UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Humanities

The Croatian God Mars: The Impact of the War on the Male Wartime Generation in Croatia

by

John Paul Newman

Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2008

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy

THE CROATIAN GOD MARS: THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT WAR ON THE MALE WARTIME GENERATION IN CROATIA

By John Paul Newman

This thesis explores the impact of the Great War in Croatia on the male wartime generation through a study of Croatian veterans, that is, men from Croatia who fought or served in the Habsburg army from 1914-1918. The study is based on extensive archival research in Croatia, Serbia, and Great Britain, as well the study of memoirs, journals, publications, monuments, and other traces left by veterans. This material has been synthesized with existing historiography to answer questions about the way in which post-war transition was experienced and interpreted by Croatian men, and the impact of this on state and society relations in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in the 1920s. The study is divided into four parts. The first two parts, concerned with Croatian disabled veterans and ex-volunteers (Habsburg South Slavs who 'switched sides' to the Serbian army during the war) examine the way in which Croatian veterans attempted to reconcile their wartime sacrifice with that of the Serbian army. The second two parts study the fate of ex-Habsburg officers of Croat descent and the tens of thousands of Croatian peasants who had been conscripted into fighting for the Habsburgs during the Great War. These chapters examine the extent to which some veterans remained un-reconciled to the new order, rejecting the transition from a Habsburg to a Yugoslav framework in the post-war period. The overarching theme of the study is that Croatian veterans arrived at an understanding of their war-time sacrifice through an ongoing negotiation or contestation both with other nationalities (especially Serbians) and with fellow Croats. The inability of many of them to reach a consensus on this issue is a reflection of the contested nature of Croatian national identity in the 1920s and of ambivalent attitudes to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In this respect, the impact of the war is one part of the broader issue of post-war transition in Croatia and in East-Central Europe in the 1920s. The study significantly enhances our understanding of the manner in which the transition from empire to nation-state was experienced in Croatia in the 1920s, setting out a new agenda for understanding the impact of the Great War and the character of the new nation-states in the interwar period in Eastern Europe.

List of Contents

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgements

It is impossible in such a short space to list all the people who, over the past few years, have helped me produce this independent piece of research. First and foremost I must acknowledge the good faith placed by Professor Mark Cornwall on a student with no degree in history and no post-graduate qualification whatsoever. His call asking me to be part of his research project on the Great War at the University of Southampton marks the beginning of my career as a student of history. Since I knew so little about the discipline when I started, whatever I have learnt, I have learnt from him. My interest in the Balkans began somewhat earlier, and was nurtured by David Norris and Vladislava Ribnikar at the University of Nottingham. Wendy Bracewell at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies listened patiently to some of the rawer ideas in the early stages of my study, as did Rory Yeomans. I am grateful to the advice and help of Ivo Goldstein and Goran Hutinec of the University of Zagreb. The largest part of my research was conducted at the Croatian National Archive and the National and University Library, both in Zagreb. The staff of these institutions were tirelessly helpful. The same can be said of staff at the Historical Archives in Zagreb, the National Archives in Split, and the University Library, also in Split. At the National Archives in Rijeka, I am grateful to Mladen Urem for his help on my (ultimately unsuccessful) quest to find Lujo Lovrić's correspondence with Ivo Andrić. In Belgrade, I was the beneficiary of Mile Bjelajac's encyclopaedic knowledge of the Yugoslav army, and of the hospitality, translation skills, and insights of Vladimir Berbatović: an overlooked genius. The two weeks I spent at the *Matica Srpska* in Novi Sad looking up volunteer veterans was a very pleasant spell in the most pleasant of Serbian towns. I am grateful to the time and efforts of staff there. Thanks to Robert Evans and his co-covenors at Oriel College's East-Central Europe Seminar Series for letting me try out some of the arguments in chapter four, and John Horne for his comments and interest in chapter two. Similarly, Melissa Bokovoy, Jovana Knežević, Vesna Drapać, and Vjeran Pavlaković all offered ey expert opinion and opened up new avenues of research. Back at Southampton: the irreplaceable Mary Stubbington, without whom everything stops functioning, I am very grateful for her help at all stages. Peter Howes and Andrew Newman were the *über*-intelligent general commentators; they offered the perspective of the non-historian. Finally, I am indebted the support of all my family and especially that of my parents.

List of Abbreviations

ASCG – Archive of Serbia and Montenegro, Belgrade (*Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore*).

HSS – The Croatian Peasant Party (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*).

IMRO – The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.

JNNO – Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth (*Jugoslovenska Napredno-Nacionalna Omladina*).

JO – Yugoslav Committee (*Jugoslovenski odbor*).

NA – National Archives, Great Britain.

NDH – Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatske*).

ORJUNA – Organization of Yugoslav Nationalists (*Organizacija jugoslovenska nacionalista*).

PAZG – Historical Archive, Zagreb (*Povijesni arhiv Zagreb*).

ZZD – Law for the Protection of the State (*Zakon zaštite države*).

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, 1918. From Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven and London:1997).

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the impact of the Great War in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes[1] through a study of Croatian veterans: men from Croatia who had served in the Habsburg army during the Great War.[2] The case for the impact of this rather heterogeneous group on state and society has not yet been made in the historiography of twentieth-century Croatia, nor that of Yugoslavia, and it is the intention to confront this omission. The research presented here will illustrate the way in which the sacrifice of men from Croatia was considered of lesser value by the agents of South Slav national integration after 1918. Those agents bestowed primacy on Serbia's war(s) of 'liberation and unification' fought on behalf of all South Slavs, a national epic which either subsumed or overwhelmed alternative interpretations of the war. Croatian veterans were forced either to accept their secondary status in the Yugoslav kingdom's 'hierarchy of sacrifice', or seek an alternative matrix outside the new state within which that sacrifice could be re-situated. Croatian veterans often chose the latter option, absorbing influences from outside Yugoslavia's borders and putting them to the use of their own national cause, thereby undermining the process of nation-state building in the new kingdom. With the assassination of the most popular Croatian politician, Stjepan Radić (1928), more people in Croatia were prepared to accept a radical solution to the Croatian question in Yugoslavia. This thesis will show how ex-soldiers cultivated the necessary space for these radical solutions to flourish in the 1930s, a process which included transmitting their values to the 'post-war' generation who had been too young to fight in the Great War.

Despite the primacy of Serbia's war in the Yugoslav kingdom, the thesis does not take the reductive view that the experience of Croatian veterans must be seen

---

[1] According to the British Foreign Office, the cumbersome name came about, in part, because of the Serbian People's Radical Party's insistence that the new state include 'Serb' or 'Serbia' in its title, whilst the Democratic Party would have preferred 'Yugoslavia', a name which was not officially adopted until October 1929. See National Archives (NA), FO 371/7686 , 'Annual Report 1921 for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes' For the sake of brevity, this thesis will refer to the country as 'Yugoslavia', or the 'Yugoslav kingdom'.

[2] For national appellations, this study uses a system partially derived from Ivo Banac's monograph *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*. For nouns, the terms Slovene(s), Croat(s), and Serb(s) are used, although Serbian(s) refers to a person or persons from the pre-war Kingdom of Serbia (see map). For adjectives, the terms Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian are used. See Ivo Banac *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: 1988), pp. 17-18.

through a Serbian, or for that matter a European prism. Instead, it acknowledges that the men who are the object of this study often understood their wartime experiences in both Yugoslav and European contexts. It will be helpful to think of this study as informed by a three-storey approach. The 'ground-floor', the way in to each chapter, is an exploration of the essence of the veteran identity. This exploration will involve an attempt to gauge whether the men in question can rightfully be considered veterans, whether or not the war caused significant and permanent disruption to pre-war kinship groups and ways of life to the extent that veterans were unwilling or unable to return to those groups. The next storey encompasses the question of South Slav national integration in the context of Serbia's foundational narrative, in other words the way in which Croatian veterans responded to the reality of the Serbian veterans' position as *primus inter pares* in discourses surrounding the Great War. The final storey offers a potential way out of this narrative for Croatian veterans. The legacy of the war throughout Eastern Europe remained contested throughout the 1920s; it was here that many Croatian veterans could locate a meaning of their wartime experience which did not relegate them to a subordinate position. Alternative interpretations of Wilsonian self-determination, the example of socialist revolution in Russia, and even the post-war paramilitary subculture of groups such as the *Heimwehr* and the *Freikorps* all exerted a compelling influence on certain groups of Croatian veterans, undermining the process of South Slav national integration in Yugoslavia.

Drawing the reader's attention to this last storey is essentially to read the impact of the war in Croatia as part of the larger and still under-researched question of the impact of the war across Eastern Europe. A discussion of Croatian veterans in Yugoslavia will remain incomplete if it is merely restricted to the domestic life of the kingdom, although this aspect is crucial for understanding the development of so much of Croatian national identity in the interwar period. The 'greatness' of the Great War, however, lies in the fact that its impact transcended national and ethnic boundaries. Many Croatian veterans, former soldiers of the polyglot Habsburg army who had fought on a variety of battlefronts, were aware of the war's trans-national impact, and its implications for state-building in the Yugoslav kingdom. This thesis shares their interpretation of the war as an event of trans-national significance and argues that the experiences of Serbian and non-Serbian veterans were sufficiently different so as to undermine the process of South Slav integration in the decade after

the Great War. With this in mind, the subsections of this introduction follow the three-storey approach, starting at the top, with a survey of the impact of the war in Eastern Europe and especially in the successor-states of the Habsburg empire. This will be followed by an outline of the different perceptions of the Great War in Yugoslavia and finally a review of the theoretical literature, historiography, and sources relevant to the study of veterans in Croatia.

Before advancing to these subsections it will be useful to define both the boundaries of 'Croatia' in the interwar period and, as a corollary of this, to define who will and will not be considered a 'Croatian veteran'. The wisdom behind this is two-fold. Firstly, a more precise definition of the area under study will, of course, reduce the chances of anachronism. Secondly, the diversity of influences on Croatian national sentiment in the period after the Great War is reflected in the experiences of the men studied in this thesis. It is often written of the Yugoslav kingdom that its leaders were faced with an impossible task in bringing together the disparate strands of this new nation-state.[3] In this respect, the 'Croatian question' and the matter of Serb-Croat relations in Yugoslavia are identified as the keystone of South-Slav national integration, the issue upon which the project will succeed or fail.[4] Whilst this thesis acknowledges the importance of the Serb-Croat nexus in the Yugoslav kingdom, it also acknowledges the lack of homogeneity within Croatia itself. The Croatia of 1918-1929 was also the product of numerous disparate political, social, and cultural influences. On the Adriatic coast there were traces of the Italian Renaissance and of the French Revolution. Large parts of Croatia and Slavonia had been organised under the Habsburg military frontier, separated from 'Civil Croatia' until 1881, which had been under Hungarian authority (more intensely after 1868), which was in turn separated from Dalmatia, controlled by Venice and then Austria (1815-1918). Robin Okey has noted that the manifold traditions to which Croatia is heir make it one of the most complex small nations in Europe.[5]

---

[3] Many general readers are introduced to the region with the opening paragraph of Joseph Rothschild's essay on the interwar kingdom: 'By virtually every relevant criterion-history, political traditions, socioeconomic standards, legal systems, religion and culture-Yugoslavia was the most complicated of the new states of interwar East Central Europe.' (Joseph Rothschild *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: 1974), p. 201.)

[4] For example, Alex Dragnich *The First Yugoslavia: The Search for a viable Political System* (Stanford: 1983).

[5] Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (Basingstoke: 2001), p. 21-22. Monographs which detail the tributaries of the modern Croatian nation include Elanor Murray Despalatović's *Ljudevit Gaj and the Ilyrian Movement* (New York: 1975) which looks at the Croatian

The extent to which national integration was achieved in Croatia during the period after the Great War has been addressed by Mark Biondich in his monograph *Stjepan Radić, the Croatian Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1905-1928.* In that work, Biondich found that Radić's programme of agrarian populism was successful in bringing these various traditions together into one national movement. Radić's position as the pre-eminent force in Croatian national life in the post-war period is undisputable, and his party's relationship with peasant veterans is addressed in chapter four. The preceding three chapters, however, demonstrate that many Croatian veterans also negotiated a sense of national identity and the meaning of their wartime experiences outside of Radić's programme. The various ways in which this was done is a reflection of Croatia's diverse historical and cultural traditions. Volunteer veterans, for example, found a precedent for their support of South-Slav national integration in Napolean's Illyrian provinces and in Josip Juraj Strossmayer's programme of cultural Yugoslavism. On the other hand, veterans associated with the Frankist party turned to the historic 'state-right' of Civil Croatia, or saw themselves as the descendants of the *grenzer* regiments of the Military Frontier. By addressing this diversity, this thesis will help explain the different currents which came to the fore in Croatia after the death of Stjepan Radić, and even some of the violence and ideology of the civil war in Yugoslavia 1941-1945. Veterans of the Great War from Croatia can be found in the upper echelons of each of the three movements which contested the civil war. The Chetniks, the Partisans, and the Ustasha each owed something of the character of their movements to the male wartime generation.

This discussion of the lack of homogeneity in national life in Croatia during this period must also address the ethnic diversity within the region under study. Veterans of the Great War from Croatia are not necessarily Croats; Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims were also amongst the Monarchy's South Slav soldiers. The highest ranking South Slav soldier in the Habsburg army during the war, Field Marshall Svetozar Boroević, for example, was an ethnic Serb from Croatia. In the

---

19th century national renaissance and the impact of French revolutionary thinking in Croatia, Mirjana Gross's *Povijest pravaške ideologije* (Zagreb: 1973) is the standard work on the history of Croatian state right in the same century. Gunther Rothenberg is the military frontier's historian; his monograph *The Military Border in Croatia 1740-1881: a Study of an Imperial Institution* (Chicago: 1966) is relevant to a study the military traditions for which Croatian soldiers were held in such high regard in the Habsburg army.

discussion of volunteer veterans in chapter two, this thesis will address the extent to which nationality influenced the experiences of veterans in post-war Croatia, and especially their loyalty to Yugoslavia. The sources pertaining to South Slav prisoners of war in Russia show that the men who volunteered to fight in the Serbian army were mostly *prečani* Serbs, that is, ethnic Serbs from Croatia or other Habsburg lands. In addition to this, the leading role of former *prečani* Serb volunteer veterans in the Yugoslav nationalist movement ORJUNA, formed in Dalmatia in 1922, suggests that these veterans were closer to Serbia's foundational narrative in Yugoslavia than were most Croats. Whilst this matter is explored in greater detail in chapter two, a distinction applicable throughout this thesis is that between Serbian and non-Serbian veterans, that is, men who had fought in the Serbian army during the war, and men who had not. The former (including volunteer veterans) could be integrated more easily into the narrative of Serbian 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs. The majority of the veterans studied in this thesis, whether Serb or Croat, fall into the latter category, and their status as non-Serbian veterans was more important than their nationality in interwar Yugoslavia. With these national and ethnic parameters established we can now consider some aspects of the impact of the war in the region and the external influences which Croatian veterans were subject to.

The Impact of the War

The impact of the war in Eastern Europe and the successor states of the Habsburg empire is the top storey of this study. It is at this level that we can assess the political, social, and cultural influences relevant to the study of Croatian veterans. It is also at this level that we can consider the importance of the legacy of the Habsburg empire for the men who had fought for her during the Great War. Politically, the Great War had introduced Wilsonian self-determination and Marxist-Leninist socialist revolution to Europe. These two opposing ideologies proved to be the most compelling amongst South Slavs in the period under study. In the former Habsburg South Slav lands, as in other regions which had been part of the Monarchy, former soldiers also needed to 'disengage' from imperial loyalties, the easier to live in their new nation-states, and it is with the dissolution of the Monarchy that we begin this subsection.

Austria-Hungary was reduced to fragments by the end of the war principally because it was unable to find imperial centripetal forces commensurate to its

nationalist centrifugal forces.[6] In Austria, the state of flux in the region at the end of the war allowed for the emergence of a number of paramilitary groups of various colour, the most infamous of which were those organized to prevent South Slavs gaining ascendancy in Carinthia.[7] The *Heimwehr*'s assault on workers in Vienna in 1934 is testimony to the long-term fractures of interwar society in the Austrian republic, an example of paramilitary violence which is relevant also to Croatia, and will be explored in chapter three.

Outside Austria, the small nations of the erstwhile Monarchy rallied around the moral authority of the American president Woodrow Wilson. Thomas Masaryk and his protégée Edvard Beneš, for example, had come to terms with Slovaks over the formation of a Czech-Slovak state in Pittsburgh in June 1918.[8] Their safe passage into the age of nation-states looked assured; Wilson at the peace conference held in Paris looked favourably upon their vision of a new state. Wilson also looked favourably upon the Serbians, whose wartime journey had captured the imagination of so many in Allied countries, and would become synonymous with heroism and gallantry in the face of extreme conditions. Wilson's support for the South Slav delegation at Paris was a crucial bulwark against Italian designs in the Adriatic, a threat which gave unity of purpose to two otherwise 'antithetical characters', the Serbian politician Nikola Pašić and Yugoslavia's first foreign minister Ante Trumbić.[9] The wartime disagreements between these two men over the formation of South Slav volunteer divisions in Russia, as well as the delicate nature of their agreement over the structure of a future South Slav state, were harbingers of the divisions which would beset Yugoslavia.[10]

---

[6] The influential model of centripetal/centrifugal forces was created by the Hungarian liberal Oscar Jaszi in his book *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: 1961, originally published in 1929), see p. 4. Paula S. Fichtner notes how this work 'has become almost paradigmatic in our thinking about the Austro-Hungarian empire': see Paula S. Fichtner 'Americans and the Disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy: The Shaping of an Historiographical Model', in Robert A. Kann, Bela K. Kiraly, Paula S. Fichtner (eds) *The Habsburg Empire in World War One: Essays on the Intellectual, Military, Political, and Economic Aspects of the Habsburg War Effort,* (New York: 1977), p. 226.

[7] Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics 1918-1936* (Athens: 1986), p. 19.

[8] Antony Polonsky, *The Little Dictators: the History of Eastern Europe since 1918* (London: 1975), p. 116.

[9] See Ivo J. Lederer *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiermaking* (New Haven: 1961).

[10] A more detailed account of the volunteer question during the war and in the interwar kingdom will be made in chapter two. The historian Dragoslav Janković has researched the background and consequences of the 'Corfu Declaration' of 1917, where the Serbian government and the JO negotiated over the establishment of a South Slav state and the character such a state would take. See Dragoslav Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje i krfska deklaracija 1917. godine* (Belgrade: 1967), pp. 73-95.

