than they had deserved. In spite of the given context, no large-scale research has been undertaken in the Vienna and Budapest archives. Probably also as a consequence of the 1991-1995 wartime, the popular press and TV documentaries did accentuate the »fighting prowess« complex, albeit never completely abandoning Krleža's notion of

»Kanonenfuter«; there was also a tendency to overestimate the role of the WWI Domobranstvo.

More rounded accounts began to appear around 2000. In addition to the WWI diplomatic history by Livia Kardum, Professor of Political Science, the highly dedicated Zagreb-based amateur historian Lovro Galić has co-authored several books on the Isonzo front, but being published in Slovenia, these are still impossible to get in Croatian stores and libraries.

In comparison, during the decade prior to 2014, apart from several rather general-type collected papers and manuscript memoirs, probably the greatest breakthrough was made concerning local history, with a handful of PhD's on the everyday life, charity, healthcare, suspects and internees on the city and town level, followed by an even smaller number of PhD's on several Habsburg-loyalist personalities, and one on the memoirs and diaries of Croatian WWI military participants, using a »history from below« type of approach (some of these PhD's have later been converted to books). Also, already on the occasion of the 90th anniversary, some museums and archives presented their WWI artefacts, the most representative result being the Zagreb-seated Croatian History Museum's exhibition catalogue.

Out of local communities, it seems that the legacy of WWI has for a decade or so been rather well, if not entirely satisfactorily, publicly presented in the city of Pula, a former seat of the Habsburg admiralty and battle fleet, including the renowned naval cemetery, coastal fortresses and the von Trapp villa (named after Georg, the submarine ace and the Sound of Music head of family). Another case to be mentioned is the town of Karlovac which has held annual commemorations at one of the cemeteries on the Isonzo front for years, and even erected a memorial plaque on the spot in 2013.

On the other hand, until recently even the estimates of the WWI military death toll from today's territory of Croatia varied from 50 000 to twice or even three times as much, Wilhelm Winkler's initial statistics being for all intents and purposes

forgotten. At the moment, the conservative estimate revolves around 80 000 killed or otherwise deceased soldiers, but additional research is needed. Although duly protocolled during the war, the whereabouts of their final resting place were largely forgotten, even the easily accessible Isonzo front being a sort of terra incognita. Similarly, not even the dedicated WWI scholars knew about the aforementioned multinational Mirogoj ossuary, presuming it was solely a symbolic monument erected to the memory of the fallen soldiers of the Croatian-Slavonian domicile.

So, the stage in Croatia was set for the 100th anniversary roughly in that manner. Because as of late 2012 no information has been published on the plans concerning official state activities, a dozen or so of the WWI-related researchers, archivists, museologists, schoolteachers and freelance publicists began to meet informally but regularly in the Zagreb-seated Institute of Croatian History, initiating a much wider mailing list, coordinating their activities and trying to promote a general change of attitude towards WWI (http://1914-1918.com.hr/cilj_odbora/). Besides individual achievements and fruitful discussions, the group – presided by Vijoleta Herman Kaurić – published a 22-page anniversary draft-action plan; successfully initiated the printing of a memorial postage stamp; and made crucial contributions to an international conference, a 4-hour TV-documentary, a dedicated teachers' handbook and a national-level teachers' education seminary on WWI. In 2015, the group organized a pioneering 3-day minibus excursion to the Isonzo front, taking several hundred photographs to be presented in the popular press, websites and lectures. Following legal registration as The 1914-1918 Association, it planned to widen the range of its activities.

Obviously fostered by the common European Union policy, the first-ever Croatian State Committee for the Coordination of the WWI Anniversary Activities was founded in April 2013 under auspices of the Ministry of Culture (the incumbent minister of a centre-left-liberal government was Andrea Zlatar-Vioić, well-educated in Krleža's writings), soon to incorporate

three members of the 2012 informal group. Devoid of finances and authority, the Committee served according to its title, sometimes being asked for expert advice on selected issues (no session has been held since early 2015).

Out of singular events, the most intense media coverage was given to the Zagreb-held May 2014 EU National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC)-organized conference titled Commemorating 1914 – Exploring the War's Legacy, hosting Christopher Clark and Frédéric Rousseau, among others. As the 1965 translation of the 1948 edition of Pierre Renouvin's *La crise européenne et la Première guerre mondiale* has been the latest standard general work available in Croatian (also as a 2008 reissue), Clark's approach to the question of war guilt resonated particularly well with the media's need to further deconstruct the aforementioned dominant view of Central Powers-only warmongering politics (as informed, *The Sleepwalkers* are currently in the process of being translated to Croatian).

In fact, probably reflecting the reactions in the Bosnian and Serbian press, the most frequently posed question by Croatian news reporters in 2013 and 2014 was the one whether Gavrilo Princip had been a hero or a terrorist. To my knowledge, contrary to the pre-1990s schoolbook lessons, no interviewed Croatian historian answered simply that he was a hero, although some did try to historically contextualize these two notions. Perhaps this is both the crudest and the most obvious signal of the radical changes that went down in the sphere of public memory in the last twenty years.

An even more important event, although seemingly not so well publicized, was the first-ever Croatian central state commemoration of WWI. Starting in the early morning of 27 June, 2014 with laying wreaths at the most properly selected Mirogoj ossuary, it continued with a meeting at the Croatian State Archives building. In presence of a small ceremonial guard, the wreaths were laid down by the Minister of Defence and other dignitaries or their envoys. The President of the Republic, Ivo Josipović, had personally attended the meeting,

delivering a written speech. Predominantly of abstract humanist nature, the speech provoked almost no public reaction apart from negative comments in several right and centre-right wing media, saying it was improper of him to state that Alojzije Stepinac, the future Croatian Archbishop, had been fighting as a volunteer on the side of Serbia (strictly speaking, after falling into Italian captivity as a dutiful Habsburg officer, Stepinac did, incited by the members of the Yugoslav Committee, join the Serbian, Croatian and Slovene volunteers, as they were styled only in 1917, but too late to see the fighting).

Supposedly, the curious date of 27 June was chosen for the anniversary primarily in order not to collide with the Croatian President attending the 28 June finale of the Sarajevo Heart of Europe festivity, sponsored by Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, France and Spain. The festivity was officially described as »the European entry point in the WWI commemorations«, hoping also that »the message of peace coming from the heart of Europe will underline the intellectual and cultural importance and strength of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of peace and reconstruction in Europe« (<http://www.sarajevosrceurope.org/about.html>).

As rumoured behind the scenes, divergences surpass the scope of this contribution; suffice to say that, paradoxically, in such a way of scheduling, an international manifestation abroad was symbolically prioritized over the first-ever national and domestic one. Surely, the Sarajevo assassination could reasonably be singled out as one of the most important events leading to the outbreak of hostilities, but WWI did not start until over a month later, and the initial goal was – as I understood – to commemorate its anniversary, not that of the assassinations.