Beneath the political elite, Wilson's message of national self-determination resonated at a more popular level, and continued to do so for many years after the Armistice. Josip Horvat, a Zagreb publicist and veteran of the Habsburg army, spoke of how 'like Christ, Wilson brought good news predominantly to the weak, the degraded, and the insulted, he brought them the idea of equality.'[11] For some Croats, that idea of equality proved illusory. The Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić, for example, believed that the Croatian people's rights of self-determination had been violated in the union with Serbia and Montenegro (proclaimed on 1 December 1918), and tried to send a petition to Wilson stating as much (March 1919). His appeal earned him a jail sentence, his first of several in the new state. In any case it was a lost cause: the clamour from Italy over territory in the Adriatic promised to them by the Allies in the secret Treaty of London (1915) was too great for Croatia to handle without Serbian support. The delegation sent to Paris was initially recognised by Allied peacemakers as that of the 'Kingdom of Serbia' rather than the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes', since the former was one of the victorious Allies, and Croatia was not.

This last point is important. The Serbians were identified very strongly as being amongst the winners of the Great War at Paris. This identification gave leaders such as Pašić a freer hand in the process of state building and furthermore, this identification continued throughout the interwar period.[12] We can see here the contradiction between the universality of Wilson's vision of self-determination and its reality: that it would often be applied to victorious nations (Serbs, Romanians, Czechs) at the expense of those that were perceived as defeated. This is part of the impact of the war throughout the successor states but it is particularly relevant to the Croatian case study. Throughout the interwar period, there was scope for parties in Croatia which were opposed to Yugoslavia, such as Radić and the Croatian Peasant Party, to exploit the gap between the apparent universality of Wilson's programme and its denial in their nation. But perhaps more significant than this was the identification of Serbia not just as a victor of the Great War, but as part of a post-war

---

[11] Josip Horvat, *Politička povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: 1990), p. 19.

[12] Winston Churchill, for example, complained that 'the Croats had no right to change sides in the moment of defeat and by a judicious dive emerge among the victors. However the force of events prevailed. The Croats sought, and the Serbians accorded shelter and status as a friendly people forced into war against their will by a defunct and guilty imperialism.' See Winston Churchill 'The World Crisis: The Territorial Settlements of 1919-1920' in Lederer (ed.) *The Versailles Settlement: Was it Foredoomed to Failure?* (Boston: 1960), p. 81.

European order organized by the Allies at Paris and based on the moral authority of Woodrow Wilson and of national self-determination.

There was another way out of empire for small nations in post-war Europe which was no less a part of the impact of the war in the region. If Woodrow Wilson was, as Josip Horvat claimed, the Christ of the new epoch of nation-states in Europe, then Lenin was perhaps the anti-Christ. Wilson's vision of a new European order became a post-war reality, but it was challenged throughout the 1920s by Communism. At the end of the Great War, socialists took power, albeit rather briefly, in parts of Germany, Hungary, and in Vienna. The ranks of socialist revolutionaries throughout Europe were boosted in no small part by the large number of POWs, converts to Bolshevism, returning from Russia.[13]

This too had a long-term impact on the region. The dialectics of post-war politics meant that extreme left was confronted with extreme right. The men who formed the units of the German *Freikorps*, for example, imagined a hostile theatre of battle populated by Jews, Communists, and women. The heated masculinity of that movement as well as the misogyny, the anti-Semitism and the way that those aspects became equated with anti-Communism has been correctly identified as a pre-cursor to National Socialism in Germany.[14] The 'white terror' unleashed in order to dispose of Bela Kun's regime and its followers permanently scarred interwar Hungary, and allowed for the conditions in which the Hungarian strain of fascism was born.[15] One can see how George Mosse believed the Great War to be the basis for the brutalization and habituation to violence that animated fascists in the interwar period.[16] The tensions between the competing visions of mass democracy after the

---

[13] Carsten, p. 224.

[14] See Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: 1987, 1989).

[15] Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Iasi: 2001), p. 75.

[16] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: 1990), see also *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: 1996). Both of these works have been of invaluable use, and especially inform the study of ex-officers and Frankists in chapter three. The former work's description of the 'Cult of the Fallen Soldier' offers a portal into the ideology of the far right in Croatia and their attitude towards the veterans of the Great War. The latter work explains the stereotypes upon which these men and women based their criteria for masculinity. This thesis, however, qualifies Mosse's slightly unilinear analysis by asserting that in Croatia, as elsewhere in Europe, the emergence of the far right was just one, in this case very small, part of the impact of the Great War. Chapter four will show how the majority of Croatian soldiers returning from the Great War apparently determined never to take arms again. Mosse's work can be read alongside that of Jon Lawrence, who establishes and attempts to explain a lack of violence amongst veterans in post-war Britain where such violence was widely expected. See Jon Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain' in *The Journal of Modern History*, 75 (September 2003), pp. 557-589.

Great War, the *de facto* order of Woodrow Wilson's nation-states, and the socialist apocalypse threatened by Lenin, created no small amount of violence and oppression for the peoples they were supposed to be liberating. It is little wonder that writers such as Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth looked back fondly on the security and mundane predictability of the Habsburg days.

All of these ideological currents were present in the Yugoslav kingdom during the 1920s. The victory of the Allies and Serbia's role in that victory meant that, respectively, the South Slav state would be organised according to a programme of Wilsonian self-determination, and that the programme would be chiefly a Serbian prerogative. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav kingdom was haunted by the spectre of Communism, and the Comintern, calling for Yugoslavia's destruction from 1925 onwards,[17] was a bogey for the country's leaders. Indeed, they had cause for concern at the extent to which Lenin's revolutionary creed had infiltrated the country, at least in the first years after the end of the war. Many South Slav POWs had, like their German and Hungarian counterparts, absorbed Bolshevik ideology whilst in Russia, and made their presence felt on their return home. Amongst those men was Josip Broz, a reserve officer and Habsburg army fencing champion recruited by the Monarchy's army from the Zagorje region of Croatia. The ascendancy of the man who became Tito in the Yugoslav Communist Party did not begin in earnest until the 1930s; the key figures in the movement in the 1920s were intellectuals such as Miroslav Krleža and August Cesarac, returnees from Russia such as Vladimir and Milan Čopić, and revolutionary terrorists such as Alija Alijagić. It was they who threatened to upset the Yugoslav kingdom's stability in the 1920s, or at least they were perceived as the men who threatened to do so by the Yugoslav kingdom's ruling elite.

Alongside Communists, Stjepan Radić took advantage of these new post-war currents. His idiosyncratic style of party leadership was perhaps revolutionary enough to appeal to peasants who had been in Russia and who now felt molested by government tax inspectors and army recruiters. As an agrarian populist leader with mass support he was a rarity in the region (the ill-fated Bulgarian Peasant leader Alexander Stamboliski being the only other example). At least some of that support was derived from resentment in Croatia at the post-war re-organization of Europe.

---

[17] Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution* (Cambridge MA: 1991), pp. 83-89.

There was very little room outside Radić's big tent in post-war Croatia; any other national ideology was fated to remain on the margins during the period (although the supranational ideology of Communism emerged as the most popular amongst voters in Zagreb, according to the municipal elections of 1920). Such was the predicament of the Frankists and their followers in post-war Croatia, a handful of Habsburg 'chameleons'[18] whose path in the 1920s is traced in chapter three. Like the *Heimwehr* and the *Freikorps*, a number of followers of this movement refused to acknowledge the Armistice at the end of the war. Party members and former Habsburg officers of Croatian descent, as émigrés in Budapest and Vienna, chose to scheme at military revolution in order to upset the Yugoslav kingdom and achieve autonomy for Croatia, in some form or other. Their grandiose machinations set alongside their miniscule support may now invite ridicule. It was not so clear at the time: the existence of a paramilitary subculture throughout Central and Eastern Europe suggests that many men planned for and expected to play a new role in violent revolution. Again, it needs to be stressed that Croatian veterans understood their fate in Yugoslavia as linked to the larger question of the impact of the Great War throughout the region. Invalids from Croatia felt kinship with those from Austria, Hungary, etc; South Slav volunteers sent delegations to volunteer organizations throughout Europe. Veterans who had turned to Bolshevism whilst in captivity in Russia saw themselves as part of a movement which transcended national boundaries, whereas soldiers who supported Yugoslavia emphasised the sanctity of the new international order based on nation-states and Wilsonian self-determination. It is essential that this trans-national dimension be kept in sight, since many Croatian veterans had this dimension in sight themselves.

The Impact of the War in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes

The next storey down is the impact of the war within the borders of Yugoslavia. This subsection is concerned with the impact of the Great War on South Slav integration and nation building in Yugoslavia and its implications for veterans from Croatia. Two connected points stand out: the primacy of Serbia's war(s) of 'liberation and unification' in the foundational narrative of the Yugoslav kingdom, and the lack of

[18] See Banac, *National Question*, p. 260.

contribution from Croatia to discourses surrounding the Great War. These two points are as much a part of the context of study of Croatian veterans as is the impact of the war in the region, and the history of the men examined in this thesis cannot be properly understood without their being addressed. The Serbian wartime sacrifice, especially, is such a conspicuously salient point that it needs to be considered before advancing into the study of any aspect of the impact of the Great War in Yugoslavia. Every single veteran society, every novel and memoir, every ex-soldier examined in this thesis was influenced in some way by Serbia's Great War. It is better to address this overarching narrative in the introduction than to spread it piecemeal throughout the main body of the text, in order that it does not obscure the central concern of the thesis.

The Serbian wartime narrative actually begins in 1912, with the success of the first Balkan war, and continues through to the Serbian army breaking through the front at Salonika at the end of the Great War. By this time, Serbia's war had become one of 'liberation' and 'unification' of all South Slavs (liberation and unification are terms whose frequent appearances in this thesis reflect the frequency with which they were used in discourses surrounding the Great War in Yugoslavia). By 1918, Serbia had experienced defeat, occupation, and eventual victory, and had suffered more per capita losses, both civilian and military, than any other belligerent nation. Jozo Tomasevich has calculated that the figure for total losses in Serbia and Montenegro, military and civilian and including figures from the Balkan wars is between 750-800,000. Losses for Habsburg South Slavs are harder to calculate due to the decomposition of the Monarchy in 1918, but the figure is around 150,000, the majority of whom must have been soldiers, rather than civilians.[19]

This concept of Serbian 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs and of the great Serbian sacrifice which this entailed are crucial to an understanding of the impact of the war in Yugoslavia. Ivo Banac has written of how the national question permeated every aspect of public life in Yugoslavia after 1918;[20] it could be said that the national epic of Serbia's war was similarly omnipresent. Serbia's wartime sacrifice was woven into the fabric of the new state, becoming the foundational narrative of the Yugoslav kingdom even though its appeal was restricted along

[19] Jozo Tomaesvich, *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: 1955), pp. 222-223.
[20] Banac, *National Question,* p. 415.

national lines. These wars of 'liberation and unification' were celebrated in a number of ways commensurate with behaviour in France or Great Britain. Monuments to battles and fallen soldiers were erected throughout Serbia and battle accounts and memoirs were widespread in Yugoslavia. General Franchet d'Esperey of France, who had commanded the Serbian army during the breakthrough at Salonika, visited Yugoslavia in 1919 amid much ceremony; a street in Belgrade was named after him to commemorate the occasion. In 1922, huge celebrations were held to mark the decennial of the Serbian victory against the Ottomans at Kumanovo in the first Balkan war. Numerous other monuments, songs, and poems, and photographic exhibitions appeared in celebration of Serbia's victory during the interwar period.[21]

Unsurprisingly, there is no comparison in Croatia to Serbia's vast war commemoration. The many plaques and statues which appear throughout Serbia were not present in Croatia, where an official monument to the war dead at Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb did not appear until 1938. There were also four thousand rather neglected war graves at Mirogoj. We will see that, occasionally, Zagreb newspapers would comment on this forgotten corner of the cemetery, ill-tended and occasionally decorated with the scantiest of floral tributes. This was also true of cemeteries throughout the country; in Karlovac, Varaždin, and Slavonski Brod the sections of cemeteries dedicated to those who died fighting in the Great War are easily missed by the inattentive passer-by.

The 'Croatian silence' surrounding the war, which is also part of the background to this thesis, is in part attributable to the process of South Slav national integration and Serbian cultural hegemony in Yugoslavia. Unable to be absorbed into the dominant narrative, Croatia's war was simply pushed to the margins, or in the words of T.G. Ashplant, it became a 'sectional war memory'.[22] That interpretation is valid up to a point. The centrality of Serbia's war to the Yugoslav foundational narrative may account for the lack of official commemoration in Croatia, but it is less successful in explaining the apparent lack of unofficial commemoration: private and smaller rituals of mourning and grief. On this point, it can be noted that the Serbian/Croatian comparison is perhaps inappropriate. Serbian casualties, both

[21] Melisa Bokovoy 'Whose Hero? (Re)Defining War Dead in the Interwar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes', conference paper delivered in Southampton, September 2007, as part of an international conference, *Sacrifice and Regeneration: Sacrifice: the Legacy of the Great War in Interwar Eastern Europe.*

[22] T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper (eds), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: 2000), p. 20.

civilian and military, were so much greater than those of Croatia that one should expect a disparity between Serbian and Croatian commemoration after the Great War. Whilst this thesis acknowledges the dominant position of Serbian sacrifice in discourses surrounding the war, it does not take the position that *ceteris paribus* its impact in Croatia and in Serbia was in any sense equivalent. The impact of the Great War in Serbia was in most respects far greater than its impact in Croatia. It can also be noted that the war was fought on Serbian and not on Croatian soil, and that this also had an impact on the post-war landscape in Yugoslavia, as it did throughout Europe. Battles fought at Kumanovo, on the river Kolubara and at Kajmakčalan made these places important memory sites for many Serbians, in the same way as the location of the Isonzo Front was for many Slovenes, but there was nothing comparable to these sites in Croatia.

The diversity of Croatian national identity, already noted, may also be partly responsible for this gap. Croatian veterans, in contrast to those from Serbia, found it harder to associate their wartime sacrifice to a national cause in a Europe where, as we have seen, national causes were at a premium. Croatian veterans perhaps also found it harder to express a unified sense of national identity from a variety of often competing historical traditions. There are certain parallels with German veterans of the Great War in Austria, who also found it hard to fuse a sense of unified national identity in the first republic, and were also subject to various external and internal influences. If the men studied in the four chapters of this thesis seem to have used very different vocabularies and understood their wartime experiences by drawing from very different sources, it is worth remembering that all of them were, in a certain sense, in the same post-war predicament. As Croatian veterans they had to find a meaning for their wartime experiences fighting for an extinguished Monarchy in a nation-state where, at least as far as the legacy of the Great War was concerned, they were not considered part of the 'state of nation'. The struggle of the Croatian veteran, then, was a struggle to create a legitimate sense of his own sacrifice for the national cause in a Yugoslav society which often refused to recognise any sacrifice other than Serbia's wars of 'liberation and unification'.

Croatian Veterans

Now that the regional and national contexts of the study have been established, we are ready to look at veterans themselves. This final subsection will explain the content of the chapters, as well as offering a methodological approach to the study of Croatian veterans, the relevant historiography, and a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the sources used.

The study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter examines the approximately 40,000 Croatian men who returned home from fighting in the Habsburg army as 'invalids', i.e., disabled veterans. These men came from a range of pre-war backgrounds and served on various fronts and at different ranks during the war. The extent to which they shared a fate as invalids in the post-war period make them an ideal test case for examining the notion of a Croatian 'veteran identity'. The second part moves on to a study of 'volunteers', a far smaller group of men who had defected from the Habsburg into the Serbian army during the war. This group is important since it complicates the notion of a Croatian wartime sacrifice inferior to that of the Serbian. The Croatian volunteer actually adds a higher dimension to the idea of national sacrifice i.e., that the sacrifice is volitional, it is something which men are compelled towards because they will to serve and die, not because they are obliged to. The third part examines the fate of soldiers of Croatian descent who had fought as commissioned officers of the Habsburg army during the Great War. Their political links with the radical right in Zagreb show the way in which ex-soldiers came to play an important role in the Ustasha paramilitary organization in the 1930s. The last part attempts to discover the impact of the war on Croatian peasant-conscripts, who collectively formed the 'cohorts' of the Habsburg war effort in Croatia. The vast majority of veterans of the Great War in Croatia fell into this last category. Considered together, the experience of these four groups in the Yugoslav kingdom is the 'ground-floor' of the thesis.

For all the reasons cited, drawing these four groups together into a coherent whole is challenging. The diversity of the cultural, political, and social impact of these men on society is such that the historian is restricted to a very low threshold of commonality; to speak of the 'Croatian veteran experience' is to speak in very general terms. Moreover, the apparent disregard for the Great War in Croatia compared to its celebration in Serbia makes it even harder to find applicable literature. Nevertheless,

there are a number of works which are of theoretical use to the study of Croatian veterans.

The work of greatest scope in this respect is Arthur Marwick's study *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*. Informed by the assumption that total war must impact on the whole of society, Marwick's work concluded that whilst British 'society' had changed as a result of the war, the 'state' had not, and he makes the case for social over political history as a way of understanding the impact of the Great War.[23] This holistic approach is especially useful for the study of the Great War in the successor states of the Habsburg monarchy, despite the differences between their wartime and post-war experiences and those of Great Britain. In Croatia the 'deluge' was similarly two-fold. Croatian society, predominantly rural, revolted against Habsburg mobilization and central authority in 1918, as tens of thousands of men (many of them veterans) took to the woods of the country's interior and refused to continue fighting the Monarchy's war. The deluge in the Croatian state, on the other hand, came with the introduction of universal manhood suffrage throughout the country, a legislation which swept away the old, imperial order and gave the Croatian people a voice in the Yugoslav kingdom. Part four will show that those two changes are inseparable and of crucial importance for understanding the impact of the Great War in Croatia.

Two other British studies are also useful: Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* and Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Both of these works describe the way in which post-war culture in Great Britain was drastically, permanently altered as a result of the Great War. Fussell's central thesis is that the horror of the Great War was of such magnitude that it defied conventional cultural forms and demanded a new, ironic mode of expression.[24] The large amount of literature Fussell uses to make his case extends beyond the interwar period, looking at novels of the Second World War and even Korean and Vietnam Wars. The book's vast scope, covering almost the entire twentieth century, is part of its attraction; it defies the simplified interpretation of the Great War as a prequel of the Second World War, and instead sees it as the source of many of the century's most distinctive cultural tropes.

---

[23] Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: 1965), p. 350.
[24] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: 1975), pp. 29-35.

In contrast to Fussell's break with the past, Jay Winter asserts that the need throughout Europe to come to terms with the unprecedented loss of life favoured traditional cultural modes; the Great War was not, as Fussell claimed, a great break with the past and in this sense, '"modern memory", with its sense of dislocation, paradox, irony, did not have the power to heal.'[25] Instead, Winter offers an anthropology of symbols, memorials, and kinship groups which helped people to find meaning from their experiences of the Great War. In taking on 'the challenge of leaving behind national boundaries'[26] Winter has proposed a commonality to the cultural history of the combatant countries, although those combatant countries are usually from the west of Europe.

If the conclusions are different, then at least the methodologies of both Fussell and Winter can be used profitably in the Croatian case study. Winter's approach offers a methodology that interprets the impact of the Great War at a European rather than a national level, and the case for such an interpretation was made in the first subsection. In addition to this, his notion of kinship groups which can mediate the process of mourning and suffering caused by the Great War is relevant to the numerous veterans' organizations studied here. Fussell, on the other hand, was able to prove that a reciprocal relationship existed between the war literature of Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon *et al*, and the understanding of fighting the Great War for the average British soldier. In this way, Fussell found that the literary output of these writers and veterans was broadly representative of the majority of British soldiers' experiences of the trenches, or at least those soldiers felt that it was broadly representative. It is impossible to make such a connection between the literary output of veterans examined in this thesis and the experience of the average Croatian soldier. The sources do not exist either to define that experience or even to define that soldier; thus conclusions will remain heavily qualified. Nevertheless, in terms of literary sources the work of Miroslav Krleža, a veteran of the Habsburg army during the war and a fierce critic of the post-war order, can be used in the same way that Fussell used the work of British poets and writers. Krleža understood the impact of the Great War on veterans from Croatia, and he sought to express this impact in his writing. His short stories, published together under the title *The Croatian God Mars* also provide

---

[25] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: 1995), p. 5.
[26] Ibid, p. 11.

the historian with valuable insights into the otherwise obscure experiences of the Croatian peasant during the war. But even more than this, Krleža's social conscience compelled him to write about a number of issues germane to the study of Croatian veterans. For example, his criticism of the misplaced confidence of pro-Yugoslavs in post-war Croatia provide an important counterpoint to the study of Croatian volunteers in part two. Similarly, his verbal and written attacks on ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent are important for understanding the issues central to part three. In both cases, he demonstrated a great sensitivity to the impact of the Great War on the environment in which he lived.

Concerning the definition of veterans' themselves, two works are of especial interest. First, the methodology used in this thesis to establish the existence and character of a 'veteran identity' amongst men such as Krleža derives partly from Eric J. Leed. In his monograph *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One*, Leed wrote of how veterans in post-war Europe were trapped between the front and home, separated from the 'civilian' population and trapped in a 'liminal stage' between the 'familiar and the unknown.' This separation was two-fold, since it was made by both the veteran himself and the civilian population.[27] For Leed, the image of the veteran is open to a number of interpretations. For some, he is 'an appealing and potentially revolutionary figure', for others, he is a threat and needs to be re-integrated into society, unless that society wishes to pay the price of his alienation.[28] This thesis will examine the extent to which the separation Leed has written about is true of Croatian veterans. In each of the parts of this thesis, the sources have been analysed to gauge and locate this 'liminality' and its impact on post-war society in Croatia.

Second, this thesis will use the study of Croatian veterans to explore notions of gender in interwar Yugoslavia. In this respect, the thesis adheres throughout to the 'double-helix' theory of gender relations as posited by Margaret and Patrice Higonnet in the classic collection of essays, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. According to this theory, the disruptions in gender relations caused by the war, such as the apparently revolutionary appearance of women in roles traditionally consigned to men, were temporary and predicated upon a conservative and patriarchal understanding of the value of those roles. Women were doing men's work at home

---

[27] Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: 1979), pp. 14-15.
[28] Ibid, pp. 195-196.

merely because men were involved in the far more important task of winning the war. The subordinate position of women in society was in fact unaltered, and their contribution was still considered of secondary importance.[29] Since this thesis is concerned with the 'hierarchy of sacrifice' in post-war Yugoslavia, it should be acknowledged that aside from nationality and wartime experience the sacrifice of these soldiers, as men, was considered of higher value to the national cause than that of women.[30] The 'double-helix' of gender relations will be apparent throughout the study of veterans' memoirs, novels, diaries, newspapers, etc.[31]

It is fair to say that theoretical literature of the kind cited above has yet to be integrated into Yugoslav historiography of the Great War. In fact, it is difficult to talk about any kind of historiography of the Great War in Croatia, since historical writing on this topic has so far been minimal. New research by cultural historians such as Melissa Bokovoy has introduced some of the theoretical work cited above to the study of the Great War in Yugoslavia.[32] In December 2008, the Institute for Contemporary History in Zagreb will hold a workshop entitled *1918: Precedents, Events, Consequences* which will offer new research and perspectives on the Great War in Croatia. However, these are relatively new currents in Yugoslav historiography, which has undergone a number of radical transformations in partial reflection of the transformations of political culture in Yugoslavia, and most recently in modern Croatia.

The earliest examples of literature on the Great War (pre-World War Two) often emphasised the union of all South Slavs in one state and/or the military successes of the Serbian army. There were also a number of accounts of émigré

---

[29] Margaret R. Higonnet, Patrice L. R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', in Margaret Higonnet (ed.) *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, (New Haven: 1987), pp. 31-46.

[30] Gender and masculinity are neglected fields in modern Yugoslav historiography. This blind spot is starting to be addressed, however. Melissa Bokovoy's chapters on 'Croatia' and 'Serbia' in Kevin Passmore (ed.) *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945* (Manchester: 2003), and her essay 'Kosovo Maiden(s): Serbian Women Commemorate the Wars of National Liberation 1912-1918 in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (eds.) *Gender and War in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: 2006), pp. 157-170 look at the issue of gender in relation to commemoration of the Great War. Masculinity and Croatian fascism are the subject of two articles by Rory Yeomans, 'Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae: The New Ustasha Man and Women in the Independent State of Croatia' in *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2005, and 'Cults of Death and Fantasies of Annihilation: The Croatian Ustasha Movement in Power 1941-1945' in *Central Europe,* vol. 3, no. 2, 2005.

[31] Along with Higonnet's work, Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* has been invaluable to this thesis for understanding the impact of the Great War on masculinity amongst Croatian veterans, most critically those studied in the first part.

[32] See Melissa Bokovoy, 'Croatia' pp. 111-124.

politics and diplomacy concerned with South Slavs in Russia. For example, the Czech historian Milada Paulová's work on the Yugoslav Committee (JO), Franko Potočnjak's memoir of his time in Russia, and Ante Mandić's memoir, all published within ten years of the end of the war, both of which remain relevant to this day, fall into this category.[33] In addition to these useful works there is the *Jubilee Anthology of Life and Works of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes*, published in 1928 to celebrate the decennial of the founding of Yugoslavia. The anthology is full of illustrations and statistical information, much of which is relevant to the study of Yugoslav veterans. It is, however, clearly meant as a celebration of Yugoslavia's achievements over the past decade more generally, and as such is more concerned with Serbian 'liberation and unification' than with Croatia's war. The volunteer memoirs and novels studied in chapter two were written with similar intention: to celebrate South Slav unification and the sacrifices made during the Great War, but they depicted, often in a tendentious way, only a small part of Croatia's war.

The concept of South Slav unity during and after the Great War was then completely rejected by the Ustasha during their brief tenure in Croatia during the Second World War. The foundation of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) by that movement in 1941 marked a radical but short-lived departure from the study of the Great War in the Yugoslav kingdom. The way in which the Ustasha elevated the sacrifice of Croatian veterans of the Great War for the national cause is a whole topic in its own right. This elevation was due in part to the large number of ex-soldiers used by the Ustasha in their army and homeguard (*domobran*), and in part because the Ustasha, formed initially as a paramilitary group violently opposed to Yugoslavia and to Serbia, wished to negate much of what had taken place over the past twenty years in the Yugoslav kingdom. This negation involved, *inter alia*, erasing the memory of 'liberation and unification' and recasting Croatian soldiers as warrior heroes, a role which was substantiated by the traditions of the Military Frontier (on which subject it was politic for the Ustasha to ignore the fact that many frontiersmen were ethnic Serbs). Slavko Pavičić's 750 page *Military and Wartime History of Croatia*, published in Zagreb in 1943, for example, dedicated 400 pages to Croatia's role in the

[33]Franko Potočnjak *Iz emigracije IV: u Rusiji* (Zagreb: 1919), Milada Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor: povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata of 1914-1918* (Zagreb: 1925), and Ante Mandić *Fragmenti za historiju ujedinjenja: povodom četrdesetgodišnjice osnivanja Jugoslovenskog odbora* (Zagreb: 1926). Other valuable works include Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca, 1914-1919* (Zagreb: 1920), Louis Voinovitch [Lujo Vojnović] *Dalmatia and the Jugoslav Movement* (London: 1920), Henry Baerlien *The Birth of Yugoslavia,* 2 vols. (London: 1922).

Great War, and included a roll call of military figures from the past, many of whom were now members of the Ustasha movement. Similarly, Rudolf Horvat, a pre-eminent Zagreb historian, and deputy in the Ustasha *Sabor* (assembly), produced an account of Croatia's history in the Yugoslav kingdom which emphasized a narrative of national oppression at the hands of Serbia. Whilst not covering the war years directly, Horvat drew attention to the Croatian soldiers killed in Zagreb whilst protesting against the union with Serbia and Montenegro, on 5 December 1918. His intention was to demonstrate how Croatia had been opposed to Yugoslavia from the very beginning, and as such was in line with Ustasha cultural politics (the movement erected a monument to the soldiers in *Jelačić* Square) and their forerunners in the Frankist party (see chapter three).

When the Partisans came into power at the end of the Second World War, the history of the Great War was once again re-written. Yugoslav Marxist attitudes towards feudal (Habsburg) and bourgeois (royalist Yugoslav) oppression meant that historians took a more popular approach to writing history, focussing on the hitherto neglected peasant conscripts who comprised the vast majority of soldiers from Croatia. Like their predecessors in the Yugoslav kingdom, the Partisans sought to locate evidence of South Slav co-operation in the past in order to strengthen the case for the present day socialist state. The unrest in the Croatian countryside at the end of the war and the role of deserters in the 'green cadres' (see chapter four) served as an example of resistance to feudal oppression and an early precursor to socialist revolution. Ferdo Čulinović covered the story of these men in detail, and also pointed to the mutiny of Slav sailors in the Bay of Kotor (Montenegro) as evidence of widespread discontent with the Habsburgs.[34] The presence of so many Habsburg South Slav soldiers in Russia during the Bolshevik revolution was also, of course, of great interest to Marxist historians in Yugoslavia. Whilst in the interwar period pro-Yugoslav historians and writers focussed on the South Slav volunteer movement, now the central concern of historians was the large number of men who had supported the

[34] See Ferdo Čulinović, *1918 na Jadranu* (Zagreb: 1951) and *Odjeci Oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* (Zagreb: 1957). Vladimir Dedijer approached the topic of anti-Habsburg/pro-Yugoslav sentiment from a different point in his treatment of the school boy conspirators who assasinated Franz Ferdinand: see *Sarajevo 1914* (Belgrade: 1966).

Bolshevik revolution and who had tried to import it to Yugoslavia, amongst whom had been Josip Broz 'Tito'.[35]

It is certainly true that there were more supporters of Bolshevism amongst South Slav POWs in Russia than there had been supporters of unitary Yugoslavism, despite what the volunteer authors may have claimed. It is also true that many of these veterans, on returning to Yugoslavia, worked energetically towards the creation of a Yugoslav Communist Party and towards imminent socialist revolution. These men, however, only accounted for part of the impact of the war in Croatia, and Titoist historiography tended to ignore the majority of veterans who returned from Russia and who were not converts to Bolshevism. It is also far from certain that the resistance shown to Habsburg authority in the last days of the war was evidence of Yugoslav or socialist sentiment in the Croatian countryside. Bosijlka Janjatović has used police and government records from Croatia to catalogue this resistance in the years after the war. She has identified three groups as the main targets of government suppression in Croatia in the post-war period: Frankists, Communists, and Radićists.[36] Her analysis would suggest a more heterodox political environment in post-war Croatia (i.e., not just Communist), an analysis which this thesis adheres to as valid.

The classic work of Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, must also be mentioned in this context. His work is still standard on the period between the unification of the South Slavs in 1918 and the promulgation of the Vidovdan constitution in 1921. During this period Banac depicts how all solutions to the question of state formation save that of a centralized government based on Serbian political tradition were first marginalized and then discounted. Neither his nor Janjatović's work, however, deal directly with the impact of the war. Banac shows how the unification, made necessary by the outcome of the Great War, was imposed upon non-Serbian nationalities in Yugoslavia, and that the failure to find a suitable solution to the 'national question' led to many of the kingdom's structural weaknesses. Janjatović, on the other hand, shows how this central administration found it necessary to supress continued resistance in Croatia by terrorizing regime opponents. Both historians sustain a critical evalution of Yugoslavia which supposes

---

[35] See, for example, Ivan Očak, 'Povratnici iz sovjetske Rusije u borbi za stvarnje ilegalnih komunističkih organizacija uoči prvog kongresa SRPJ(k)', *Historijski zbornik,* year XXVII (1974-1975); *Jugoslavenski oktobarci: likovi i sudbine* (Zagreb: 1979); *Vojnik revolucije: život i rad Vladimira Čopića* (Zagreb: 1980).

[36] See Bosiljka Janjatović, *Politički teror u Hrvatskoj 1918-1935* (Zagreb: 2002).

that the majority of Croats were hostile to their nation's position in the Yugoslav kingdom.[37] In this sense there is a departure from interwar and Titoist historiography, which usually took it for granted that South Slav integration was a *fait accompli*, and sought in history an explanation or a justification for this integration. Instead, works such as Janjatović's are representative of a more recent trend in Croatian historiography which focuses predominantly on Croatian national history over socialist or Yugoslav history.[38]

Throughout these vicissitudes, the subject of the Great War in Croatia and of the soldiers who fought in it has remained woefully neglected. There is as yet no monograph devoted exclusively to Croatia's role in the Great War, or the impact of the war in Croatia. Neither have Croatian veterans received any kind of treatment as yet. The subject of Croatian invalids and their fate in Yugoslavia, for example, has not been addressed by historians of the interwar Kingdom, despite the 'invalid question' being of utmost importance to ex-soldiers and politicians after the Great War (at least initially). This thesis, therefore, has attempted to integrate literature on the invalid question from other parts of post-war Europe into the Croatian case study.[39] Research into South Slav volunteers has concentrated on their wartime experiences and their propagandistic and political value to the JO and the Serbian government.[40] No study has thus far been made of their post-war experiences. Ex-officers and Frankists have received some attention due to their future involvement in the radical right in Croatia.[41] However, the typical starting point for studies of the radical right is the formation of the Ustasha in exile (1929/1930). We will test the limits of that starting point and show that the 1920s are also an important period in the development of this movement in Croatia. Also of importance in regard to this part of the study is the recent work of military historian Mile Bjelajac, who has written extensively on the

---

[37] A recent work which challenges this influential interpretation is Dejan Djokić, *Elusive Compromise: a History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (London: 2007).

[38] The recent interest in Stjepan Radić and the Croatian Peasant Party is also evidence of this trend. See, for example, Mark Biondich, *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization* (Toronto: 2000).

[39] Especially Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914-1939* (Ithica: 1984); Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: 1996).

[40] For example, Pero Slijepčević, *Naši dobrovoljaci u svetskome ratu,* (Zagreb: 1925); Bogomil Hrabak *Zarobljenici u Italiji i njihovo dobrovoljačko pitanje 1915-1918* (Novi Sad: 1980); Ivo Banac, 'South Slav POWs in Revolutionary Russia', in Samuel Williamson and Peter Pastor (eds.); *War and Society in East Central Europe: Volume.5: Essays on World War One: Origins and POWs,* (New York, 1983).

[41] For a recent study, see Mario Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanku do travnja 1941. godine* (Zagreb: 2006), pp. 33-67,

Yugoslav army in the interwar period and beyond. Bjelajac's concern with relations between Serbian and non-Serbian officers in the Yugoslav army helps us to understand the attitude in official military spheres towards ex-Habsburg officers.[42] Peasant veterans have received attention from historians due to their role in the social unrest in the Croatian countryside, autumn 1918. The number of ex-soldiers involved in the formation of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia has also been the subject of historical study, as noted above. We will pursue these ex-soldiers further into the decade after the Great War, in an attempt to gauge the real state of peasant veterans' loyalty to Yugoslavia and the process of 'disengagement' from the Monarchy.

In terms of sources, a range of official documents, novels and memoirs, and other monuments to the Great War in Croatia have been examined and analysed. The minutes of various veterans' societies which were formed in Croatia after the end of the Great War give a voice to the men who are studied in this thesis. Although many of these meetings were thinly attended, we must hope that these men fulfilled their function as spokesmen for the veterans on whose behalf they were formed, and that they are in this sense representative. Those societies supply us with a comparative dimension for the first three groups of veterans (invalids, volunteers, retired officers); the final group (former peasant conscripts) stands apart, since it has no such representation. Veteran publications such as newspapers, journals, poetry, novels and memoirs also give the veterans a chance to 'speak for themselves'. The advantage of these sources is that they demonstrate the depth and the detail which lie beneath official documents, and they can tell us what it actually felt like to be a veteran in the Yugoslav kingdom. The disadvantages are similar to those of the minutes of various veterans' societies: due caution must be exercised when determining how representative these sources are. At all times we must be aware of the potential gap between individual response and collective reality. We cannot say for sure that a handful of soldier-authors and publicists typified the Croatian war experience in their writing. Instead, publications have been analysed alongside known facts about the war

[42] See Mile Bjelajac, *Vojska kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca 1918-1921* (Belgrade: 1988); *Vojska kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca 1922-1935* (Belgrade: 1994); *Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multietničkom armijom 1918-1991* (Belgrade: 1999); *Generali i admirali Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918-1941: studija o vojnoj eliti i biografski leksikon* (Belgrade: 2004).

and biographical details about the authors to make careful conclusions about the likelihood of their veracity, and of their applicability at a broader level.[43]

Again, the final chapter stands aside from the preceding three. The tens of thousands of former peasant conscripts might have supplied the diaries and letters to link their experiences of war and of post-war society to those of their literate and productive counterparts in the ranks of the Croatian invalids, volunteers, and retired officers. They do not fulfil that role, however. Instead, we have the Croatian Peasant Party and Stjepan Radić, whose unchallenged popularity in the countryside suggests his views on the Croatian peasant were representative. Radić's correspondence, published articles, and public speeches are all available to the historian.[44] This is valuable information, essential for understanding Croatian national life in the 1920s. This study acknowledges that the vast majority of Croatian veterans were peasants conscripted into the Habsburg army, and that their story, although least documented, cannot be ignored. The life and work of Stjepan Radić is at least a portal into these experiences, in lieu of the minutes and publications available for other groups of veterans.