Of course, the exact starting date is largely a matter of convention, depending on the number of great powers we need to have in either a formal or a factual state of war. Taking into account the proclaimed Pan-European stress on the suffering of ordinary people, my personal suggestion was therefore to allow more logical adjustments on the national level, parallel to the

common European date, if it existed at all. For instance, citizens of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia were certainly much more affected by the partial mobilization of Habsburg armed forces, by the declaration of war on Serbia, and – finally – by the first shots fired in anger. Alas, some of my more cautious colleagues warned me that deciding on any of these three dates would have a great chance of being interpreted as a rejoicing over the attack on Serbia. Be it true or not, the 2018 anniversary of armistice is due to pose similar questions, as 11 November meant little to the soldiers of Austria-Hungary stopping the fight a week before, or to the Croatian Parliament declaring secession already on the 29 October, 1918.

On the other hand, the Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović attended only the 26 June, 2014 Ypres commemoration, organized on the margins of the regular European Council meeting. However, his earlier laconic comment on the founding of the Croatian State Committee for the Coordination of the WWI Anniversary Activities, stating that WWI was »one of these ancient wars we don't know if we had won or lost«, did get significant, albeit somewhat satirical media attention.

Obviously, even the commonly promoted de-heroized, victim-centred and future-oriented pacifist approach isn't completely devoid of conflict-prone political connotations, as even the selection of a particular date or place can hardly be considered trivial. In fact, the existence of this type of consensus is questionable, concerning the just cause and victory-related public manifestations in some of the former Entente countries. Perhaps a sustainable common European view could more easily be reached by promoting the bottom-up tolerance of different perspectives, not by insisting top-down on some kind of colourless peace-loving unity?

Illustratively, in Croatia, manifestations on the local community level appear to be less distanced, probably as a result of stronger grassroots-type cohesion elements and the more centre-right oriented authorities. Apart from that, the more intense participation of local 1991-1995 war

veterans' organizations attested to the existence of a kind of transgenerational solidarity, an element the state-level commemorations mainly lacked, presumably deciding not to have recourse to the narrative of the relative continuity of the Croatian statehood (or national identity and interests alike), including the pre-1918 autonomy of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia.

Within the field, the most notable efforts were made by the city of Zagreb anniversary committee, presided by the former Minister of Croatian Defenders (i. e. War of Independence Veterans) Ivica Pančić. Apart from sponsoring various activities, a memorial plaque was erected at the place of former Habsburg barracks, and initial but well-publicized visits were paid even to several cemeteries in Ukraine and France, where members of Zagreb-seated Habsburg units had been buried, some of the adjacent memorials still having the original Croatian transcriptions.

At the moment, as far as I know, no Croatian WWI-specialist is contributing to a major international research endeavour, and the majority of related projects are not financed by the Croatian Science Foundation but by the Croatian Ministry of Culture which has also devised an exhaustive list of events and media coverage (<http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=10197>). Consequently, in 2014-2015, there was practically no museum or archive that did not stage an exhibition (usually with a lavishly illustrated catalogue) on some aspect of WWI. Some archives have also sent dedicated »fishing expeditions« in order to finally get a clearer picture of 1914-1918-related funds stored in neighbouring countries, or ventured into the publication of manuscript war diaries. Because of their rarity, even some of the printed materials have been critically reissued; namely, several of the most interesting 1917-1939 war memoirs and a 1916 Domobranstvo-affiliated propaganda booklet, while both the Croatian State Archives and the National and University Library have offered a selection of digitalized wartime newspapers. The Ministry has also sponsored the Croatian branch of the Europeana 1914-1918 project, being well-received by the public.

Out of foreign scholarly works, the recent Croatian translations of Catherine Horel's *Soldaten zwischen nationalen Fronten – Die Auflösung der Militärgrenze und die Entwicklung der königlich-ungarischen Landwehr (Honvéd) in Kroatien-Slawonien 1868-1914*, Annika Mombauer's *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus*, and David Stevenson's *1914-1918: the History of the First World War* are to be mentioned, expected to be soon followed by Manfred Rauchensteiner's *Der Tod des Doppeladlers* (Clark's *Sleepwalkers* was mentioned above). Among the current translations of works of art and ego-documents, probably those of Karl Kraus and Henry Barbusse are the best known.

In the field of more popular approach, the Croatian Military History magazine has been covering the most important events of WWI almost on a monthly basis, publishing also Zvonimir Freivogel's book on the 1914-1918 armed forces of Austria-Hungary, the first-ever book on the subject in the Croatian language. Also, in 2016, a conceptually interesting WWI lexicon is to be published, containing parallel views on the same topics by Croatian and Serbian historians.

To conclude, in my opinion, as far as the Croatian case was concerned, it was a good call to organize the anniversary primarily around the fact that tens of thousands of soldiers were killed, and around the tenet that they deserve much more memorial and scholarly attention. But the next step should take us towards a more systematic reconstruction of the 1914-1918 period in order to better understand both the initial motivation and the actual decision-making of various agents, from politicians or generals to ordinary soldiers and civilians, from the pre-war crisis to the post-war echoes. In that way, the putatively homogenous Croatian perspective will be further sub-divided into a variety of branches, sometimes even to the individual level, resulting in more realistic and less teleological pictures than those presented during the 20th century.

Analogously, the synthetic European perspective and its dynastical, national, ethnic or class-defined sub-perspectives

should also be a result of historians' work, not that of politicians' projections. Simply promoting victimization instead of heroization may well be just another sort of reductionism with similarly questionable results.

To achieve this distant, somewhat utopian goal, the transnational cooperation should to a degree follow the historic footsteps. Obviously, notwithstanding the location of cemeteries along the former frontlines, more raw materials on the Croatian perspective could be found in the archives of Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Rome, Moscow, Ljubljana or Sarajevo than in those of Dublin, Oslo or Madrid. On the other hand, many decisions made in London, Paris or Washington did have a far-reaching effect. Vice versa, being Habsburg subjects, thousands of émigré ethnic Croatians have been detained in various internment camps from Canada to Australia. Also, in spite of all the different trajectories, weapons, tactics and a number of other cultural or technological achievements did possess a sort of global uniformity, making e.g. the literature of the rising German Expressionism relevant to Croatian literary historians.

Another important way of cooperation concerns contemporary methodological tendencies. Ironically, the years of Croatian silence concerning WWI research could have a beneficial side-effect, as the pioneering military, social or cultural historians may easily skip decades of painful evolution in a particular field, modelling their approach on some of the widely acclaimed British, French or German groundworks. On the other hand, neither the standard high politics, strategy and diplomacy-centred research should be neglected because of the decades of one-sided or even biased presentations.

All in all, while as of now no singular all-round Croatian history groundwork has been produced within the scope of the 100th anniversary of WWI, the solid foundations have been laid. One cannot surely say whether the public interest will soon peter out, but I dare hope that at least the trend of its memorial marginalization has finally been reversed, to bring more substantial results in the following years.



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1. Commemorations on the 100th Anniversary

The 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War caused, without exaggeration, a media craze in Slovakia. The popular press, including the most-read daily and weekly newspapers, television and radio, were full of articles and shows about the First World War, especially during the summer months. The Slovak media had previously offered very limited coverage of the Great War, but the commemoration of World War I was already more common in other countries. Especially in Western Europe, public events commemorating the beginning and the end of World War I were regularly organized on the occasion of the 80th, 90th and 95th anniversaries of The Great War. In Slovakia, however, it seemed as if the media had only discovered the First World War in 2014. The impulses towards an intensive commemoration of this anniversary emerged mostly from abroad: from foreign news agencies, Slovak embassies abroad which were invited to participate in joint commemorations, or directly from within the structures of the European Union.