Official documents have also been used in order to construct a fuller picture of the 'veteran question' in Croatia. They often provide essential information on the contours and dimensions of the object of this study, statistical information, pension and invalid allowances, land allocation, etc. They also give a sense of how the image of the Croatian veteran corresponds to Eric Leed's definition. Official documents betray both a desire on the part of authorities to reintegrate veterans into civilian life, and a fear that the veteran is a dangerous and potentially revolutionary agent; newspapers often do likewise. Alongside the 'concrete' data provided by these sources, the historian gets a sense of the temper of post-war Yugoslavia, of its official attitude towards its veterans. In Croatia, as in many parts of Europe, suspicions were informed by the fear of Bolshevism. The fact that so many of these men had been in

---

[43] In a similar way that Modris Eksteins has done in his study of Erich Maria Remarque's novel *Im Westen nichts Neues*, see 'All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 15, no. 2, (April 1980), pp. 345-366.

[44] Bogdan Krizman has compiled, edited, and introduced Radić's correspondence in two volumes. See Bogdan Krizman (ed.) *Korespondencija Stjepana Radića 1885-1928* (Zagreb: 1972, 1973). Radić's views on a range of issues political, cultural and social can be found in the numerous articles he wrote for the Peasant Party newspaper entitled *Dom* (Home, until 1920), *Slobodni dom* (Free Home, from 1920-1925), and then again *Dom* (from 1925 onwards). A large selection of these articles and of public speeches made by Stjepan Radić have been published under the title *Stjepan Radić: Politički spisi, govori, i dokumenti* (Zagreb: 1995).

revolutionary Russia made authorities especially wary, as did the official line (undeclared) that these men had been soldiers of an enemy army.

Official attitudes are also an important part of the veteran experience in post-war Croatia. In the final analysis, it is perhaps this suspicion and hostility towards Croatian veterans, both official and otherwise, which contributed to the failure of South Slav integration after the Great War. The following study will demonstrate the distance many Croatian veterans felt from Yugoslavia's foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification', and that it was this distance that hindered a smooth transition for many ex-soldiers from empire to nation-state. The final word, demonstrative of this distance, goes to Rebecca West's official tour-guide Constantine, a Serbian, and quoted in her epic travelogue *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Arguing with a Croat about Serb-Croat relations in Yugoslavia, he accuses the Croats of being more lawyers than soldiers: quibbling for their rights and state traditions in Yugoslavia when they should be more like Serbians, soldiers working and fighting for the new state.[45] His comments encapsulate the failure of many Croats, and certainly most Croatian veterans, to become integrated into Yugoslav culture. This failure is attributable to many historical and political factors, of which the impact of the Great War is amongst the most important.

[45] Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia* (London: 1994) p. 86.

Chapter One - The Invalid Question

In the period immediately after the war both state and society in the newly-formed Yugoslav kingdom were confronted with the formidable task of coming to terms with the human cost of the war. Whilst this was true throughout Europe, no nation could match, proportionately, the huge losses that Serbia suffered during the Great War. Notwithstanding sentimental notions of Serbia's 'lost generation', the massive reduction of man-power was bound to put an added economic strain on a land which was already hobbled from six years of fighting, as well as three years of military occupation. The Habsburg South Slav lands had had a shorter and less intense experience of war, but one which had taken a great toll nevertheless. In addition to the war-dead, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia had been subjected to martial law during the war, and in the Slovene lands the entrance of Italy on the side of the Allies had brought the front-line into their territory. In the Croatian hinterland, the increasingly dire economic straits in which the Monarchy found itself took its toll. In Zagreb, as elsewhere, the population had to endure meatless days and food queues, whilst in the countryside requisitioning of crops and livestock became more and more frequent towards the end of the war. In addition to those hardships, armed bands of military deserters, soldiers returning from Russia, and local peasants, known collectively as 'green cadres', were making the region ungovernable, and bringing front-line violence to the Croatian population.

Of the men that did survive the fighting, not all came home unscathed, and the new state's leaders had to add the thousands of men who returned from the front physically maimed to the human and material cost of fighting. Their story raises important questions about the impact of the war on the male wartime generation and the nature of the veteran experience in the 1920s. In the years after the war, invalids from all regions of the Yugoslav kingdom attempted to negotiate with the state and with the general public in order to gain what they felt was suitable recognition for their war-time sacrifice. In turn, the state pondered the extent of its responsibility to war invalids, attempting to weigh this against severe financial restrictions and the possibility that the duty of care for many of these men could be shifted to the private sphere of the family. The extent to which it was possible for South Slav war invalids to re-integrate into pre-war patterns of living in this way is a central concern for the

study of the male wartime generation, and is a theme which will be revisited in subsequent chapters.

More specific to invalids from Croatia, these negotiations were made harder by the fact that these men had fought in the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian army during the war. Whilst not officially classed as soldiers of a defeated enemy, it will be shown that many of Yugoslavia's military officials and bureaucrats harboured prejudices such as these towards non-Serbian veterans. Unlike their fellow invalids from the Serbian army, these Croatian veterans could not present their demands as the debt their country owed them for having fought on its behalf during the war. To a certain extent, the history of Croatian invalids as presented in this chapter reveals the way in which these ex-soldiers attempted to negotiate a legitimate sense of their war-time sacrifice in a state which was reluctant to grant it to them. These often delicate negotiations involved a process of reconciliation to the new state and, as a necessary precursor to this reconciliation, a disengagement from the now defunct Monarchy, on whose behalf they had fought. This was a concern not just of Croatian invalids but of many Croatian veterans, and the way in which ex-soldiers made this transition is one of the key themes of this thesis. It is therefore an ideal place to begin a study of the impact of the war on the male wartime generation in Croatia.

1.1. The Invalid Question in War and Peace

Whilst the war was still being fought, care of soldiers who were injured fighting for Austria-Hungary was organized by the competent military authorities. For soldiers recruited from Croatia and Slavonia, legislation concerning their examination in order to assess fighting capability or entitlement to invalid benefits was set by the authorities in Budapest. It was then the duty of invalid commissions, staffed by medical professionals and based at military stations throughout the Monarchy, to carry out examinations of injured soldiers and make assessments based on these examinations.

In Croatia and Slavonia a number of 'invalid schools' had been established in 1915 on the advice of Miroslav Kulmer, a deputy of the Croat-Serb Coalition in the war-time *Sabor* (Assembly). These schools were staffed by soldiers on active duty and offered the opportunity for injured soldiers to learn various trades suitable to their

reduced physical capacity.[1] From 1915 onwards, the Holy Spirit poor-house in Zagreb allocated part of its buildings to soldiers injured whilst fighting. The Holy Spirit was just across the road from the Ciglana army barracks, a large complex of buildings which could house up to 250 soldiers, and which was also set aside for the use of wounded men. In addition to this, the army barracks at Brestovac (situated on Sljeme, on the Medvedica mountain north of Zagreb) had been converted into a sanatorium for soldiers suffering from tuberculosis. Whilst many soldiers spent time in these buildings during the war, the process of demobilization meant the number of men who sought use of them was to increase exponentially. At the end of the war the Zagreb-based newspaper *Obzor* counted 227 soldiers in the orthopaedic hospital at the Holy Spirit and at Ciglana, and 93 at Brestovac. In total, the newspaper counted 1655 soldiers in the six hospitals, both military and civilian, in Zagreb at the time.[2] That figure, over which *Obzor* expressed much concern, would come to seem paltry compared to the number of invalids the Yugoslav kingdom counted amongst its population in the years to come.

The members of the editorial board of *Obzor* were not the only people concerned with the problem of injured soldiers at the end of the war. The leaders of the newly-formed state were confronted with the tasks of measuring the huge cost of the war and devising a programme of reconstruction throughout the country. In this context, finding a solution to what became known as the 'invalid question' was identified as one of the most important challenges they faced in the aftermath of the war. In the immediate post-war period, expert advice on this matter was provided by Dr Bozidar Spišić, who had served as director of the invalid school at Ciglana during the war. He travelled to Belgrade in spring 1919 to deliver a lecture to his Serbian colleagues entitled 'How we can help our Invalids', an adaptation of a lecture he had first given in 1917. Spišić appealed for basic medical care and schooling to be provided free of charge, to ensure that invalids would be capable of working and providing for themselves as quickly as possible. 'Our invalids must not earn their daily bread by begging,' he warned.[3] Spišić had almost certainly seen demobilized soldiers doing exactly this in Zagreb during the war, and *Obzor* printed several

[1] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 February 1922.
[2] *Obzor,* 22 December 1918.
[3] Ibid, 25 April 1919.

articles at this time concerning the problem of begging in the Croatian capital.[4] 'We should ensure that, in our young state, they live lives worthy of human beings.' Spišić concluded.[5]

In his lecture, Spišić demonstrated a laudable attitude towards the dignity of wounded soldiers and an optimistic appraisal of their chances of becoming productive members of society. That was fairly typical of the prevailing attitude towards these men at the time, and it will be shown that only later, as the difficulties (and the financial commitment) this process of integration entailed became apparent, were these men considered by many (and even considered themselves) to be a separate, even parasitical class. Spišić's lecture also shows how experts envisaged a sort of reciprocal relationship between the state and its invalids that would be beneficial to both parties. By re-training these men to become useful and productive workers in civilian life, the state would retain a large source of man-power. This was a vital consideration in a state where so much had been lost in material and human resources during the war. For their part, the men who opted in to this programme would be given the opportunity to rejoin the majority of the working population as quickly as possible.

This was also the hope of a council of military doctors in Serbia who, having listened to Spišić's experiences of the invalid problem in Croatia, advanced some proposals of their own at the end of May 1919:

> Nobody today can think of the invalid question as merely a calculated percentage of disability, [and] then giving to those disabled the label invalid, along with financial support from the state. That would do almost nothing to help invalids and the state in which they lived.[6]

The council went on to suggest a programme of support, medical and financial, that would enable invalids once again to earn money for themselves: 'Invalid means incapable, not of living, not of working, but of further fighting, for military purposes. Freed from the army, he must not be freed from all kinds of work.'[7] Like Spišić, the

---

[4] In June 1919 the newspaper reported twice on invalid soldiers begging in the streets of Zagreb, especially on Ban Jelačić Square. See ibid, 4 June 1919, and 15 June 1919.
[5] Ibid, 25 April 1919.
[6] *Službene novine,* 17 July 1919.
[7] Ibid.

council saw no permanence in the 'invalid' status; a suitable expenditure of time and money could reduce this to nothing, or next to nothing. It is also notable that the council saw the term 'invalid' as meaningful only in a military context; there were no civilian invalids, as 'invalid' merely meant incapable of fighting. These are two considerations which are of critical importance: whether or not the term invalid was appropriate in the post-war period and if so, whether or not it was a permanent designation (i.e., whether the hope of rehabilitation was merely illusory). The answers to these questions will help gauge the impact of the Great War on this section of the male wartime generation, and will be considered in greater detail later in the chapter. There were certainly men who returned from the front with serious disabilities only to be tormented in the post-war period by the impossibility of returning to pre-war life, an accomplishment men like Spišić and those who sat on the Serbian council thought entirely attainable.

Paying close attention to all sides of this debate in 1919 were staff of the newly formed Ministry of Social Policy, who were preparing to take responsibility for the invalid question from the military and local authorities now in liquidation. The first minister for Social Policy was Vitomir Korać, a Social Democract. In November, Korać held a conference on the invalid question in Belgrade attended by about 100 delegates from across the country. These included, *inter alia*, representatives of competent authorities, delegates of military and civilian invalid groups, charitable organizations and families of missing, killed or interned soldiers. Participants were invited to offer opinions and suggestions pertaining to the resolution of the invalid question in the Yugoslav kingdom. Some of these would be taken into account when drafting a unified invalid law to cover the whole kingdom. The conference delegates aimed to address as many aspects of the invalid question as was feasible during the conference's three-day duration. Items for discussion included medical treatment, organisational, administrative, financial, and socio-economic concerns for invalids, housing, economic well-being of various invalid institutions, and programmes of professional training.[8]

The conference was intended as a comprehensive survey of the invalid question and of the problems associated with it as understood at this time, and the full text of the conference agenda demonstrates both the energy and the ambition with

[8] Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Belgrade (hereafter ASCG), Fond 39 'Ministarstvo socialna politika i narodno zdravlje 1919-1941', box 7.

which Korać's ministry initially confronted the challenges ahead of them. The delegates reviewed the situation from its war-time origins until the present day and discussed the direction they hoped it would take in the future. Suggestions were put forward that every single invalid should be re-examined using the most advanced medical methods in order to ascertain their individual needs. Provisions were made for passing the concern of invalids from military to civilian authorities, and calls were made for a review of all those institutions involved with the invalid question to be unified into one single authority which would cover the entire country. The delegates also discussed how to ensure that within one year (eighteen months at most) every single invalid who required a prosthetic limb would be supplied with one. Finally, provisions were made for the establishment of a department for social statistics since, at this time, the ministry did not have figures of its own which confirmed the number of invalids in Yugoslavia and the nature of their injuries.[9]

As already noted, the conference agenda shows that Korać and his fellow delegates were both concerned for and optimistic about the fate of injured soldiers in the Yugoslav kingdom. It has been shown that this optimism was shared by medical experts such as Bozidar Spišić and the members of the Serbian medical council. Unfortunately, many of the conference's proposals remained unrealised in the 1920s due to economic realities of the post-war period. It seems that this initial enthusiasm would eventually prove to be counter-productive. Many war invalids felt betrayed by the ministers and officials who promised so much immediately after the war but were ultimately unable to deliver. Like the idea, popular after the war, that invalids would be able to return to pre-war life, the promise of financial and material compensation was considered illusory by many invalids in the post-war period, and only served to exacerbate their sense of isolation and distress. This needs to taken into account when analysing the nature of invalids' complaints and the way in which they define their experiences. However, before turning to the study of Croatian invalids and their organizations in the Yugoslav kingdom, it is possible to construct a fuller picture of their experiences through the examination of the schools, hospitals, and refuges available to them in the post-war period.

[9] Ibid.

1.2. Invalid Facilities in Croatia

The majority of invalids in the 1920s most frequently came into contact with other invalids and state authorities through one of the number of invalid schools, hospitals, or refuges provided for them by the Ministry of Social Policy. In so far as invalids are 'historically visible' it is often through the records of these institutions, and their study reveals much about the often fraught relationship between state authorities and Croatian invalids.

As has already been noted, the arguments and debates surrounding re-training invalids and looking after their health were to a great extent conditioned by war-time experiences. The perceived success of invalid schools in providing professional re-training during the war was considered by many people as pointing to the most efficacious way of resolving the invalid problem. This post-war continuity extended to the location of invalid institutions in Croatia in the 1920s. Lacking purpose-built facilities, invalids and state officials alike accepted that buildings used by invalids during the war would now, with certain adaptations, become part of a more permanent solution to the invalid problem.

To this end, the Ministry for Social Policy earmarked almost two million kuna for the adaptation of the Holy Spirit Poorhouse in Zagreb into an invalid home.[10] This process began in spring 1921, and in the summer the invalid school re-opened at the Holy Spirit.[11] The Holy Spirit now offered a number of practical courses for invalids, as well as an orthopaedic hospital and, along with the barracks at Ciglana, space to accommodate more than two hundred invalids. At the very highest point on mount Medvedica, the invalid barracks at Brestovac, Sljeme, continued to serve as a sanatorium for soldiers suffering from tuberculosis. It was believed by many that the clean mountain air would prove medicinal to invalids with respiratory illnesses.[12] The sanatorium had space for 120 patients and 42 members of staff. In addition to this, a group of wealthy benefactors purchased a school for the blind at Moslavina, and put it at the disposal of the Ministry of Social Policy (1919), an act of charity which stipulated that the school be used for the benefit of invalid soldiers as well as the

[10] Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb (hereafter HDA), Fond 137, 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju: Odjeljenje za socialnu politiku', box 469 and 470.
[11] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 January 1922.
[12] Ibid, 7 January 1925.

blind.[13] These can be considered the main invalid institutions in Croatia in the 1920s. Concerning the quality of facilities and treatment these institutions provided for the thousands of veterans who passed through them, the sources reveal a great disparity between the ministry's high expectations of them and the problems imposed by financial restrictions. These were problems which caused frustration and anger for many of the invalids who used these institutions in the 1920s.