Remembering the outbreak of WWI, rather than its end, was a novelty in Slovakia and it was done with a certain awkwardness. Part of the professional as well as the general public – accustomed to celebrating or commemorating the end of World War I or the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic –

questioned whether we should celebrate the unleashing of the war instead of its ending. Such contradictory perceptions for the commemoration of the centenary of the Great War in 2014 have specific underlying reasons. One of them is that there was, up until now, little interest in the First World War amongst the public and within historiography, since – as confirmed by the recent investigations of how memory is created – the memory of the First World War was overshadowed by the memory of World War II. However, the main reason lies in the specific assessment of the importance of the First World War within the national narrative not only in Slovakia but in all Central European countries which were, before the war, part of the Habsburg Empire. The national narratives of the states that arose from the ruins of the Habsburg monarchy interpreted the war as a path towards the dissolution of the Habsburg multi-ethnic state and the founding of their own national state. For such an interpretation neither the end of the war, nor certainly the beginning of the war was important, but the emergence of their own distinct national state. This was also the case of Czechoslovakia and Hungary where evaluations of the end of the war greatly differed. In case of Hungary, the Treaty of Trianon, with its negative connotations rather than the end of the war is remembered, while in the historiography of Czechoslovakia the end of the war is somewhat concealed by a positive victorious end in the form of the founding of a national state of Czechs and Slovaks. Connected to that was a different perception of the chronology of the Great War where the most significant event was not the signing of the armistice on November 11, but the emergence of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918.

If we consider the typology of commemorations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of WWI in Slovakia, we must state that in principle it is no different from other countries. Activities to commemorate the Great War can be characterised based on their organizers, their audience and the forms they took as the following types:

- *Official commemorative events* organized by government authorities in Slovakia and abroad: several foreign embassies of the Slovak Republic installed a special exhibition with the topic “the centenary of the war and Slovaks” organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and were engaged in several international events (exhibitions, lectures, international conferences) abroad. Similarly, foreign embassies in the Slovak Republic organized various commemorative events;
- *Scientific events and activities*: conferences, publications and discussions of social scientists, particularly historians, generally organized by national scientific research institutes and universities at home and abroad;
- *Events for teachers and students*: publications and lectures for students and teachers; for example, educational events for history teachers organized by the special institute of the Ministry of Education;
- *Popularizing and informational activities* for the general public varied the most in their form: in addition to articles, commemorative narrations and reports in the daily press and special editions of popular history magazines, there was a special series of debates and programmes created by the Slovak Radio. Public television also aired a number of new foreign documentaries. All commemorative exhibitions were popular with visitors. These included the two main state-organized exhibitions in Bratislava which provided special programs for children and young people, and exhibitions in local museums. Leading Slovak historians organized a lecture series about their latest research on the First World War, which was well attended and received media attention;
- *Art events* for the general public took the form of exhibitions (e.g. historical photographs), movie presentations, publishing of literary works (e.g. reprints of novels by the Slovak female-novelist Timrava) and the introduction of

- new dramatic plays (including the international drama project “1914”);
- *Electronic data projects* which created specialized databases with text and visual materials pertaining to the Great War. They were published on the internet on the Slovak portal *Slovakiana* (<https://www.slovakiana.sk/>) and on the web-site of the Slovak national library (<http://dikda.eu/category/1-svetova-vojna/>), both of them connected to the international project *Europeana* (<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>);
 - The public were made more aware of the *local activities of NGOs* dealing, for example, with the revitalization of military cemeteries (the Military History Club in Eastern Slovakia was particularly active in the revitalization); Slovakia also hosted events of a Czech project called *Legion 100* which, among other activities, has organized the unconventional exhibition of a replica of the so called “legion train.”

“Media hysteria” drew attention to two important facts:

1. The public is interested in the Great War, but more in people’s private lives and everyday activities, often motivated by a desire to trace the fate of their ancestors in the war, than in the war’s political aspects.

2. Untapped sources of information about WWI still exist. They are predominantly held in private ownership, particularly in family archives. In 2014, there were efforts to collect war materials, initiated, for example, by museums and the Slovak National Library. Previously unknown materials, documents and physical objects were discovered on this occasion. This gave historians the opportunity to access many sources that are rarely preserved in the archives in Slovakia.

2. The current historiography of World War I

Over the last 15 years, the attention of Slovak historiography has moved from the area of political history to the social

and cultural history in the research of WWI. Since 1989, it has focused mainly on overcoming Marxist deformations of the interpretation of history. These included, for example, a revaluation of the impact of the Russian Revolution (1917) and overcoming the misrepresentation of the importance of foreign resistance on the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy (legionaries and the founders of the Czechoslovak Republic – T.G. Masaryk, M.R. Štefánik and E. Beneš). Since the 1990s, the focus of research has shifted from topics of foreign resistance and politics to issues of the economic, social and cultural conditions in the hinterland during the war, to the issues of everyday life, the impact of the war on family, and to issues such as changes of loyalties due to the war. A synthesis of Slovak history during WWI (released in 2008) dealt with these aspects. Since then, research on the history of the war as an experience (the myth of war enthusiasm, changes in loyalty) has continued. The research into the issues of ethnic relations, anti-Semitism, the attitudes of different Churches towards the war, and the rendering of the war in arts has also continued, as does the issue of the radicalisation of the population and its impact on post-war circumstances. Works pertaining to shaping the memory of the First World War and to changes of the image of M.R. Štefánik were published; publications about different perceptions of Trianon in Hungarian and Slovak historiography and literature were written as well. This research is mainly carried out in the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The institute's researchers have also published a popular edition of the sources from the period of WWI. The Institute of Military History specializes in the research of military issues and the foreign Czechoslovak Army (Legions). In addition, the Institute of Military History published, for example, a new monograph about prisoners of war in the territory of Slovakia and it participates in the Czech and Slovak project of an electronic database of the fallen and the database of the members of Czechoslovak foreign brigades.

In the investigation of the Great War, Slovak historians seek inspiration mainly from theoretical and methodological concepts from German, Anglo-Saxon, Austrian and Czech historiography, and of course from Hungarian colleagues. Co-operation with colleagues from these countries also takes place. An international conference organized by Roman Holec on 'stereotypes of the image of the enemy' as well as conferences abroad on 'war and media' or 'cultural and mental aspects of war' were interesting and methodologically beneficial. Christopher Clark's new interpretation of the causes of the outbreak of the war gained attention in Slovakia, too. Dušan Kováč responded to Clark's claims in his study where he disputes Clark's interpretations and highlights the need to weigh the sources of German provenance addressed to the Allies and neutral countries against those sent by Emperor Wilhelm II and German diplomats to Austria as their ally. Confronting these sources clearly confirms the interest of Germany in the unleashing of an armed conflict. Clark does not carry out such a balanced evaluation and his conclusions ultimately won him the support of German nationalists.

The research of Slovak historians on the impact of the First World War on society in the Austro-Hungarian Empire shows the specificity of Central and Eastern Europe in their nationalization of a multi-ethnic society and politics. It is not only different interpretations of the causes of the war, but especially different interpretations of the political consequences after the war in various national historiographies and the subsequent political solutions that should have an important place in the research of creating the memory of the Great War.

3. The methods used to influence a social memory of the war

After the fall of the communist regime, historians successfully proceeded to eliminate deformations of the Marxist interpretation of history. However, nationalism has proved to be at least as

strong a factor shaping historiography. The view of the war “from below”, from the position of an ordinary soldier or a civilian reveals new facets of the consequences of the war on society and on the individual, and opens up the possibility of forming the social memory of the war from an individual’s perspective. Especially in didactics, it is possible to use the outcomes of new research for the explanation of the war’s impact on everyday culture and way of life. In this sense, the selection of topics to cover, their assigned relevance, and their placement into a wider context all impact memory formation.

It is, however, clear that the impact of popular mass media is incomparably more significant in the short and the long run than even the highest-quality scientific or specialised literature. Modern technologies capable of reproducing historical written and especially visual sources, including historical film footage, are currently the most powerful means to attract interest and to form the memory of the war. Nevertheless, professional historians are still irreplaceable as they are able to place information into a wider context and critically interpret it. The frequent dilettantism of journalists and amateur “historians” presents the danger of the misinterpretation of historical materials strongly influenced by propaganda, thus resulting in a distorted evaluation and influence over the social memory. History teachers have an important role in enabling their students to develop thinking through a critical approach in analysing sources and fact-checking. In the current era of over-abundant information, journalists commonly publicize only scandalous and especially curious historical phenomena in order to attract more interest. This practice negatively affects the formation of historical memory. It is therefore important for historians to create and offer high-quality materials in forms which are attractive for the media in order to present a realistic picture of the war based on genuine knowledge of the past. This applies to the creation of both documentaries and artistic products with historical topics.

My own experience and that of my colleagues who were involved in a lecture series for the general public about the war

combined with the projection of historical visual documents and memoirs confirmed the high efficiency of traditional forms consisting of lectures and subsequent discussions. We have the same experience working with teachers. An individual's perspective appears to be attractive for the interpretation of phenomena associated with the First World War, especially in the form of examples of personal stories with which the audience can connect. Personal ties which are linked to the history of their own community, or to tracing the fate of their own family members, make the strongest motivation for the latest generation, too. New technologies and media offer a suitable means for interpreting these findings.

Interest in the individual's perspective may certainly be the consequence of an overly political interpretation of history within the past political regimes which ultimately led to a general lack of interest in so-called "great" history; though, as visible from the public's interest in everyday aspects of life and personal destinies during the war, the interest in the so-called "small" history of the region, communities, families and individuals is still present. In my mind, a high-quality research of the consequences of the war on a specific region, which highlights the problem of war and violence, terrorism, the issues of survival strategies in crisis situations, the problem of loyalty, questions of civic engagement and accountability, and similar phenomena, is a way of forming the social memory. War as a shared experience, as a precedent and a warning, as a crisis of humanity, as a temporary state with long-term consequences, may become a suitable interpretative framework when shaping a mutual "European memory" of the Great War.

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How would you typologise the commemorations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of WWI in your country and in Europe?

One can distinguish or define the numerous commemorations organized on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of WWI in Europe and in Serbia according to the territorial and the organizational criteria as: international, national, regional, local and institutional. Also, they could be typologised according to the sources of funding as: state-budgeted, international funds and NGO-financed, or as the private initiatives invested and donated by individuals and smaller social groups. In that respect, numerous types of the artistic, cultural and academic/scholarly projects often combined different sources of financing.

One can speak of concentric circles of remembering which cover the official political ceremonies, local initiatives compliant with the state-established politics of memory, and the private rituals and mores often neglecting the wider official framework.

Thematically, they could be divided as those marking the assassination in Sarajevo, the beginning of the war, major battles and the most important – Armistice Day.

How are official and unofficial practices related to each other and shaping the memory of WWI?

Official practices represent crucial elements of the political activism and as such, they are creators of the specific systems of values in every society. Staging the past in the public space through various public ceremonies, commemorations, visualisations and materializations of the historical events, persons and phenomena epitomizes politics of memory and, thus, the contemporary political messages. However, the public space represents the field of dialogues, debates, often even of confrontations. It is the space where the official initiatives are in a constant communication with the private and individual grassroots ideas.

First acts and objects commemorating the war dead were the result of the personal and familiar mourning and bereavement. Their creators were the specific agents of memory whose initiatives inevitably formulated the basis on which all the later images of the past were constituted no matter if they were accepted, neglected, or denied. With the passage of time, the national framework erased personal memories, including the episodes of betrayal, desertion, war profiteering and treason. The heroic narrative which was created among the victorious states overshadowed the “unwanted” stories, while on the losing side, war memories were suppressed and covered with the stories of chivalry and “true friendship” of those who were defeated. The official interpretations were always wrapped in the national flags and colours, erasing personal memories.

However, the contemporary unofficial and local commemorations organized by the NGO sector primarily aimed to open new perspectives on the war. Commemorating the various national and religious groups of the war participants forgotten during the last decades has a potential to present the war in all its complexity and simultaneously to undermine totalising monolithic historical culture in the present.

What was novel in the commemorations and what remained solidly on the traditional ground?

The image of the war heroes was always the main symbol used to make sense of the war. The figure of the soldier was the crucial component of the collective identities during the whole century. Civilian victims were pushed aside and although their sufferings were noticed, they never became the central topic of the World War One commemorations. Also, the image of women in war was always present but at the margin of the public field.

Centennial commemorations recognized the victims of the punitive expeditions and those of the great epidemics as well as the stories of the “ordinary citizens” in the war. However, the symbolic meaning of the soldiers’ stories maintained its central position. Men marching in columns, struggling in the trenches and fighting in the partisan units who were wearing the national uniforms remained the most recognizable symbol of the 1914-1918 conflict.

The commemorations represented the important political events during 2014. In Europe, the central position was given to the commemoration organized at Liege, a few dozen kilometres from the place where German troops entered Belgian territory and started the war on August 5, 1914. It brought together heads of states from the European Union as well as heads of the participating nations and states outside the EU. As the participants at the commemoration stressed, the main goal of this specific commemoration was not only to pay tribute to the fallen, but also to promote the concept of political and historical reconciliation. Thus, it was aimed to further strengthen the international/transnational framework in contemporary European societies, and to promote the ideas of integrations as a way to overcome the heavy burden of the 20th century.

The central commemoration in Serbia was organized eleven days later at Tekeriš, in the Western part of the country, at the place where the first Serbian victory over the Austro-Hungarian army took place on August 15, 1914. It was organized in front of

the monument of the fallen soldiers which was renovated by the small local patriotic organization. At the commemoration were present prime ministers of Serbia and Republika Srpska (one of the two administrative entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina), church and diplomatic representatives in Serbia. Like on the previous occasions and commemorations, the pacifist messages were sent together with the proclamation that Serbian citizens will never go to war again. Simultaneously, the specific international position of Serbia – close political ally of Russia and candidate for the European Union – was underlined.

The 2014 anniversary in Serbia had a special meaning since it was organized without the wider Yugoslav framework. Serbia entered the First World War as an independent state, the main result of which on the territory of the Western Balkans was the formation of the Yugoslav Kingdom. Although during the 20th century numerous commemorations were organized in Serbia (as part of Yugoslavia and later as one of the Yugoslav socialist republics), the centennial anniversary marked the “new tradition” and the new historical narrative.