In fact, invalids voiced complaints about the standard of treatment in these facilities from a very early stage. In September 1921, the Society for War Invalids in Croatia printed a list of complaints about conditions at Brestovac. Invalids, they claimed, were given sub-standard food and drink whilst staff kept the better food for themselves. They complained further that horse-drawn coaches, the most comfortable way of getting to and from Sljeme, were used exclusively by the staff, whilst invalids were made to travel in freight cars. One invalid, they noted, died two days after being sent down the mountain to another hospital in such a car. Finally, they drew attention to the dilapidated state of the barracks due to lack of funds, and how this was of critical importance during the winter months.[14] A newspaper printed by invalids in Dalmatia reported twice on the frequency of complaints by invalids staying at Brestovac: once in 1922 concerning the poor quality of food, and again in 1923 concerning the increasingly mutinous mood of invalids housed there.[15] In summer 1923, staff at Brestovac made a small concession to the invalids, writing to the Ministry of Social Policy asking for sheets, blankets, and soft pillows. Above all else, blankets were especially needed, since Sljeme was particularly exposed to the elements during the winter.[16]

Two things can be noted about the complaints generated at Brestovac. First, the requests for blankets and sheets are evidence of the lack of even basic facilities at the sanatorium in the 1920s. This must be related to an apparent shortfall in funds that the government set aside for invalids throughout the country. Complaints about bad food and the poor state of the barracks can be seen as further evidence of this, rather than of invalids making unreasonable demands on the authorities. Secondly, and perhaps more revealing for the case of Croatian invalids, the number of complaints

---

[13] HDA fond 1363, 'Politička situacija', box 16.
[14] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 10 January 1921.
[15] *Vojni invalid,* August 1922, 1 April 1923.
[16] HDA fond 137, 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju: Odjeljenje za socialnu politiku' box 468.

against staff reveal the adversarial relationship many invalids had with their carers. The clashes may be a result of an inferiority complex on the part of many invalids as a result of their mutilated state, a crisis of masculinity experienced by men who now needed assistance from the able-bodied (sometimes women) to carry out even everyday tasks.[17] That interpretation does not rule out the theory that Croatian invalids were treated less well than their counterparts from the Serbian army, on account of the fact that they had fought against the Allies during the war. It is entirely feasible that a 'hierarchy of sacrifice' existed in Yugoslavia which put veterans of the Austro-Hungarian army on a lower level than veterans of the Serbian army.[18]

Whatever the causes, these complaints persisted and in October 1924, invalids at Brestovac made the national headlines when they launched a hunger strike in protest at poor conditions in the sanatorium. On this occasion, the men refused to take meals until new sheets and thick coats for the approaching winter months were supplied to them.[19] Fifty two of the seventy two invalids staying at Brestovac refused food for six days, during which time a commission from the Ministry of Social Policy arrived there from Belgrade to address their demands.[20] The commission carried out a full investigation of the hospital and its patients, six of whom were sent home as, due to restrictions in the ministry's budget forcing a change in policy, they were no longer classified as invalids. Delegates from amongst the patients were also allowed to visit the minister in Belgrade, where they presented their complaints and were given a number of winter coats to take back to Brestovac.[21] This was not the end of complaints at the sanatorium, however, and in November 1926 patients went on strike once again, demanding warm clothes for the approaching winter.[22] Complaints from Croatian invalids about conditions at Brestovac were persistent throughout the 1920s.

Moslavina was the target of similar if not more virulent complaints, as well as two full investigations by the Ministry of Social Policy (1925 and 1930) after invalids lodged official complaints against staff there. The history of this school in the 1920s is marked by bad relations between staff and invalids and it reveals more explicitly

---

[17] The impact of mutilation on masculinity in Britain is detailed by Joanna Bourke in *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: 1996), pp. 31-75.
[18] Bourke has noted the 'graduated levels of sacrifice' which existed in Great Britain, where veterans had a more homogenous experience of war. See ibid, p. 249.
[19] *Obzor,* 17 October 1924.
[20] Ibid, and 20 October 1924.
[21] Ibid, 28 October 1924.
[22] HDA fond 137, 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju: Odjeljenje za socialnu politiku' box 468.

the way in which officials in Yugoslavia identified Croatian veterans as soldiers of a defeated enemy. The first occasion for complaint came in September 1920, when the invalids expressed dissatisfaction about the treatment they received from the institute's director. They claimed he bought a number of cows, fattened them and then sold them on at profit, without giving invalids any of the milk they produced. He also bred pigs, invalids complained, 'whilst we receive food that is not fit for pigs.' The complaints were passed on to the Minister of Social Policy.[23]

At the end of 1924, invalid veterans, as well as a number of blind students who were receiving training at Moslavina, submitted a further list of complaints against staff at the school to the Ministry of Social Policy. The list comprised of 26 complaints, all of which were dated. Amongst the complaints were having to sleep in rooms next door to the director's pigs, pigs which took up space that should have been used by other invalids, and a report of an insult directed at the invalids' war record. When three invalids complained to the director that a serving girl had thrown their food down on the table and told them to serve themselves, they claimed he had dismissed it with the reply, 'I am in charge here, and if you don't like it, you can go to Franz Joseph.'[24] It was neither the first nor the last time that Croatian veterans claimed to have been insulted in this way. The investigating commission recommended that good relations between staff and pupils could be restored if efforts were made to improve material conditions in the school. This, they concluded, was the reason for the discontent.[25]

Just as at Brestovac, however, complaints persisted, and Moslavina was investigated again in 1930, following further complaints about conditions and staff at the institute. Again, the commission heard of how Croatian invalids complained about staff who had made insulting and derogatory remarks about their war records. In this investigation, an invalid complained of how the school's Serbian director had called him a 'kraut whore' after getting drunk, and threatened to 'turn his brains into schnitzel.'[26] The complaint was upheld and the director, who conceded both to being drunk on duty and to the possibility that he had made such a remark, lost his job. The report found that this comment was not only characteristic of his attitude to work, but

[23] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 September 1920.
[24] HDA fond 1363, 'Politička situacija', box 16.
[25] Ibid.
[26] ASCG Fond 39, 'Ministarstvo za socialnu politiku 1919-1941', box 7.

that it reflected more generally the bad state of relations between staff and invalids at Moslavina over the years.[27]

Taken together, the two investigations seem to hint at a lack of professionalism amongst staff at the school (drinking on duty, insulting pupils), and could even be interpreted as evidence of corruption (using premises meant for invalids to keep livestock). It is also difficult to refute evidence of prejudice against Croatian invalids when it is supported by an independent investigator. It must also be true that invalids lived in substandard conditions whilst at Moslavina, a symptom of the financial problems the state was facing, especially after 1929. In fact, the investigators noted exactly this, saying that the general running of the sanatorium was acceptable and that most staff were acquitting themselves well, considering the terrible financial and material conditions at the school. The commission also took the opportunity to point out that of the 71 invalids staying at Moslavina, 38 of them were no longer eligible for state support and would have to leave the school.[28]

The centre of invalid support in Zagreb and therefore all of Croatia was the barracks at Ciglana and the nearby orthopaedic hospital and invalid school at the Holy Spirit. It was here that Croatian invalids would come to receive their prosthetic limbs and to learn the skills that would ensure they would not have to turn to begging or selling cigarettes to earn a living. At the invalid school, pupils were entitled to study free of charge for a period of one year. During this time they could be accommodated either at the Holy Spirit or at Ciglana (also free of charge), and would be given all the tools they needed to learn their craft. The school employed a number of professionals, experts, and artisans qualified to pass knowledge of their trade on to the pupils. Courses were offered in a wide range of crafts, including, *inter alia*, tapestry, auto-mechanics, accountancy, and table-making. Basket-making was especially favoured, as it was felt that this trade offered a good chance of employment for invalids without being too taxing on their reduced physical capacity.[29] Upon finishing their studies, invalids were given the tools they needed to practise their new craft, as well as a sum of between two and three thousand dinars in order to help start their careers.[30]

---

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid. This was in the wake of the new invalid law of 1929, which, due to budget restrictions, prescribed a tighter definition of what constituted a war invalid. Those who had lost their sight whilst fighting, for example, were no longer considered invalids.
[29] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 April 1922.
[30] *Obzor*, 26 July 1922.

The hope was that the school would provide a comprehensive programme of rehabilitation for Croatian invalids, but once again, the men felt disappointed by the reality of conditions at the school. In summer 1922, invalids complained that despite grand talk of reintegrating invalids into society, the school was still woefully under-funded, and invalids were finding it to hard to gain employment on leaving.[31] At the end of 1922, 140 invalid pupils at the school downed tools in protest at the poor conditions. In yet another example of bad relations between invalids and school staff, the men called for the director to resign. The pupils presented their protest to the local authorities in Zagreb, led by Šimun Ergović, a Croatian invalid who had lost his right arm fighting in 1914 and had been at Ciglana since it opened its doors to invalids in 1915. On this occasion, the authorities noted the invalids' complaints, although they refused the request to sack the school's director.[32]

In addition to the school, invalids could gain employment at the orthopaedic hospital located at the Holy Ghost, making prosthetic limbs for distribution to invalids throughout Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. Josip Pavičić, a Croatian invalid who stayed at Ciglana for a short period in the early 1920s and whose short stories depicting invalid life will be examined in closer detail later, found a certain sense of irony in the work of these invalids at the Holy Ghost:

---

[31] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 8 July 1922. Whether or not this was due to faulty training or Yugoslav society's prejudice against the disabled is unclear. If it was due to society's prejudice, then it was not an exclusively Yugoslav pre-occupation. Robert Whalen, in his study of war invalids in Germany, has found that these men had great difficulty gaining employment in the 1920s. See Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914-1939* (Ithaca: 1984), p. 114.

[32] *Ratni invalid* (Belgrade), 21 December 1922.

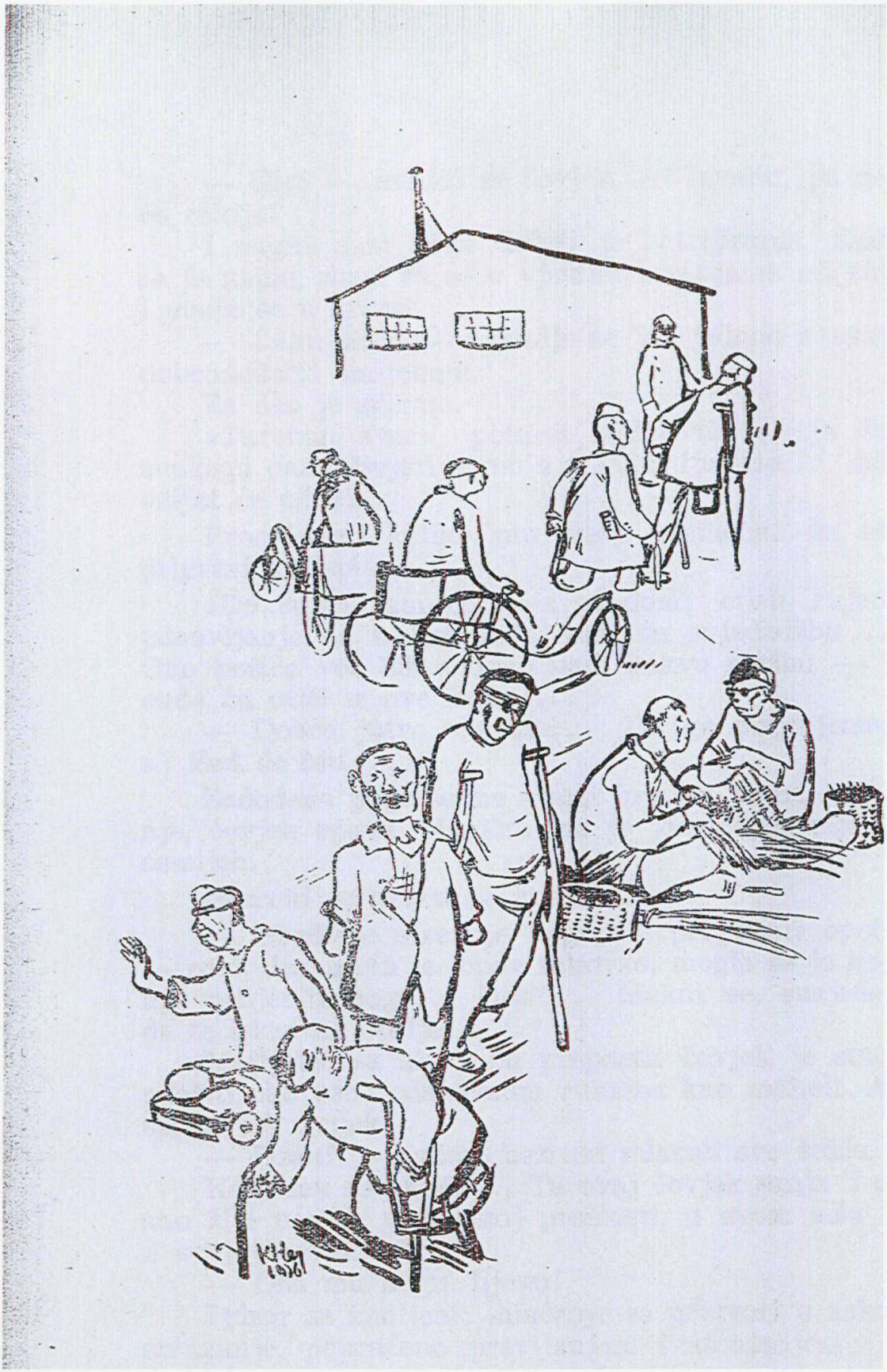

Figure 1: a sketch of life at the Ciglana barracks in the 1920s, from an illustration by Željko Hegedušić in *Memento* by Josip Pavičić.

> So – there is a town in a street, completely grey with age. At the end of the street stands a large building, you could not distinguish it by its colour, and ten, maybe twelve people live there, and they work. You would not believe it, but I have seen it with my own eyes, those people are strange, you could not find a whole person amongst them. Some have two arms, but just one leg, or no legs...and if one walks about on healthy legs, take a look and you will see that his sleeve is empty. They are all like that, but stranger still is their work. They make that which they themselves lack: arms, legs, feet, fingers...[33]

This was one of the gentler of Pavičić's portraits from invalid life in Croatia in the 1920s, as we will see. A more serious predicament arose from the fact that the Holy Spirit remained throughout the 1920s the only hospital in Croatia with the facilities to equip invalids with prosthetic limbs. Invalids living in Dalmatia complained about the difficulties some veterans (who lived far from Zagreb) faced in travelling to the Holy Spirit in Zagreb. They lobbied the Ministry of Social Policy (unsuccessfully) for a hospital closer to them, in Split.[34]

Invalid leaders in Zagreb were also sensitive to the inconvenience that their fellow veterans throughout the country faced when having to travel long distances. They printed a number of (possibly apocryphal) stories about invalids who had suffered humiliation and discomfort on the journey to the Holy Spirit in the pages of their newspaper. One such was the story of 'Veg', an invalid who had travelled from Djakovo to Zagreb with the intention of collecting his new prosthetic legs. The story claimed that Veg had been thrown off the train at Sisak for not having a ticket, despite protesting that as an invalid he was entitled to free rail travel. His journey took another turn for the worse on his return to Djakovo (*sans* prosthetic limbs). A group of soldiers boarded the train and demanded that Veg relinquish his seat for them. When the wounded veteran told them he could not get up as he had no legs (!), the soldiers attacked him, and Veg eventually fended them off with a knife.[35] The story is another example of the invalids' preoccupation with the return to 'normal life' in its depiction of the discomfort and difficulty they experienced undertaking something as mundane as a train journey. Whether Veg's story was true or not, it illustrates how many invalids felt the return to pre-war life, championed by so many at the end of the

---

[33] Josip Pavičić, *Memento* (Zagreb: 1936), pp. 31-49.
[34] *Vojni invalid,* 15 April 1922.
[35] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 August 1920.

war, was proving impossible. The fact that Veg's tormentors were soldiers is also significant. Was this another example of a Croatian veteran being persecuted by Serbian soldiers? The story made no reference to the nationality of the men, but it was printed at a time when relations between much of the population in Croatia and Slavonia and the (mostly Serbian) soldiers based in the area were particularly strained.

Ciglana and the Holy Spirit were also affected by the financial problems faced by the state towards the end of the 1920s. Invalids were eventually moved out of the facilities in 1928. The Ciglana barracks were knocked down to make way for a new technical faculty, whilst the Holy Ghost returned to its original function of poor-house and school. Although the orthopaedic hospital stayed at the Holy Ghost, the remainder of the invalid facilities were moved to Novi Ves, another, smaller poor-house in the centre of Zagreb. Invalids in Zagreb, who were opposed to the move, reckoned that 129 men would be affected by this move, although the number, they claimed, would be five times as high, if not for the ministerial budget restricting the number of invalids accepted at the Holy Spirit and Ciglana. Significantly, a number of leading Croatian newspapers were in favour of the move, much to the chagrin of the invalids, who had previously counted on the support of the press. *Obzor* suggested that the needs of the city's poverty-stricken children outweighed those of the veterans. The newspaper also commented that many of the buildings were in such disrepair that it would be cheaper to knock them down entirely and build them again from scratch than to adequately re-equip them for invalid use.[36] The Croatian dailies *Zagrebačke novine* and *Jutarnji list* also favoured the move.[37]

The closing of these facilities came at a time, the late 1920s, when the state was in the process of withdrawing its care of invalids through, above all else, economic necessity. This accounts for the introduction of greater budgetary restrictions, the reductions of invalid numbers, and the diminishing size of existing facilities. Moreover, the attitude of newspapers such as *Obzor* at the end of the decade represents a turnaround from the more sympathetic way in which they reported the 'invalid question' earlier on. All of this was a long way from Vitomir Korać's national conference and the injunctions, at one time frequently made, against neglecting war invalids in the new state. It appears as if a significant change in

[36] *Obzor,* 4 September 1928.
[37] *Invalidsko pravo,* 15 June 1928.

attitudes on the part of the state towards its invalids had taken place, and if this is the case there is a useful parallel with British invalids. Joanna Bourke has found that in Great Britain the initial respect paid to the 'fragmented bodies of war' had all but evaporated by the end of the 1920s.[38] It seems that Croatian society went through a similar process of diminishing respect for its invalids, and it may be the case that for a number of countries, part of the process of post-war transition involved, over time, pushing veterans of the war ever further into the margins of public life. This was certainly the experience of life as interpreted by many veterans in Croatia in the post-war period, to whose history we now turn.

1.3. 'Go to Charles, maybe he will give you something,'

So far this chapter has, through a study of the history of institutions responsible for the care of invalids, has constructed a portrait of the experience of these men in their relations with the state. The remainder of the chapter will focus on a study of the Croatian invalid experience in the 1920s. The sources examined are primarily those produced by the invalids themselves, and the traces that they have left provide valuable clues as to the invalid experience in Croatia in the 1920s and to the impact of the war on these men.

Invalids in Croatia began to organise themselves very soon after the end of the war. In June 1919, an invalid society had met for the first time in Zagreb, and submitted a statute to the authorities for a 'Society of War Invalids for the Territories of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria, Medjumurje with Prekomurje' (hereafter the Society of War Invalids in Croatia). The men who established this group reckoned that presenting a unified front to the authorities was the best way in which to lobby for concessions in the new state, and their statute stated its *raison d'etre* as 'the protection of [invalid] interests, for the cultivation of mutual solidarity, mediating in invalid affairs, and the shoring up of support for members and families of deceased war invalids.'[39] The Croatian society was organised under very similar terms to a group of Serbian invalids who had formed a society in February, but the two groups were in no way connected at this stage.

---

[38] Bourke, p. 31.

[39] HDA Pravila društava, Zagreb, 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja'.

In December, less than three weeks after Korać had held his much publicised conference in Belgrade, the society met in Zagreb's Metropol cinema, with around 600 people, mostly invalids, in attendance.[40] The meeting was opened by the society's president Anton Budi, who welcomed everyone present, explained the aims of the society as stipulated in the statute, and expressed the importance of unity amongst invalids in order that their demands to the state be met. Further speakers drew attention to the conditions of invalids in invalid schools and drew comparisons between the treatment of invalids in Germany and Austria to those in Croatia, claiming that Croatian veterans were in a less favourable predicament. There were also calls for the Ministry of Social Policy to pass an invalid law immediately, one which was permanent, and would be satisfactory to all war invalids throughout the country.[41]

The society next met at the beginning of March 1920. About 500 people, again mostly invalids, convened at the Metropol. One invalid speaker, Andrija Vudjan, expressed disappointment at the poor turn-out, especially since the meeting had been announced in the press, 'It is more proof,' he said, 'of how few people are concerned [about invalids] in our country, our bourgeoisie have no feeling nor interest in the invalid cause.'[42] It was the next two speakers, however, whose words captured the anxiety that many Croatian invalids felt about their status in Yugoslavia. The first, Franjo Meštrić, poured scorn on the efforts of the Ministry of Social Policy stating, 'We were until a short time ago people, now we are wasting away, and it is shameful for today's state, which is doing nothing for us.' He claimed he had gone with a group of invalids to speak to an official at the ministry, 'he asked: "were you at the front in Salonika?", when we answered honestly that we were not we received the mocking reply, "then go to [deposed Habsburg emperor] Charles, maybe he will give you something."'[43] A former Habsburg officer named Batalo was next to take the floor. He expanded on the theme of Croatian veterans being treated as enemies within their own state, offering a defence of their involvement in the war:

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 April 1920.
[43] HDA Pravila društava, Zagreb, 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja'.

> We were soldiers, and we did not ask why, since we were raised as higher ranking Austrian officers. We fought because we had to [...] you did not want to fight, but you had to, if you did not you would be shot. We are not guilty because we were not able to fight for liberation on the Salonika front. It is shameful that today we have to sell cigarettes. The institute for social protection [sic] offers us no protection, only ruin.[44]

Understanding this perception of Croatian invalids, indeed Croatian veterans, as former enemy combatants is of vital importance for understanding their interpretation of the Great War, and it informs much of their relationship with state authorities, the general public, and with Serbian invalids. Croatian veterans, unlike their Serbian counterparts, could not base their demands (to the state, to the public) on appeals to Croatian patriotism or a sense of duty to the Yugoslavia's triumphant war heroes, or at least not to such an extent. Serbian invalids were able to evoke a series of memories, heroic victories and defeats starting with the Balkan wars and culminating in breaking through the front at Salonika in 1918. These memories could be used to remind people of the great debt that the new state owed to invalids who had fought in the Serbian army, who had sacrificed so much to realise 'liberation and unification' in the South Slav lands.

But Croatian veterans were often confronted with outright hostility when they approached bureaucrats, politicians, and administrators in the new state. It seems that many members of the official class in the Yugoslav kingdom felt that the sacrifice of Croatian veterans was not only less valid than that of Serbian veterans (that is, veterans of the Serbian army), but was actually in opposition to that sacrifice. Comments such as 'go to Charles, maybe he will give you something,' and insults such as 'kraut whore' (an innuendo which suggested Croatian soldiers had sold themselves to Austria during the war) are evidence of a refusal in official circles to recognise the legitimacy of the sacrifice of the Croatian veteran in the post-war period. Whilst this statement could be made of veterans throughout Europe after the war, it seems that in the Yugoslav kingdom the issue is complicated by the 'divided' nature of war experience. One could even talk of a dialectical relationship between Serbian and Croatian veterans that often revolved around perceived notions of victor and vanquished, ally and enemy, defender of the state and potential threat to the state.

---

[44] Ibid.

Croatian invalids through necessity confronted this hostility (they wanted their war-time sacrifice to be rewarded materially and financially by the state) and attempted to mitigate it by diminishing the extent of their agency in fighting for the Monarchy. Some Croatian invalids pressed the notion that they had been compelled to fight during the war, that they had had no choice in the matter. Moreover, they claimed that many of the real enemies, the war profiteers and millionaires who had sent them to kill or be killed, were now high-ranking officials in the new state:

> Is it humane, is it possible for a reasonable and intelligent person, is it possible for a noble heart to say 'you fought for Austria, you do not have any right to seek help from the state of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. What irony in those words. Those gentlemen should let us alone and take a look in the mirror [...] who was it who gave so much for war credits, that they might extend the fratricidal slaughter? Those same gentlemen, those same devils, who were the greatest black-and-yellow clamourers, that Frankist rabble who didn't even know how best to express their dog-like loyalty towards the Austrian eagle, are now the greatest Yugoslavs and Serbophiles.[45]

By distancing themselves from the Austrian war effort and depicting themselves as its victims Croatian invalids sought to draw closer to their Serbian counterparts and Serbian veterans in general (an urgent requirement for Croatian invalids in 1920). Many Serbians who had experienced the trauma of occupation were still sensitive to the prospect of their former occupiers continuing to play a part in public life in the Yugoslav kingdom, as will be shown. It is, however, worth noting that in the Yugoslav kingdom at this time, mid-ranking bureaucrats and officials at the Ministry of Social Policy were predominantly Serbian.[46]

These problems with the state and with Serbian invalids were exacerbated in the initial period of organisation amongst Croatian invalids due to the fact that the leaders of their small organisation embraced a strictly Communist interpretation of the 'imperialist war' and of the 'bourgeois parliamentarianism' of the new kingdom. Throughout 1920, the pages of their organ, *Ratni invalid* (War Invalid), called for

---

[45] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 July 1920.

[46] If the complaints of Croatian invalids can be taken at face value, that is. The various investigations into invalid hospitals and schools seem to corroborate this statement, and there is the (not uncontroversial) research of Rudolf Bičanić, who claimed that after the war, a large number of non-Serbian civil servants were relieved of their posts. See Rudolf Bičanić, *Ekonomska podloga hrvatskog pitanja* (Zagreb: 1937), pp. 60-61.

closer co-operation with left-leaning invalid groups in other parts of Europe and even suggested joining the Comintern. This last was necessary since 'bourgeois capitalism has already created its own fratricidal international (war with Russia, destruction of proletarian liberty in Hungary, a free hand to the White Guard in Germany [presumably a reference to the *Freikorps*]).'[47] Their own experience of war was of manipulation and hypocrisy:

> Voices ringing about the greater good, about the interests of the homeland, about the solidarity of the whole, about the freedom of the nation, they created the conditions, realised an ethical justification, awakened a moral heroism hidden behind which was the truth: the interests of the gentlemen and the power of the lesser imperialistic layers.[48]

And on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand (i.e., the beginning of the Great War):

> Six years have passed since the war took the hand of the bourgeoisie in marriage [...] The honeymoon of this marriage has long since passed in all its glorious and wild love, and the wedding nights have been very fertile.[49]

The article went on to suggest that the product of this marriage, the 'children', was the scores of invalids, orphans and widows found throughout present-day Europe.[50]

How does one account for this flirtation with Communism and what were the long-term effects on the Croatian invalid movement in the 1920s? It seems that this politicization was a reflection of the wider appeal of Communism, or rather Bolshevism, throughout the country, the part of the 'top-storey', the regional context, referred to in the introduction. The success of the Bolsheviks in ending Russian participation in the war had proved an appealing example throughout Croatia. Communist deputies would make substantial gains in elections to the constituent assembly and had already won majorities in municipal elections in Belgrade and

---

[47] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb) 15 May 1920. This article was signed 'Spartacus' in homage to the failed German socialist revolution of the same name.
[48] Ibid, 1 June 1920.
[49] Ibid, 15 August 1920.
[50] Ibid.

Zagreb. Many young Croats were also impressed by the Marxist credentials of the writers August Cesarac and Miroslav Krleža.

More specific to the impact of the war and the question of war veterans, many Croatian soldiers were still returning from Russian captivity at this time, who had witnessed the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and were intent on following this example in their own country. In the context of the invalid question in Croatia, without exact data from the war records of the members of the Society of War Invalids in Croatia, but accepting the large number of such 'returnees', it can be assumed that they had at least some influence in the organisation. In support of this assumption, there is the constant rhetoric within the ranks of the Society of War Invalids in Croatia against the 'war millionaire' Vitomir Korać, the 'traitor to socialism' who was now part of the government. Criticism almost identical to this could be heard from the ranks of the nascent Communist Party in the Yugoslav kingdom, formed in large part by returnees from Russia.[51]

Whatever its roots, supporting this subversive and soon to be outlawed party proved costly to the Croatian veterans, since it made any kind of co-operation with the majority of Serbian invalids, and certainly the Serbian Invalid Society, impossible. The members of the Serbian Society had a clearer sense of why they had fought and what they had achieved as a result of the war. Serbian soldiers who had sworn an oath of fealty to King Peter and had fought and suffered to realise the 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs were unwilling to turn their backs on all that Serbia had gained in 1918, no matter how hard their lives were in the new state. The Society of War Invalids had been formed in Croatia in the belief that there was greater strength in greater numbers. Yet support for Communism isolated them from the largest group of invalids in the country, and was therefore counter-productive to their cause. This is to say nothing of the great suspicion with which Yugoslav authorities treated any group or individual connected even remotely with Communism or Bolshevism.

---

[51] Speakers at both the first and second meetings of the Society of War Invalids attacked Korać on these terms. See HDA Pravila društava, Zagreb, 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja' and *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb) 1 March and 1 April 1920. The formation of the Communist party in Yugoslavia until summer 1921, the involvement of returnees in Croatia, and the attitude of the party towards the 'ministerialism' of Korać is addressed by Ivo Banac: 'The Communist Party of Yugoslavia during the Period of Legality 1918-1921', in Bela K. Kiraly (ed.), *War and Society in East Central Europe Vol. XIII: the Effects of World War One: The Rise of Communist Parties* (New York: 1985), pp. 188-212.

It could be, then, that the presence of Communist sympathies within the ranks of the Society for War Invalids is linked to the larger question of Croatian veterans returning home from Russian captivity radicalised by what they had seen (a question which will be dealt with in depth in chapter four). It could also be the case that these Croatian veterans had followed the example of French veteran Henri Barbusse, who had become attracted to pacifistic socialism on account of his experiences fighting on the western front, and who formed the politically motivated *Association Republicane des Anciens Combattants* (ARAC).[52] An article in the Society's newspaper hinted that it was their reduced circumstances as invalids that had moved them into the Communist camp:

> When one thinks about where invalids stand as a class, since they are amongst the most wretched, one can draw but one conclusion: invalids are the most wretched, and in their relations with the state the most neglected part of the nation. [They] can only protect their interests fighting shoulder to shoulder with the remainder of the exploited people, the working people.[53]

Whatever the reasons, the Society's fidelity to the Communist cause was soon abandoned in favour of closer co-operation with the larger and more powerful Serbian Invalid Society in Belgrade, and the relationship revealed much about the character of the Croatian invalid question.

1.4. Relations with Serbian Invalids

During the 1920s the Society for War Invalids in Croatia had an often difficult relationship with Serbian invalids, marked by periods of hostility and disagreement as well as co-operation and mutual support. Throughout the decade, the Croatian invalids had far more to gain from the relationship than their Serbian counterparts. A study of these relations reveals the different ways in which the experience of Great War made an impact on Croatian and Serbian veterans, and demonstrates the limits of invalid solidarity in the post-war period.

---

[52] For the ARAC, see Antoine Prost, *In the Wake of the War: 'Les Anciens Combattants' and French Society 1914-1939* (Oxford: 1992), p. 40.
[53] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb) 15 August 1920.

The decision taken by invalids of all nationalities to create a unified society was made at a congress in Belgrade in September 1920, and put into effect by January 1921. This act of unification called for a single organisation of war invalids throughout the country, with a central council in Belgrade and autonomous councils throughout the country. In order to side-step potential areas of contention (Communism within the Croatian Society, for example) it was agreed that the councils would co-operate on a 'non-faith, non-political basis.'[54] In fact, those provisions did not prove sufficient in ending disagreement between Croatian and Serbian invalids, and the consensus between the two groups soon broke down over the important issue of a new invalid law.

Since the end of the war, invalids in the 'newly-associated' regions (those regions which were not formerly part of the Kingdom of Serbia) of Yugoslavia were still subject to rules and regulations legislated during the days of Austria-Hungary. This meant that invalids in Croatia were still paid a Hungarian pension, a nominal sum in the Yugoslav kingdom, and one which was paid in the devalued currency of the Monarchy, in crowns, rather than in more valuable dinars.[55] In addition to this, the Ministry of Social Policy had failed to meet its goal of re-examining every single invalid in the Yugoslav kingdom. The 'invalidity' of most veterans in Croatia and Slavonia was calculated using the Monarchy's percentile system (i.e., 100%+ for the most seriously wounded down to 20% for very slight injuries), a system incompatible with Serbia's own wartime categories of 'double-invalid', 'full-invalid', and 'half-invalid.'[56] Evidently, invalids did not escape the consequences of the failure of administrators to unify the diverse socio-political regions of the new kingdom into a single legal entity. The absence of a single unified law covering all aspects of the invalid question in the Yugoslav kingdom caused division between veterans of differing nationalities. Not for the first time, the Croatian invalids found themselves separated from their Serbian counterparts in the eyes of the state. For these reasons,

---

[54] Ibid, 3 October 1920.

[55] See John R. Lampe, 'Unifying the Yugoslav Economy, 1918-1921: Misery and Early Misunderstandings' in Dimitrije Djordjević, *The Creation of Yugoslavia* (Santa Barbara: 1980), pp. 139-156.

[56] *Ratni invalid* (Belgrade), 29 November 1921. Like the Croatian invalids, the Society for Serbian Invalids also printed a newspaper, written in Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and also called *Ratni invalid.* References to this journal are followed by 'Belgrade' in parentheses, whilst references to the Croatian journal are followed by 'Zagreb.'

the passing of an invalid law became an issue of critical importance for Croatian invalids.

Agreement between Serbian and Croatian invalids as to the draft of the invalid law was not forthcoming, however, and the two organisations remained deadlocked on the issue until the end of 1922. During this time an occasionally acrimonious feud opened up between the two sides. The cause of the disagreement was article 36 of the law, which stipulated that train fares for invalids travelling to receive medication/prosthetic limbs were to be distributed by the central council (i.e., from Belgrade) alone. The Croatian Society claimed that this was impractical and inappropriate for the thousands of Croatian invalids who needed to travel regularly to and from Zagreb for this purpose.[57] From this detail, a phase of mutual recrimination began between invalids in Belgrade and Zagreb that would expose much of the ill-feeling that their circumstances in the post-war period had cultivated.

Very quickly, the debate about the finer points of the invalid law was abandoned in favour of a more adversarial confrontation over the moral high-ground in the post-war period. The Serbian invalids, in their newspaper, adopted a wounded tone, dismayed at the behaviour of the Croatian brethren:

> The history of attempts to unify Serbian and Croatian [invalid] societies in one united organisation remains a very unpleasant memory for representatives of Serbian war invalids, who have tried so hard to realise this ideal [...] The representatives of Croatian invalids have the same attitude as their politicians [...] Many times we have made this futile attempt, always with sacrifices on our part, but the question of unification, due to the conduct of Croatian invalids, has not been able to progress very far at all.[58]

This was another expression of the interpretation many Serbian veterans had of the wars Serbia had fought for the 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs, as Serbian invalids referred to the sacrifices they had made for unification. A few weeks later, the Serbian invalids were even more explicit about this notion of sacrifice:

---

[57] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 October 1921.
[58] *Ratni invalid* (Belgrade), 6 April 1922.

> Our nation has succeeded in freeing itself from five centuries of Turkish slavery, and has also given the initiative [for liberation] to the Bulgarians and Greeks, and after this we succeeded in freeing our brother Croats and Slovenes from the thousand-year slavery of Austria-Hungary [...] If the Croatian and Slovenian nations had trusted Radić and others [like him] they would not now be free.[59]

It is obvious from these passages that there was more separating the Croatian and Serbian invalids than merely a disagreement over train fares. One wonders to what extent these comments are a reflection of attitudes which permeated into relations throughout the various veterans' movements, the army, and elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

The Croatian invalids countered these comments by expressing dismay that their fellow sufferers in Serbia seemed to be treating them as so many others were in the new state, i.e., as second-class war invalids. The Society of War Invalids in Croatia sought to promote the idea that regardless of what might have happened previously, they were all in the same predicament in the post-war period. They were all war invalids and needed to work together to achieve their aims, 'not just with the comradely organisation in Belgrade, but with all war victims of all countries, since we are all victims one and the same.'[60] Forging this sense of solidarity was proving impossible, however, 'since our comrades in Serbia and Montenegro do not admit us as their comrades, they maintain that we are Austrian invalids.'[61] The idea that Serbs had fought for 'liberation and unification' was also debunked, in language that hinted at the movement's erstwhile Communism:

> Children know that the last war was conceived by western capital, and that Serbia entered the war first and foremost, to protect her own hearth from German and Hungarian violence, and that the idea for the unification of South Slavs came to the Serbians after they had been expelled from their homeland, and that it was actually the *prečani* who came up with the idea [of unification] many years before the war, whilst Serbian politicians dreamt of a greater Serbia.[62]

An even-handed observer could find elements of truth in both sides of the argument, but was any of this germane to an agreement over article 36? It is worth

[59] Ibid, 30 April 1922.
[60] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 August 1922.
[61] Ibid, 15 November 1922. Note the use of the word 'comrade' (*drug*).
[62] Ibid, 1 March 1922.

noting at this stage that the Society for War Invalids in Croatia had at most 8,500 members. Of those invalids, perhaps as few as 3,500 had paid their membership fees in full.[63] This was from an invalid population in Croatia of around 40,000. Many of these invalids, whilst not actually members, still looked to the society to ensure their well-being in the new state. Yet the issue which was causing the greatest material hardship for Croatian invalids, the lack of a unified invalid law, without which invalids in Croatia felt they would not get due compensation from the state, was also the issue that the society singularly failed to address throughout most of 1922.