The historical discourse used during the existence of the Yugoslav state wrapped the WWI narrative in the liberating traditions of the south Slavic peoples, creating the specific historical continuum of the Yugoslav idea during the 20th century. It presented the war as an act of new state creation, thus giving new meaning to the hundreds of thousands of victims who fell during the war.

After 2006 when Montenegro as the last Yugoslav republic declared independence, Serbia started to create new national traditions connecting its present existence to the kingdom period that existed before 1918. This was used for positioning the contemporary state as the direct descendant of Serbia that entered the war in 1914. The anniversary was used to strengthen contemporary Serbian position by creating its desirable image in the past.

How much interest did the anniversary generate among the public?

The public interest in Serbia in WWI was high during 2013 and 2014. The intellectual circles were included on several levels: drama and theatre, fiction, historiography, state commemorations and the conservation of monuments. The public paid huge interest for the plays, publicists' works, and the history monographs and studies.

The main reason for the high interest could be found in the heated debates on war guilt provoked by the books *Sleepwalkers* by Christopher Clark and *The Russian Origins of the First World War* by Sean McMeekin, published in 2013. One can even claim that it is possible to trace two different perceptions of the academic debates in the official political circles. The first one was defined by the actions of the current Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić who insisted on making an accurate First World War celebration calendar. The main interest of the Presidency was to promote the image of Serbia as the first victim of the Austro-Hungarian and German aggression and as one of its biggest victors. On the other hand, the Serbian government and its Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić were only marginally included in the organization of the anniversary. Thus, the public was on the one hand expecting numerous official events and celebrations; and on the other hand, stayed without the explanation why many of them, although eagerly expected, never received wider political attention. The main goal of those debates was to retain the traditional narrative of the war guilt, fearing that the new interpretations could lead to historical and, consequently, political revisions which could blur the roles of the war participants.

Bearing this in mind, one can better understand why the most comprehensive and instructive public event organized in order to mark the 100th anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination and the beginning of WWI took place on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be more precise, in Republika Srpska. It was organized in the newly created Andrić-town, or Stone-town,

the cultural/historical complex made according to the project of the world famous director Emir Kusturica, and financed by numerous institutions and the governments of Serbia and Republika Srpska. The town was solemnly opened on June 28, 2014 and dedicated to the only Yugoslav Nobel prize winner Ivo Andrić. The analysis of the whole ceremony is highly relevant for understanding the official Serbian viewpoint on the motives and causes of WWI. The program in Andrić-grad started with the opening of the church dedicated to Saint Lazar and Serbian martyrs, continued with the unveiling of the mosaic of Gavrilo Princip made in a socialist realist manner, and followed with the promotion of the book “Sarajevo Assassination – Return to the Documents” written by Dr Miroslav Perišić and published by the Andrić Institute from Andrić-grad and the Archives of Serbia from Belgrade. In the evening, Emir Kusturica staged the historical play in the streets of the invented town, which included surrealist elements, considered by the great number of critics as political kitsch.

In 2014, two theatrical plays also attracted huge interest from the public. The first one was “This Grave Is Too Small For Me” written by Biljana Srbljanović for Vienna’s Schauspielhaus; the other one was “The Dragon Killers” written by Milena Marković for the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade. Although the public expected radically different standpoints and conclusions, both playwrights had a similar answer to the trivial but publicly often raised questions: was Gavrilo Princip a murder or a hero, was he a terrorist or an idealist? They refused to banalise the historical figures and their actions, and perceived Princip as a Yugoslav idealist (Srbljanović) and a social revolutionary (Marković).

How was it manifested, what appealed the most to the public?

The number of theatre spectators as well as readers of the historical books and the museum visitors reflected increased

interest in WWI. Also, the government financed several projects on the Serbian state-owned television which created the documentary serial “Serbia in the Great War” and a number of smaller serials dealing with topics such as public memory, war memorials, and private mourning which further developed public interest in the topic. Almost all the museums were actively included in the organization of the numerous exhibitions and round table discussions (among which the most important was “Serbia 1914” organized by the Historical Museum of Serbia in Belgrade). Local communities financed the organization of similar exhibitions in local museums. The central state archival institutions (The Archives of Serbia and the Archives of Yugoslavia) also exhibited their documents for the public. The paradigmatic example represents also one of the most important festivals of experimental theatre in Europe, BITEF, that was dedicated to the First World War in 2014.

Small associations organized numerous actions which included marches around Serbia virtually uniting the present generations with those who took part in WWI. Their main message was that Serbia couldn't be accused and marked as the war provoker.

How much did these commemorations bring transnational aspects of WWI and its memory to the fore?

The state and local manifestations, although including the representatives of the war allies of Serbia and contemporary political partners, were mostly aimed at influencing local population and internal politics. It was important to construct historical continuity between the present society and the one before the creation of Yugoslavia, and simultaneously to diminish the Yugoslav and socialist heritage. Connecting the contemporary situation with the period when Serbia was the independent state in the Balkans a century ago, the specific sense of empathy was supposed to be created among the citizens.

The wider international framework established in the work of several historians was marginal in the public commemorations.

What could be the place of WWI in European memory?

Suppressing the memory of the first military conflict which gained the epithet “Great” and then “First World” war could be the source of multiple problems and controversies. On the other hand, by presenting dubious questions and opening the space for public dialogue, contemporary societies are in a position to further deconstruct the still present mental boundaries between nations.

One century later remembering the war in the wider European framework must highlight the position of an ordinary citizen in the war, the role of women and the tragic position of children in it.

Also, a special space should be opened for the studies of the numerous anti-war reactions and those movements, groups and individuals that were promoting the political theories and practices aimed at opposing the ongoing militarisation of European societies before and during the war. Furthermore, the analysis of the green cadre and desertion in all the armies as well as the post-war socialist revolutions must be reopened in the academic and in the public fields.

The commemorations must include different local communities whose ancestors shared similar experiences although belonging to the different sides of the front. The numerous groups of (self-) organized people could lead spontaneous manifestations which would represent the new beginning in war commemorations. Thus, the commemorations of the events of the war should highlight and celebrate peace and those historical figures and movements that strongly opposed the war.

On the other hand, particular attention must be paid to the burden of the European imperialist, colonial and racist heritage which was one of the main causes of the First World War. From

the 21st century perspective and the conflicts in the Near and the Middle East, the contemporary European position must be discussed in the wider historical framework.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

What are the most important debates on the anniversary?

The revisionist interpretations of the Serbian role in the Sarajevo assassination and the question of Serbian and Russian responsibility for the beginning of the war were, by all means, the central topics during the last few years in Serbia. The majority of the texts dealt with the topic of the outbreak of WWI, concluding that the motives for the war lay among the Great Powers and their conflicting global positions during the “Age of Empire”, as Eric J. Hobsbawm called the period before 1914. In that respect, special attention was given to the understanding of Gavrilo Princip’s motives and to his political and ideological postulates.

The important part of this debate continued in 2015 with the question if the remains of Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis and his close collaborators should be returned to Serbia. Known as the organizer of the 1903 assassination of the Serbian king Milan Obrenović and Queen Draga, and as the main figure who supplied the Young Bosnians with the ideas and the ammunition, Apis was sentenced to death during WWI under the accusation that he was planning the assassination of the new Serbian regent Aleksandar Kradjordjević. The contemporary government of Serbia promoted the idea of transferring his remains to Serbia on several occasions. The public is still divided. According to some, Apis as conspirator cannot be promoted as the hero for future generations; while for others, he is the best representative of the most patriotic military circles who committed his life to the idea of the unification of all the Serbs.

How did discussions of international salience affect debates in your country?

The academic community was highly interested in the international debates and the new perspectives on World War One. Scholars from Serbia (Milan Ristović, Mile Bjelajac, Ljubinka Trgovčević, Božica Mladenović, Danilo Šarenac, Olga Manojlović Pintar and others) were active participants in numerous conferences and congresses with a wide range of new topics dealing with social history and the remembrance culture.

The majority of media opened thematic chapters dealing with questions of the First World War. Their focus stayed on the problems of political and diplomatic history and on the question of the war guilt. Special emphasis was put on Gavrilo Princip's historical role as a terrorist and the assassin, or as a national hero. Marking the German and the Austro-Hungarian aspirations toward the Balkans as the crucial initiator of the war, the majority of the Serbian public refused the interpretations which pointed at Russia as the main or at least an equal initiator of the war and at the Serbian government as its ally in that respect.

What are the significant new trends in research on WWI?

Social history and the culture of remembrance are in the focus of several researchers (mentioned in the previous answer). The role of the foreign medical missions in the Serbian army, the reports of foreign journalists and analysts from the Balkan front as well as the phenomenon of desertion from the Serbian army are also re-read and re-interpreted.

What should the broader public expect in terms of new interpretations or new perspectives on the war?

The opening of new perspectives on WWI and its new interpretations are active constituents of the contemporary society. Presenting the different groups of the war participants and their visions of the war opens numerous questions and consequently deconstructs the rigid political and historical

culture in the present. Avoiding discussing the war only through the victorious or martyr narratives further problematizes the phenomenon of war in general. This complex framework which was often missing from the Serbian interpretations and representations of the First World War only partly has changed during the 100th anniversary. However, no matter how modest, these changes opened the wider possibility for a new understanding of historical reconciliation after one century.

Do you think WWI needs a reconceptualization? If yes, in what sense?

Historical reinterpretations are the result of political revisions and concurrently their main accelerator. From the 21st century perspective, the deconstruction of the dominant Eurocentric view and of the “glorifying national narratives” of the WWI interpretations appears as inevitable.

Deeper analyses of economic history as well as new studies of colonial practices and their consequences will substantially supplement and enrich understanding of the causes of the war.

How would you position the actual national historiography in the history of a global WWI?

The national historiographies always “feel” responsibility towards their public, although history as a humanistic discipline is dedicated to “telling the truth” and not to proving the “sanctity” of the nation. When perceived as “national”, history loses the ability to be objective.

However, when driven by the objectivity imperative, national historiographies are in a position to thoroughly investigate numerous hidden episodes of the war on their territories, and by doing so, to open the possibility of further comparisons and evaluations.

What do you think would be desirable in this respect?

The most effective in this respect would be further continuation and widening of the international projects which will open new comparative perspectives. Shedding light on the still

unrecognized occurrences will uncover what was forgotten in each national narrative and provide the answer to the question why it was forgotten.

Do you think there is a specific Eastern European history of the war?

The fall of the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, German and the Ottoman Empires and the creation of the new European national and multinational states, as well as the formation of the Soviet Union as the first socialist state are certainly some of the most intriguing historical phenomena of the 20th century. The four European empires were all gravitating towards the Eastern and Southern parts of the continent – even when territorially detached and distant, while their successor and descendant states differed in many ways from their Western counterparts. Also, the experience of the social revolutionary movements in Germany and Hungary strongly influenced by the October Revolution deserves special attention.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that this topic should and must be analysed with special consideration, however, in the wider European and global contexts.

How should we relate the Eastern part of the continent to Europe as a whole or the World in historiography?

The studies of the processes of modernisation and of historical traditions cannot reach the comprehensive level without a comparative method which includes not only international comparisons between the respective East-European states and nations, but also with their Western counterparts that often represented their role models.

METHODS OF DISSEMINATION, BEST PRACTICES, COOPERATION

What are the most important books published recently in your country concerning WWI?

The most important historical books on the First World War in the Serbian language were written by Andrej Mitorvić back in 1984. Until now, this has been the most relevant historical analysis of the Serbian role in the First World War. His book was republished in 2014 together with Ljubodrag Dimić and Mira Radojević's "Serbia in the Great War 1914 – 1918, A Short History"; Miroslav Perišić's "Sarajevo Assassination – Return to the Documents", Mile Bjelajac's "1914 – 2014 Why Revision?", Miloš Ković's "Gavrilo Princip, Documents and Memories", Danilo Šarenac's "The Gun, Soldier and Memory, First World War and Serbia 1914-2009", and Olga Manojlović Pintar's "The Archaeology of Memory, Monuments and the Identities in Serbia 1918 – 1989".

Historiography was accompanied by a number of publicists and literary works among which one novel is holding the central position. "The Great War" by Aleksandar Gatalica was published in 2012. The book received the highest literary award in Serbia (Ninova nagrada) and gained huge attention since it shed the light on different groups of the war participants. The public was also interested in works on Gavrilo Princip which differ in quality: "Gavrilo Princip, 14 stories on Sarajevo assassination" written by Vladimir Pištalo, Saš Ćirić, Miljenko Jergović, Vladimir Kecmanović, Igor Marojević, Srđan Srdić, Dejan Stojiljković, Ivančica Đerić, Miroslav Toholj, Vule Žurić, Miloš Ilić, Jelena Rosić, Nele Karajlić, and Muharem Bazdulj. The novelist Vladimir Kecmanović wrote the book titled "Das ist Princip", while Professor Radoš Ljušić named his book "Gavrilo Princip, Essay on National Hero". In this context, one cannot neglect the excellent book of Jasminka Petrović written for children on Nadežda Petrović, one of the most important Serbian painters who died as a nurse in a military hospital during WWI.

What were the most notable scientific venues?

The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts organized the International scholarly conference “The Serbs and the First World War 1914 – 1918” on 13-15 May, 2014. More than 60 historians from Serbia and eleven other countries of Europe took part in the conference.

Four months later, on 24 September, the Institute for the Strategic Researches and the Historical Institute in Belgrade organized the conference “The First World War, Serbia, Balkans and the Great Powers”.

The conference “The European Tragedy of 1914 and the Multipolar World of 2014: Lessons Learned” was organized in Belgrade by the Centre for International Relations and Sustainable Development on 30 May. It could be considered the most provocative one. The organizers succeeded in ensuring the participation of Christopher Clark, Margaret MacMillan, Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, and numerous politicians and diplomats who discussed sensitive questions concerning the beginning of the First World War.

What do you consider the best methods to reach the larger public with results of scholarly research on WWI?

Televised debates and round table discussions as well as documentaries presented on national television still have high ratings. However, the new digital generations are searching for new forms and streams of communication which must include the Internet as the most important platform that attracts the youngest generations.

What topics are people the most interested in?

The new interpretations of the old topics are always attracting interest from the public. The symbolism of the war heroes and martyrs has a great epic potential. Also, the unknown war stories which combine the suppressed facts with those remembered in the public are opening new perspectives on the war and its participants.