A series of events towards the end of the year changed this situation. In September 1922, the 'Sixth Inter-allied Invalid Congress', which included delegates from all formerly Allied states, was held in Yugoslavia (Slovenia). The congress raised the profile of the invalid question, which had been submerged in the many other difficulties the kingdom was facing. In what was interpreted by some invalids as a cynical attempt to win international favour at the forthcoming congress, the minister of social policy Gregor Žerjav set aside ten million dinars to adapt the tuberculosis clinic on Sljeme, and a further three million dinars to build an invalid home in Belgrade.[64] Žerjav also took the initiative in passing a permanent invalid law, meeting with invalid delegates from Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Split, and Novi Sad, and offering a generous proposal that was acceptable to all present. The meeting was held on 8 September, just two days before the congress was due to begin in Ljubljana.

Due to the large amounts of money allocated to the invalid organisations, the ministry also decided to conduct a full audit of the Societies' financial affairs. They discovered that the presidents of both the Serbian and Croatian Societies had embezzled large amounts of money from their respective organisations. Both presidents were immediately replaced by veterans who took a more reconciliatory approach to Serbian/Croatian invalid relations. Invalids in Croatia and Slavonia recognised that squabbling with the Belgrade society was not furthering their cause,

---

[63] According to the only figures available at this time. The figure of 8,500 was quoted at a meeting of the society in Zagreb, June 1920: see *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 July 1920. This was almost certainly a high-water mark for the society, as the numerous conflicts with Belgrade and divisions amongst Croatian invalids themselves had a deleterious effect on the society's membership figures. It should also be noted that at the beginning of 1922, a 'Society for Dalmatian Invalids', opposed to the anti-Belgrade position of the Zagreb organisation, opened in Split, taking many of the Zagreb society's members with it. A survey conducted by the Central Council for War Invalids in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes at the end of 1924 reckoned that its Zagreb section had as few as 2,168 members. See *Ratni invalid* (Belgrade), 18 January 1925. The figure 8,500, therefore, would be the most generous estimate of membership figures in 1922.

[64] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 30 September 1922.

and offered 'fraternal' and 'patriotic' support to the central council. Invalids from across the country were moving towards a unified front once again.[65]

1.5. Direct Action

The unity within the movement and the renewed interest in the invalid question convinced the new presidency of the Society for Invalids in Croatia that it was time to take more decisive action to ensure that both the government and the general public knew about their plight. They suggested to the Belgrade society that a march or demonstration in the capital could achieve both of these goals. They drew attention to a spontaneous demonstration they had held after a meeting in April 1920. On that occasion, around 500 invalids had marched from the Metropol cinema to the Ban's palace in Zagreb, to present a list of demands and a petition to officials. The demonstration had attracted interest in the Zagreb press, and it was thought that a larger demonstration outside the parliament building would have even greater effect. The strategy was approved by the central council in Belgrade, and a 'section for intervention' known as the 'council of the hundred' (since it was comprised of about one hundred invalids) was chosen for the purpose of lobbying the Yugoslav government.[66]

The Section for Intervention began its work on 1 November, just a few days after the meeting in Belgrade. On 4 November some of the invalids were received by the Prime Minister Nikola Pašić. Since Pašić had been with the Serbian army during its epic retreat across Albania, his expressions of sympathy for the invalid cause were perhaps sincere. He stated that the issue needed to be addressed immediately, but that due to the current parliamentary crisis it was very difficult for his government to act at the present time. The same group of invalids also visited the Ministry of Social Policy, where they received similar expressions of sympathy, and recognition of the need to pass an invalid law immediately.[67] This was considered a good start, but the Section for Intervention was not satisfied with promises of future legislation. These

---

[65] *Obzor,* 29 October 1922.
[66] The protest outside the Ban's palace was reported in *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 1 April 1920. The wisdom behind this demonstration and that which was about to take place in Belgrade is explained in an article in the same newspaper, 30 November 1922.
[67] *Obzor,* 5 November 1922.

men had pressed to have a law passed in parliament and they would not disperse until this concrete aim was realised.

Whilst the Section for Intervention stayed put in Belgrade, they sent letters to various newspapers throughout the country and a number of dailies in the capital. The letters thanked the press for their support thus far and asked them to keep reporting on their actions over the coming weeks.[68] They also appealed to all invalids to support their action, calling on them to come and demonstrate outside the parliament building. They hoped that the sight of thousands of invalids protesting on the streets of the capital would force the government to take notice.[69] In fact, over the course of November the demonstration gained momentum and proved to have a broader appeal than the invalids had imagined, as civil servants and ex-volunteers joined the protests against the government. Like the invalids, these men were dissatisfied with the way they were treated in Yugoslavia.

The culmination of these protests came at the beginning of December. The Section for Intervention was furious when the Minister for Social Affairs, Gregor Žerjav, took an unscheduled trip to Ljubljana on the day he was due to meet with them. Outside the parliament building, around 6,000 invalids, ex-volunteers, civil servants, and sympathisers had gathered. It was a huge public manifestation just one day after 1 December, the anniversary of the unification of South Slavs in 1918. The pro-Yugoslav Zagreb-based newspaper *Obzor* reported on the lack of enthusiasm shown on 1 December in Belgrade.[70] The article was surely evidence of the newspaper's disillusionment with the progress made by the new state, of which the still unresolved invalid question was a glaring reminder. Despite *Obzor*'s report on the lack of celebration in the two main Yugoslav cities, and much to the chagrin of the Croatian invalids, there seems to have been a hint of festivity within the ranks of the Serbian invalids. The Croatian organisation complained that some Serbian participants appeared to be more concerned with 'cinemas and concerts' than with the 'empty stomachs of invalids.'[71] Apparently the Serbian invalids combined protest with celebration of the 1 December, the 'unification and liberation' of all South Slavs. Whilst the Croatian invalids were encouraged to see their ranks swelled on the streets

[68] Ibid, 7 November 1922.
[69] Ibid, 9 November 1922.
[70] Ibid, 3 December 1922.
[71] *Ratni invalid* (Zagreb), 15 December 1922.

by a large number of Serbian invalids, they were worried that the focus of their protest would be lost.

The invalids now promised an even larger demonstration if a law was not passed immediately. The Section for Intervention threatened to call every single volunteer and invalid in the country to the capital, and to block all exits out of the city, bringing its economic life to a standstill. They predicted that the call would bring up to 160,000 protestors onto the streets of Belgrade. In addition to this ultimatum, civil servants, who were also unhappy with low wages and loss of work in the Yugoslav kingdom, now threatened to call a strike if *their* demands were not met by the government. This proposed show of might did not take place, however. At the end of December, Pašić's government was dissolved and new elections were called for March 1923. Lobbying the government now became a moot point; invalids would have to reformulate their strategy for a new political constellation. Not for the first nor last time political life in Yugoslavia had come to a halt, and the invalids had wasted their time and efforts on a lame-duck government. The announcement in parliament to dissolve the government was greeted by angry jeers from invalids in the public gallery, who heckled members with cries of, 'For shame!', 'National bloodsuckers!', and 'We will be waiting for you with sticks when you reconvene!'[72]

The entire episode in Belgrade reveals much about the nature of the invalid question in the Yugoslav kingdom, as well as the country's attitudes to its veterans in the post-war period. It is, for example, notable that the initiative for the demonstrations and the formation of a 'Section for Intervention' came from the Society for War Invalids in Croatia. This is consistent with the Society's aims as stipulated in its statute and expressed by its leaders at various meetings held in Croatia: to work exclusively for the purpose of gaining material and financial concessions for its members. That was the wisdom behind demonstrating outside the parliament in Belgrade as well as the reason that a tension existed with Serbian invalids commemorating 'liberation and unification' with 'cinemas and concerts.' For the Croatian invalids, any sense of commemoration or references to the war years would lead them back to the hostility and prejudices they faced from bureaucrats and administrators in the new state, who were quick to identify Croatian veterans as soldiers of a defeated enemy. It was more politic for them to reduce the invalid

[72] HDA Pravila društava, Zagreb, 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja'.

question in Yugoslavia to its lowest common denominator, namely that all invalids of all nationalities in the new state were victims, and as such shared the same fate. Paradoxically, they needed to withdraw to this basic commonality in order to co-operate with the Serbian invalids, but they needed this co-operation in order to attach their claims to the moral conscience of the state and the general public to those of the Serbian veterans. Serbian veterans, in turn, had a greater claim on the moral conscience of the new state precisely because they had won the war, because they had fought for the 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs and so deserved to be rewarded by the new state (the creation of which was made possible, after all, through their blood sacrifice). This was an intractable problem for Croatian veterans in their relations with the state and, to a certain extent, with the public in the post-war period. Put simply, their sacrifice was not deemed valuable, or at least could not be reconciled with the foundational narrative of Yugoslavia. If veterans of the Serbian army had fought for the 'liberation and unification' of the South Slavs, then, logically, veterans of the Austro-Hungarian army had fought against it. Once again, the Serbian/Croatian dialectic operated at the expense of the Croatian invalids.

Nevertheless, the failed demonstration also shows that Serbian and Croatian veterans were joined in frustration at the lack of recognition their wartime sacrifice was given in the 1920s, even if their understanding of what they had sacrificed differed. The conduct of the veterans during the protest is evidence of this frustration. Furthermore, it demonstrates the two main targets of this frustration in the post-war period. First and foremost were the government, the state, and its politicians. These were the men most directly responsible for the hardships the veterans now faced and also most directly responsible for compensating them in the post-war period. The veterans felt that the state owed these men a great deal, and for that reason the demonstrators targeted the parliament building and demanded interviews with Pašić and Žerjav. Secondly, the men wanted recognition from the general public, non-veterans and non-invalids who were not entitled to ignore the pleas of these men, although they had been doing so for some years. It was in search of this recognition that invalids wrote letters to Yugoslavia's newspapers and swelled the streets of Belgrade in their thousands. Veterans felt that the only alternative to this recognition was to be forgotten, to become invisible. For Serbian and Croatian invalids alike this was their greatest anxiety since to become invisible was to admit that their wartime sacrifice, their invalidity, was meaningless, a burden on a society which did not care

to be burdened by such matters. As Adrian Gregory has noted in his study of Armistice Day in Great Britain, those soldiers who were maimed whilst fighting found it harder to let go of their 'veteran identity.'[73] In the Yugoslav kingdom, the demonstration of December 1922 was an attempt on the part of South Slav invalids to give meaning to their status as veterans by calling upon the state and society to acknowledge this status.

The events which had taken place in Belgrade at the end of 1922 dominated the agenda of the next invalid congress, held in Slavonski Brod at the beginning of 1923. It was at this meeting that the unification between the Serbian and Croatian societies was finalised, as both councils agreed that the demonstration had proven that working together was more effective than working apart.[74] Delegate after delegate took to the floor at the congress to express disgust and disappointment at the Yugoslav kingdom's government and elected officials. The new president of the Zagreb council made a long speech about the relations of invalids and war veterans to the country's politicians. The negligent attitude of parliament towards war invalids was to be expected, he felt, since those who had sacrificed so much for the country had no representatives of their own; the country was instead run by various kinds of 'war parasites', men who had sacrificed nothing during the war and were now trying to exploit those that did.[75] The solution, he thought, was to field invalid candidates in the forthcoming elections for the country's parliament, Trojan horses who would campaign on the lists of the most popular parties, but once elected would work exclusively for the interests of invalids.[76] The idea was met with angry cat-calls from the floor, as delegates clamoured to express their unwillingness to co-operate with any of Yugoslavia's political parties after their experiences in December.[77] A new course of action was proposed, that invalids present their own list, creating an 'invalid party' to contest the forthcoming elections independently. Although this motion was better received, it was defeated when put to the vote. The Central Council of the Serb, Croat, and Slovene Invalid Society would not endorse any party-political engagement on the part of invalids.[78]

---

[73] Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: 1994), p. 52.
[74] HDA pravila društava, Zagreb, 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja'.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

Nevertheless, some of the Croatian invalids decided to field candidates throughout the country in the elections in March, as a sequel to the demonstration in Belgrade. They joined forces with a number of ex-volunteer veterans who were also unhappy about their demands being neglected by the government (many had demonstrated on the streets of Belgrade with the invalids), and the list was presented as a 'veteran party.' If these men thought that they could turn the support they had received in the streets and in the press into concrete political representation they were badly mistaken; the party received just 178 votes in Croatia and Slavonia, and 724 in Dalmatia (about 0.7% of total votes cast). With such miniscule support, the lists were nowhere near returning a single candidate.[79] Contributing factors to this failure may be the lack of experience and organisation of the veterans in electoral campaigning. When the decision was made to go to the polls, they had less than two months before the election, and were competing with parties and candidates who had years of experience. It is also possible that the lists would have fared better in Serbia and Montenegro where veterans were held in higher regard amongst the general public. This also would have given the veterans a chance to launch a co-ordinated and nationwide campaign to mobilise support, as they had done during the December demonstration.

Does this failure also mean that the war was not, as it were, a 'vote-winner'? Not necessarily. The war was regularly part of political discourse in Serbia during the 1920s. In 1925 for example, Pašić and Pribićević campaigned throughout the country on a platform of protecting and supporting the wartime achievement of Serbia. Of course, voters in Serbia were bound to be more receptive to such appeals than those in Croatia. Nevertheless, Stjepan Radić, as will be shown later, evoked the memory of war whilst campaigning for Croatian votes throughout Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia. He used the memory of defeat and of Croats fighting for a foreign power to substantiate his pacifist ideology and, as a corollary to this, his opposition to the Karadjordjević dynasty and the army. It may be the case that his appeal to Croatian veterans and those for whom the war was a key issue was more persuasive than that of the veteran party itself. It may simply be that there was no room for special interest parties in Croatia in the 1920s since they could not compete with the overwhelming

[79] Figures from *Obzor*, 25 March 1923.

popularity of Stjepan Radić and the HSS.[80] It can also be noted that throughout Europe exclusively 'veteran' parties did not make an impact on parliamentary politics in the interwar period. This was true even in countries such as France, where the veteran movement's mass support did not translate into political gain.[81]

The political engagement of veterans was more evident in direct, paramilitary groups which, of course, operated outside of the parliamentary process in interwar Europe. Veterans of the Great War comprised the rank and file and often the officer class of the *Heimwehr* in Austria, the Szeged counter-revolutionaries in Hungary and D'Annunzio's volunteer army in Rijeka. In Croatia, a small group of veterans formed the 'Croatian Committee' with such intent, and they will be examined in chapter three. Additionally, one could mention the 'charismatic authority' which a number of leading political figures in interwar Europe, often personalities of the right, derived from their status as veterans. Amongst this group were Admiral Miklós Horthy and Gyula Gömbös, Gabriele D'Annunzio, King Alexander Karadjordjević, Ion Antonescu, and, of course, Adolf Hitler. Again, this phenomenon had its parallel in Croatia in Stjepan Sarkotić, a figure of great prestige for the Croatian radical right after the war and, posthumously, for the Ustasha in the Independent State of Croatia. In each case, these men evoked their careers as soldiers in the Great War to lend authority to their political programme and to demonstrate that they stood outside and aloof from the ranks of regular politicians, bureaucratic and double-dealing as they were. Aside from Sarkotić, no parallel existed in Croatia, and Croatian veterans looked to Stjepan Radić as their inspirational, messianic leader in the post-war period.

All of these are arguments in favour of political patterns involving veterans in the post-war period that may account for their failure at the polls. It can be argued in more certain terms that the electoral failure in 1923 reflects a more general failure of the Society for War Invalids to make a significant impact on post-war society. As already noted, complaints were often voiced at the Society's meetings concerning poor attendance and a lack of interest, both from the public and from other invalids. The qualified success of the demonstration in Belgrade was owed in large part to the

---

[80] Indeed, Marko Attila Hoare has noted that the Bosnian Croats, a constituency previously separate to Croats from Croatia, sacrificed their special interests by voting almost uniformly for the HSS from 1923 onwards. See Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: 2007), p. 145.

[81] Prost instances Henri Barbusse and his veteran organisation ARAC as one of the smaller 'politically-motivated' veterans' groups. See Prost, *In the Wake of the War,* p. 40. He also notes that 'veterans did not have a great political significance.': see ibid, p. 1.

participation of Serbian veterans. It seems unlikely that the demonstration would have been as popular without this participation. There had always been a current in the Society for War Invalids in Croatia which recognised that the best way, perhaps the only way, to work effectively towards their goals was to co-operate with Serbian invalids. The unification was a significant victory for this current, and the Society for War Invalids in Croatia remained attached to the central council in Belgrade for the rest of the decade, as part of the Society for War Invalids in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Many Croatian invalids were by this stage ready to accept that taking a path independent of Serbian invalids was bound to end in failure, given the lack of prestige Croatian veterans were afforded in the Yugoslav kingdom.

However, reconciliation (or maybe pragmatism) was not the sole temper amongst veterans associated with the Society for War Invalids in Croatia. After the congress at Slavonski brod a number of invalids, former Habsburg officers, broke away from the Society and formed a new faction based in Zagreb. They briefly printed a newspaper, *Hrvatski invalid* (Croatian Invalid), in which they propounded a more positive message of Croatia's role in the war, as well as a number of attacks on the Society's decision to co-operate with the Central Council in Belgrade. The authorities in Zagreb linked this faction with the Society for Retired Officers, a Zagreb-based group of veterans who were treated with great suspicion at the very highest levels of the Yugoslav Kingdom's official class, as will be shown in chapter three. One remarkable detail about the otherwise unremarkable history of these veterans is that, in 1927, they infuriated invalids in Belgrade when they sent Emmanuel 'Manko' Gagliardi to represent their group to the central council. The Serbian veterans were enraged since Gagliardi had worked as a gendarme on behalf of the wartime Austro-Hungarian occupation in Belgrade. But more than this, Gagliardi had also been involved with the Croatian Committee, the revolutionary émigré council formed with the intention of freeing Croatia from Yugoslavia and comprised in large part ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent. It seems that Gagliardi retained such military links long after the Croatian Committee was discovered, involvement with this paramilitary group as well as the role of ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent in the post-war period will be addressed in more detail in chapter three.

1.6. Silent Liquidation: Josip Pavičić and the 'Invalid Question' in Croatia.

It is now possible, and using the sources used in this chapter, to trace a narrative thread through the development of the 'invalid question' in Croatia during the 1920s. This narrative began with high expectations and even hopes in the years immediately after the war and ended in straightened circumstances and official and public indifference at the end of the decade. In between these two points, Croatian invalids learnt that their hopes of returning to pre-war life were in fact illusory, that they would be stamped as invalids for the rest of their days and that furthermore, as Croatian invalids they would be treated with contempt and hostility in a state which did not value their wartime sacrifice on behalf of 'Franz Joseph'. Like any narrative history, it represents a finessing of reality, a streamlining of the facts in order to make sense of them. The extent to which this narrative is meaningful is perhaps determined by the invalids themselves. Since many of these veterans perceived this story of ever-diminishing returns as true, it can at least be said that it was a reality for a great many men in the post-war period.