How could a more nuanced view of WWI be developed?

The constant dialogue and the existence of international debates are the most important preconditions to further sensitise the European public. However, the opening of a new perspective which will step out of the national discourse would nuance the views on WWI even more. Inclusion of the class, gender and racial studies and analyses will substantially improve the existing understanding of the events and phenomena of the war.

What is the role of less traditional means of dissemination?

Unconventional means of dissemination are aimed at raising the interest in this respective topic among the groups who are not attracted to historical narratives and who are avoiding to contextualize the present they are living in with the past. In this way, the essential distinction and the distance from the past could be established. The heavy burden of the political and the ideological controversies could be overcome and new connections could be established.

In what respect do you think transnational cooperation is possible regarding the memory of WWI?

The transnational cooperation must include the organization of public commemorations and events which will connect specific social groups by retelling the stories of war heroism and sufferings on the fronts with the narratives on women in war, army deserters, and the numerous opponents of the war. Thus, it could join together groups that are experiencing multiple identities, blurring the domination of the national identity much more than insisting exclusively on the international cooperation through the traditional ways of war representations.

How could you and/or your institution contribute to such an endeavour?

The History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy and the Institute for the Recent History of Serbia are in a position to organize and run various projects dealing with researches in the fields of the social history of WWI and the memory culture

in the wider region of South-Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. We could run seminars and programs and organize academic conferences in those fields, of course in cooperation with our colleagues from the region and Europe.



Liljana Dobrovšak

Ivo Pilar Institute for Social Sciences (Zagreb, Croatia)

Starting from last year, most European countries and their governments have invested considerable time and effort in commemorating the centenary of WWI. However, this is not the case in Croatia. While European countries have become involved in commemorating the centenary on a global level, in Croatia this has mostly taken place on the local level, albeit with some exceptions. Despite the fact that the Croatian government has, on the initiative of a group of enthusiasts, founded a Commission within the Croatian Ministry of Culture for commemorating the centenary of the war, this was exclusively tied to the events of 2014 and covered two international scientific conferences on the topic of WWI, the laying of a wreath on a monument dedicated to the victims of the war, the restoration of some monuments to the victims of the war, several concerts and theatre plays as well as the organization of a few exhibitions. The then-president of the Republic of Croatia took onto himself only the role of conference sponsor. He was present at one of the conferences, but not the other. A number of Croatian government officials participated in other European commemorations as delegates.

Most of the activities regarding the commemoration were performed by an informal group of scholars who have already founded the Initiative Committee for Commemorating the First World War Centenary in 2012. The Committee members include scholars from various institutions interested in the history of WWI. They also informally represent their institutions in the

Committee and initiate activities regarding the commemoration of WWI as well as independently participate in them. State institutions (the government, parliament, ministries, academy, etc.) participated in the commemorations only in 2014, while the topic of WWI has received little to no attention in 2015.

Thanks to the Initiative Committee, it is possible to find information on activities related to commemorating WWI on the Croatian Institute of History's website at <http://1914-1918.com.hr/>

Most of the activities related to the commemoration of the centenary have been the work of a small group of individuals who organize round table discussions, participate in international conferences, write articles for the daily press, or participate in TV programmes. There has been very little formal coverage of WWI-related exhibitions in the media and public lectures on the topic attract very few people. Public institutions in Croatia have also given very little attention to the matter.

Had it not been for the international influence on the organization of the WWI centenary, the anniversary would have gone by almost completely unnoticed in Croatia. The reason for this lies in the fact that the Croatian public and leading state institutions remain focused on the last year of WWI, when Croatia became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), rather than on Croatia in the war itself.

The situation regarding commemorations is similar – they remain almost unnoticed by the Croatian public. In 2014, state and city authorities participated in commemorating the anniversary of the Sarajevo Assassination and the outbreak of the war (June to August), while there have been almost no commemorations in 2015. This year, the embassies of the UK, France, Germany and Italy organized a commemoration of the fallen soldiers at the main cemetery in Zagreb on 11 November 2015, without any participation by the Croatian government authorities. This is a clear indicator of how WWI still exists in the memory of European countries, but has been almost completely forgotten in Croatia.

WWI was a pivotal event in shaping the course of 20th century history, not only being the first instance of total war to encompass such a huge part of the globe, but also paving the way for important processes such as the rise of totalitarianism, American involvement in Europe, the collapse of multinational empires, and the rise of nation states, WWII and the Cold War in Europe. The experiences of WWI also had an undeniable impact on non-military-related areas of activity such as art, literature, science, society, etc. It is therefore an event of the utmost significance for Europe on many levels and deserves a special place in the collective memory of Europeans.

Historiography

Since Jay Winter and Antoine Prost famously identified three generations of historians and historiography of the Great War, it has been common to situate scholarship in this framework. One of the most common observations is how national historiographies in Eastern Europe lagged behind the West in terms of the emergence of these generations, and after 1989 how easily they returned to interpretations which were already part of the national imagery of these states right after WWI. Nevertheless, the 100th anniversary not only brought about a new wave of interest in the events between 1914 and the early twenties, but it also contributed to the emergence of new trends and approaches to the war which are not necessarily easy to frame with the model of generations, and which show not only an interest in a more detailed understanding of how the war affected societies and people, but also in repositioning it in global history. The new focus on the Eastern front, the integration of the fate of empires into post-colonial histories, the growing attention to the non-state-organized violence as a determining feature of the post-WWI social and political landscape in Eastern Europe are only a few notable ones among these new approaches. Meanwhile, one can also speak of a revival of old

tropes and interpretations, most notably in the discussion around responsibility and in the attempts to challenge what is seen as de-heroisation in national historiography.

What are the most important debates on the anniversary? How did discussions of international salience affect debates in your country? What are the significant new trends in research on WWI? What should the broader public expect in terms of new interpretations or new perspectives on the war? Do you think WWI needs a reconceptualization? If yes, in what sense? How would you position the actual national historiography in the history of a global WWI? What do you think would be desirable in this respect? Do you think there is a specific Eastern European history of the war? How should we relate the Eastern part of the continent to Europe as a whole or the World in historiography?

Regarding the topics of WWI-related research, Croatian historiography has yet to take any concrete steps. Topics which have already been covered for a long time in European historiography remain almost completely untouched in Croatia. Croatian historiography has mostly focused on researching the circumstances in which Croatia entered into a new state (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later Yugoslavia), while giving little attention to the consequences of WWI in Croatia, which is to be expected since it had until recently been part of Yugoslav historiography and therefore the researched topics which aren't related to Croatian history. It should be stressed that Croatia entered the Kingdom of SHS as the defeated party and that emphasizing differences was unwelcome in this context. For example, more time was devoted to research the Salonika volunteers than the Isonzo Front. For this reason, numerous topics related to the history of WWI in Croatia remain unknown and unexplored, and there exists no influence of international debates on this topic, excepting the questions on who is to be held responsible for the war, and were "we" on the defeated or winning side. Speaking of fundamental topics, we can say that Croatia has yet to come up with a precise number of its people who died during the war, and neither has

it produced a register of names. This is but one example. In general, Croatian historiography of WWI is still in its infancy and will remain so due to lack of funds. However, the situation isn't all gloomy since there have recently been some changes regarding the choice of topics which have started to include everyday life during the war, the role of women, the functioning of the cities, healthcare, journalism, individuals, etc. There are no projects funded by state or international institutions in Croatia dedicated to research Croatia during WWI, and this represents an additional barrier to research.

Debates on WWI-related topics in Croatia remain on a very basic level, such as the question who is responsible for the war, who were the winners and losers, or whether Gavrilo Princip was an assassin or a freedom fighter. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the attitude towards Princip has changed since the former Yugoslav historiography considered him a liberator of the "Balkan people", while most people in Croatia now see him as a terrorist.

In order to gain better insight into WWI and perhaps come up with some new interpretations, there should be more collaboration between all European historians, unlike the conference in Sarajevo about the outbreak of the war which was boycotted by Serbian and French historians, or the conferences in Italy where no Croatian historians were even invited.

Despite first impressions to the contrary, I believe that there exists no separate history of WWI in Eastern and Western Europe, and this can be seen from the facts presented above. War is war, where everybody suffers and all are victims. Collaboration between European historiographies and historians will allow us to overcome these differences in viewpoints and approach WWI in a more objective manner, without blaming each other for the war or for who suffered more because of it.

Methods of dissemination, best practices, cooperation

Historians have enjoyed for a long time a quasi-monopoly of historical knowledge in the form of power over determining national historical canons. But other actors' contribution to the development of social memory, a genre usually summed up as public history, has gained traction and nowadays it is hard to underestimate its influence on the historical consciousness of European societies. Historiography, not the least due to its changing self-understanding following a series of epistemological revelations, is only one of many actors trying to influence the public. In this competition, traditional genres of historical writing have disadvantages, and to reach the public, even historians try to revert to new methods. However, our understanding of how social memory comes into being has changed profoundly, too. Alongside the generation of grand narratives, practitioners of memory (who actively engage in discovering, preserving and mobilizing memory) are keen to integrate individual, family, local and regional memories into broader social memory in a way that reflects the past and present diversity of societies. These processes are also part of what is usually referred to as European memory which was mainly based on the memory of the Holocaust, but since the accession of the Eastern European countries, it has also been a contested field. So far, it has mainly been the deviating memory of the Communist past which had to be integrated into European memory, but the anniversary of WWI can pose another challenge.

What are the most important books published recently in your country concerning WWI? What were the most notable scientific venues? What do you consider the best methods to reach the larger public with results of scholarly research on WWI? What topics are people the most interested in? How could a more nuanced view of the WWI be developed? What is the role of less traditional means of dissemination? In what respect do you think transnational cooperation is possible regarding

the memory of WWI? How could you and/or your institution contribute to such an endeavour?

Many articles and books on WWI-related topics have recently been published in Croatia. These include several translations, but these are focused on political history rather than topics from everyday life. The following translations have been published: David Stevenson 1914-1918; Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War*; François Bouloc, *Les profiteurs de guerre, 1914-1918*; Paul Lintier, *Avec une batterie de 75: ma piece*; David Mackenzie, *Apis: the Congenial Conspirator, the Life of Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijević*. Several diaries of WWI participants have been published, and more are being prepared and are expected to be published by 2018. As far as I know, a joint Lexicon by Croatian and Serbian historians on the First World War is being prepared, and is expected to be published by the end of this year. All of this is still insufficient for more detailed or deeper research since Croatian historiography lacks the relevant research in European archives. As I've mentioned before, there is no scientific project dedicated to WWI, and this has led to the research being halted.

Methods for raising public consciousness of WWI include various workshops (e.g. WWI kitchens), films, documentaries, conferences, round table discussions, visits to old battlefields (especially in foreign countries), mutual exchange of experiences and achievements, and cooperation between historians. It would be good to found a European association or society of scholars interested in WWI and create a mailing list through which information on WWI-related events would be disseminated. A public appeal could be launched for this purpose, or a letter sent to historical associations and universities as well as individual historians, requesting them to collaborate regarding the mentioned topic. There is currently little in the way of transnational cooperation other than on the "I know you, you know me" level. Most conferences still revolve around a small number of people, and this is something that should be changed.

One of the examples is this very questionnaire, which was initially sent to individuals for whom WWI is only a secondary interest while failing to reach the experts who weren't invited to your conferences even though our countries are neighbours. There still exists a lack of knowledge on the state of European historiographies regarding WWI and on which scholars are the best qualified experts on this topic.

To answer your question on how I, i.e. my institution can contribute to this project, I will simply answer that that depends on you. If you wish to collaborate with us or with me, we will gladly participate in projects and invite other scholars to collaborate. I am participating in activities regarding the commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of WWI in Croatia, not only through writing papers and attending conferences, but also by organizing conferences. I participate in TV documentaries, write articles for internet portals, forward WWI-related news to my colleagues, etc. Collectively, we organize commemorations for the victims of the war and visit the relevant locations. We strive to influence state institutions to participate in these activities and draw up new projects. Your experience would be very welcome, but the extent of our potential cooperation depends on you.

Helmut Konrad

1. The commemoration of WWI was a huge cultural event in Austria. A number of museums organized exhibitions, series in newspapers, books, school projects, TV, etc. It was the largest commemoration in the history of our country. And it was significantly beyond political controversy, there was also no important gap between political, scientific and public memory.

It was no longer the discussion of “Kriegsschuld”, nor a feeling of “Schande” for Saint Germain. So Austria was part of the mainstream of commemoration in Western Europe, trying to come to a transnational perspective, especially with the Italian historiography.

2. The most important impact came from Jay Winter’s 3-volume “Cambridge History of the First World War” and the consequent transnational approach in most of the articles. I could contribute with “Drafting the Peace” and I am happy to be part of the international team. In Winter’s book, you can see the new conceptualization: no national approaches, not a simple military history but an opening in the direction of cultural history and memory, to understand the war as a cruel, transforming event. I had the feeling that Eastern Europe was not fully included in this new approach. I lectured on 3 different continents, but not in Eastern Europe. Jay Winter, taking part in 2014 in more than 50 conferences all over the world, had only one panel in Eastern Europe...

3. Books are written by Manfred Rauchensteiner, Christa Hämmerle (most importantly on the gender perspective) and the teams in Innsbruck and Graz. Countless articles, catalogues and textbooks are published.

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„ It is right to say perhaps, though with some exaggeration, that the cornerstones of historical thinking about WWI in Hungary were laid down in the interwar period. After the decades of Communism, our public debates on history seem to return to their basic ideological sources whose genesis is to be found in and after 1918, keeping in mind that the war of 1914 had a major catalytic effect.”

(András Joó: The Origins and Legacy of World War I.
An (Austro-)Hungarian Perspective)

„For a long time, the history of World War I has been interpreted in school history education primarily from the national perspective. This went hand in hand with representing it within the framework of sentimentality and war propaganda, patriotic certainties such as battle, glory, hallowed dead, great men and conventional romanticism. However, in case of history textbooks used in Slovakia since 1918 until the present, WWI has not been depicted solely by the language of grief, mourning and bereavement, but it has always included also a significant positive aspect: it has been depicted as a milestone in the historical development of the nation...”

(Slávka Otčenášová: “The Truth Wins”: Interpretations
of World War I in School History)