Nowhere is this interpretation of the invalid experience in Croatia more apparent than in the stories of Josip Pavičić, a veteran who wrote about his experiences as an invalid in Yugoslavia in the interwar period. Pavičić had been called up by the Austro-Hungarian army in 1915 at the age of twenty, and lost a leg fighting in Galicia, in 1917. Pavičić had visited all the main-stays of Croatian invalid life in the 1920s, staying at Ciglana, Brestovac, and the Holy Spirit, where he worked briefly as a support teacher. In 1928, he graduated from the law faculty in Zagreb and went on to work as a civil servant until his retirement in 1939.[82] Despite this professional success, Pavičić never escaped from his status as a war invalid in Croatia in the interwar period, and his experiences in what he called the 'invalid catacombs' of the post-war kingdom made an indelible mark on him. Pavičić found a way to express this strong and debilitating sense of an 'invalid identity' in short stories, which started to be published in 1931, when he was 36 years old.

In Pavičić's stories, the end of the war was depicted ironically, as the beginning of a new phase of agony for the Croatian invalid:

---

[82] Biographical details from Vladimir Popović, *Izabrana djela: Josip Pavičić, Antun Boglić, Mato Lovrak* (Zagreb: 1971), pp. 7-16.

> And so began the roaming down tortuous paths of the invalid catacombs, from hospitals to the invalid barracks at Ciglana [...], from the barracks to the invalid home at the Holy Ghost, ending at last in the sanatorium for invalids with tuberculosis on Sljeme. The whole of the journey was interrupted with desperate and futile efforts characteristic of so many invalids of the time. That is, to return to the surroundings from which they had been torn a few years earlier, there to pick up the lives where they had left them. Every one of those attempts soon ended with a return to the ranks of the forsaken invalids.[83]

This is exactly Eric J. Leed's 'liminal stage', wherein veterans of the Great War are unable to shed their combat identity in the post-war period, and suffer social-estrangement as a result of it.[84] The testimonies of other invalids who spent time at the barracks at Sljeme, Ciglana, and at the Holy Ghost are similar enough to suggest that Pavičić is at least partially representative of this type of veteran.

Furthermore, Pavičić's stories expressed a rejection of the idea of victory in war that was particular to the Croatian veteran, and was included in his stories as a rebuttal to the constant identification of non-Serbian veterans as defeated enemies. In what reads like a tacit challenge to Serbia's dominant war narrative in the post-war period, Pavičić depicts an old invalid veteran subverting the figure of the great hero whilst telling his young niece, Suzica ('little tear'), a bed-time story. Asking her what she has learnt at school that day, Suzica replies that she has been told a story about 'our great hero and warrior, who fought a battle and struck down an enemy two times his size.' The old veteran replies,

> Listen Suzica, to this story [...] in another foreign land there also lives a great warrior who struck down his enemy. Everyone celebrates him, and little girls and boys in this country hear about him in school and they love him [...] Since he was a great warrior, he destroyed the enemy army and killed and wounded many enemies. Look Suzica, I am one of those enemies, one whom he killed and wounded [...] Do you love that great warrior in a foreign country, who killed and wounded many people, me amongst them? [...] And so my darling, our great warrior struck down his enemy and now there, in another country, there are many little girls without fathers and uncles, or they

---

[83] Josip Pavičić, preface to *Crvenim slovima* (Zagreb: 1946).
[84] See Eric J Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: 1979), pp. 193-212 *passim.*

> are wounded and walk about on crutches like these[...]Do you still love our great warrior?[85]

Again, there are parallels with the Croatian invalid experience as described earlier. In this passage Pavičić eschews an exclusively triumphal interpretation of the war years in favour of a universal sense of suffering and loss. Similarly, the Invalid Society in Croatia chided their Serbian counterparts for turning the invalid question into a matter of 'cinemas and concerts', hoping instead to emphasise the common experience of neglect and hardship in the post-war period.

Finally, Pavičić did not equate this common sense of suffering with any kind of post-war camaraderie, a 'trenchocracy' which could bind veterans together against an indifferent or hostile civilian population. Instead, the invalid experience was one of isolation and ultimately death, often by suicide. His story 'Silent Liquidation' provides the best example of this process. It tells the story of a young student (like Pavičić, a student of law) who receives an injury during the war, as a result of which he had a rib removed which he has taken to carrying around with him in his coat pocket. Barely able to live off his war pension in a student hostel, he accepts the advice of a friend and fellow invalid, who tells him to take up residence in an invalid home, free of charge. Upon arrival, the young man is optimistic about completing his studies, taking his law degree, getting out of the barracks and finding a job in the civilian world. However, the desperation and hopelessness of his fellow invalids increasingly distracts him from his studies, and eventually leads to a complete mental and physical breakdown. After witnessing the suicide of his room-mate, a blacksmith, the student takes his own life by stabbing himself with his loose rib. The following day, the room's two new occupants consider the grim frequency of such suicides and the dwindling number of invalids throughout the country. One of them is reluctant to take the room, believing it to be cursed. 'If you are going to reckon on it like that, then you'll never find a room for yourself in the home.' His friend replies,

---

[85] Pavičić, *Memento* (Zagreb: 1937), pp. 60-61.

Figure 2: Pavičić's veteran survives the nightmare of the battlefield only to pass into a new phase of misery as an invalid in post-war Croatia. From *Memento*.

> 'Every single one of them has a beautiful history! Invalids are leaving, ceaselessly leaving.'
> 'My word, and do you remember how many of us there were all together in the first days after the war? On every corner an invalid, on every mouth and in all the newspapers, the 'invalid question', pushing and pulling endlessly, there wasn't time to take it all in. And look: what people couldn't do, time has done.'
> 'That,' exclaimed the clerk, 'it's what your merchants call "silent liquidation." Yesterday the student and the blacksmith were "silently liquidated."'[86]

Pavičić here has succeeded in writing the narrative of suffering and trauma that was a reality for so many invalids in Croatia in the post-war period. The bitter irony of the invalid question stems from the fact that whilst in the immediate post-war period these men were encouraged to hope for so much, by the end of the 1920s they were 'silently liquidated', empty-handed and long-forgotten by the very people who had sworn to help them. Pavičić was very explicit about this when he wrote a new preface to his short stories in 1946. Speaking of his experiences in the interwar period, he remarked

> Those were difficult days[...]Whilst the system concealed the tragedy with endless solutions to the 'invalid question', the problem was resolving itself – with alcohol, with the tuberculosis bacillus, with a bullet, a knife, with poison[...]And ten years later, whilst the 'invalid question' was still filling up sheets of paper, it had in reality resolved itself long ago.[87]

As Robert Whalen has noted in his study of German veterans of the Great War, citing Freud, the antithesis of heroism is melancholia, and by 1930, in Croatia as in Germany, this appears to be the prevalent mood amongst invalids.[88]

Pavičić wrote these words immediately after a new war had produced a new generation of invalids and veterans in Yugoslavia. Pavičić had re-worked his stories, adding four new tales about the Partisans and the anti-fascist struggle and re-naming the collection *In Red Letters*. It was to be the final chapter in what had proven to be a

[86] Pavičić, *Memento,* pp. 138-139.
[87] Pavicic, *Crvenim slovima* (Zagreb: 1946), p. 5.
[88] Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914-1939* (Ithaca: 1984), p. 182.

long and difficult publication history. The ten stories of invalid life in interwar Croatia had originally been published under the title *Memento* in 1937, only to be withdrawn and pulped after two weeks. The regime of Prince Paul deemed the book too inflammatory for public consumption, and the publication was noted only in a handful of literary journals.[89] The suppression of his work must have served as the final confirmation that the Yugoslav kingdom did not value its invalids. In 1946, Pavičić, now cloaked in a socialist mantle, wrote of how 'Those [invalid] masses were for the capitalist order too much of an encumbrance, ballast which needed to be cast away so as not to hamper the rise of their balloon. And so the ballast was cast away.'[90]

1.8. Conclusion

It is not easy to define a Croatian 'veteran identity' in Yugoslavia. In order for this category to be applicable one must identify a set of criteria, of circumstances, wherein ex-soldiers consider themselves, and are considered, first and foremost 'veterans' and wherein this status informs the way they are treated and the way they behave. The sources strongly suggest that such a category exists for Croatian invalids, and furthermore that it has a number of definite characteristics. Invalids in Croatia complain repeatedly of the impossibility of returning to pre-war life, of being labelled as 'invalids' different and outside of civilian life, of neglect from the government and from the general public, and (particular to many Croatian veterans) of being treated as defeated enemies or 'second-class veterans' by the authorities in the Yugoslav kingdom. The common threads of the invalid experience in Croatia were expressed most angrily by the Society of War Invalids in Croatia, and most eloquently by the writer Josip Pavičić. It can be added that part of the invalid experience in the Yugoslav kingdom was one of disappointment and disillusionment, as these veterans quickly came to realise that the state had overestimated the level of financial support it could give them. Here there is a parallel both with Croatian volunteer veterans, who will be examined next, and with the nature of the welfare state throughout post-war Europe. A number of states that had fought in the war were now faced with an

[89] Where its reception was very good. Novak Simić, writing in *Savremenik*, noted that Pavičić, 'since he is an invalid himself, [he] is able to uncover the atmosphere of hospitals, invalid homes, tuberculosis clincs [...] the joyless world of invalids who just wait for death, whilst dreaming of the past, see *Savremenik,* 1937.

[90] Pavičić, *Crvenim slovima*, p. 6.

unprecedented number of dependants: war invalids, widows, pensioners, and orphans. In many cases, the nation-states of post-war Europe could not afford to give these groups the care they desired or deserved.[91] In Croatia, the fact that the only invalid society in the country before 1914 was formed by veterans of Josip Jelačić's 1848 campaign against Hungarian nationalists gives some idea of the novelty and therefore the impact of this huge new class of men in Yugoslavia.

However, there is an important qualification. The concept of an 'invalid identity' and the relevance of the material used to support the argument of this chapter is less clear cut if the majority of men were able to return to the private sphere of the family, to successfully reintegrate into pre-war kinship groups. And if this is true, it poses a wealth of new questions about post-war domestic arrangements, violence in the home, the impact of the war on gender and generational relations. Again, the work of Bourke on British veterans of the Great War is relevant. As she notes, 'it was impossible to apply military *espirit de corps* to men whose sense of identity remained lodged within their civilian domestic environment.'[92] Similarly, it is impossible to apply the term 'invalid' to Croatian veterans who shed any sense of invalidity by reintegrating with their families in the post-war period. The impact of the war in the private sphere of the family may be an entirely separate issue, and one which has been only partially uncovered.

On this matter, therefore, it could be that the catch-all term 'invalid' is an inappropriate analytical category. It is entirely plausible, for example, that a soldier with minor injuries could return to pre-war life and work, whereas a soldier who sustained more serious injuries could not. In this case, the term 'invalid' is applicable only in the latter case. Here, a natural separation falls between amputees and non-amputees, and this was certainly the distinction made by the Ministry of Social Policy at the end of the 1920s concerning those who should be considered invalids. The state argued, through fiscal expediency, that non-amputees (including the blind) were now to be cared for in the private sphere of the family; the welfare state was retracting and could no longer cover them. Against this position, there is Josip Pavičić's story, 'Silent Liquidation', in which a relatively minor injury eventually leads the invalid to

---

[91] Richard Bessel, for example, talks of the need to 'dampen the unrealistic expectations of what the *Heimat* could provide for veterans' in Weimar Germany. See Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: 1993), p. 83. Also Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 33 'Nothing that came before the First World War prepared people for its large-scale physical destruction.'

[92] Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 170.

suicide. For Pavičić the nature of the injury is less important than the experience of war and of invalidity in the new state. Those two factors caused a physic trauma which was often terminal, and which was the fate of all invalids in Yugoslavia. It is difficult to weigh up in relative terms the accuracy of Pavičić's emotional response to the invalid question against the state's chiefly economic response, although most would be inclined to side with the former.

Finally, of all the veterans' groups, the Croatian invalids have the greatest level of diversity concerning their pre-war socio-economic backgrounds in the pre-war period; this too may destabilize the notion of an invalid identity. An invalid study group in Croatia would comprise about 40,000 veterans in 1918 (and as few as 21,850 in 1928)[93] from a range of backgrounds: conscripts, volunteers, officers of all ranks, soldiers who fought on different fronts and with various levels of efficacy and commitment during the war. The justification for studying these veterans as a homogenous group in the post-war period hinges on their shared misfortune of being injured as a result of fighting.

The chimerical nature of this veteran group goes some way to explaining why so many different currents are evident within the Croatian invalid movement. The brief Communist phase at the end of the war is probably a result of invalids, mainly conscripts, returning from Russian captivity as committed Bolsheviks, and making their presence felt within the ranks of the Society of War Invalids in Croatia. In addition to this, it is clear that a group of former Habsburg officers were responsible for trying to push the invalid movement towards a more (Croatian) nationalist, anti-Serbian position, and that by creating their own faction in 1925, they were at least partially successful in this. It is also highly likely that a large number of Croatian invalids were conscripts who had fought for Austria-Hungary because they had to, and merely sought the most pragmatic and practical solution to the invalid problem in the post-war period. The chimerical nature of this group, however, also makes it an ideal place to begin the study of Croatian veterans. The heterogeneity of this group, the different currents and political persuasions we have seen amongst these men is typical of Croatian veterans in the Yugoslav kingdom, as will be confirmed in the following chapters.

---

[93] M. Mrvaljević 'Naše invalidsko pitanje' in *Jubilarni zbornik života i rada Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca 1918-1928* (vol. 2) (Belgrade: 1928), p. 675.

Chapter Two - The Volunteer Question

This chapter charts the progress of a small but active group of demobilised volunteers (Habsburg POWs recruited into the Serbian army) in Croatia in the Yugoslav kingdom in the 1920s. Many of these veterans had ruminated on the creation of a South Slav state since their pre-war days as students in the Habsburg lands. These ideals were carried over into Yugoslavia, fortified by a shared sense of sacrifice due to their soldierly efforts against the Central Powers. However, in the 1920s, many former volunteers soon became disillusioned by post-war reality in Yugoslavia. For these veterans, their wartime objectives had not yet been achieved, or were in danger of being sabotaged by civilian politicians, and therefore their duty as soldiers was not yet finished. This chapter measures their impact on cultural and intellectual life in Croatia in the 1920s. After 1918, they were used by supporters of unitary Yugoslavism to demonstrate Croatia's commitment to the South Slav state, both during and after the war. Of all the men in this study, the ex-volunteers were most sympathetic to Yugoslavia's foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification' and their sacrifice, in turn, was more easily reconciled with this narrative than most veterans from Croatia. These volunteers saw the transition from Habsburg to Yugoslav Croatia as a process which began before 1914 and was accelerated by the Great War. In the Yugoslav kingdom, these men attempted to forge a role for themselves as guardians of South Slav national integration, ready to fight Yugoslavia's enemies to ensure that 'liberation and unification' was fully realised. Their links with Yugoslav nationalist youth groups demonstrate the way in which this section of the male wartime generation transmitted their values to a 'post-war generation' who had been too young to fight. The anomalous position of these ex-volunteers in relation to other veterans from Croatia and the violence which their followers were involved in will show the contested nature of national identity and of the legacy of the Great War in Croatia. In contrast to the invalids, the volunteer case study allows us to pursue a small, homogeneous group of veterans from the pre-war period through their experiences in the Great War and finally their fate as veterans in the Yugoslav kingdom. In this way, their study offers valuable insights into the way in which veterans from Croatia made the transition from war to peace and from empire to nation-state.

2.1. Origins of the Volunteer Movement

The origins of the South Slav volunteer movement can be traced to anti-Ottoman guerrillas and irregulars operating in Serbia and Bosnia as far back as the Bosnian peasant uprising of 1875. These fighters provided support for the regular Serbian army during its military successes in the two Balkan wars of 1912-1913. As Austria-Hungary prepared for war against Serbia in the summer of 1914, these erstwhile *Komitadji* and *Četnici* formed themselves into military units to fight alongside the Serbian army. However, they were almost exclusively Serbian in character, comprised of Serbians from Serbia proper and from Bosnia, as well as a small number of Habsburg Serbs from the Vojvodina region of southern Hungary who had recently crossed the border in anticipation of the outbreak of war. Only a very small number of Croats, as well as other nationalities such as Italians and Czechs, were present in these units.[1] Nevertheless, pro-Yugoslav cultural and intellectual circles in the Habsburg lands followed developments in Serbia with great interest, and were especially encouraged following the small kingdom's successes in the Balkan wars. Vojvodina, with its large population of ethnic Serbs, was an obvious source of pro-Yugoslav, pro-Serbian sentiment in the pre-war period.

Like the *Komitadji* and *Četnici,* the nationalists in Vojvodina were predominantly Serbs, but unlike these guerrilla groups they had no history of military resistance in the pre-war period. Instead, their understanding of nationalism and Yugoslavism as a cultural concept meant they maintained close links with like-minded parties in Zagreb, Sušak and throughout Dalmatia. The path of Slavko Diklić, future volunteer and leading figure in the post-war veterans' movement, is instructive. Diklić was born in Vojvodina in 1883, the son of a noted pedagogue and Serb nationalist.[2] After graduating from the law faculty of Zagreb University, he moved to Osijek in eastern Slavonia, where he started to write prose and poetry, and established the *Srpski soko* (Serbian Falcon) gymnastics club.[3] After serving as a volunteer in the ranks of the Serbian army during the war, he returned to Osijek, where he remained for the rest of his life. His literary and journalistic output in the 1920s demonstrates how important it was for him to preserve the memory of the war-time volunteer

---

[1] Pero Slijepčević, *Naši dobrovoljaci u svetskome ratu,* (Zagreb: 1925), pp. 2-11.
[2] Nikola Sokolović, 'predgovor' in Slavko Diklić, *Pesme* (Osijek: 1935), pp. III-VIII.
[3] Ibid.

contribution. It also shows a strong commitment to the realisation of South Slav unification, an ideal which Diklić and many like him from Vojvodina had held dear in the pre-war period.

In Croatia itself, the Istrian coastal towns of Sušak and Rijeka also played an important part in the pre-war Yugoslav movement. In these towns, Yugoslav nationalism was seen by the local intelligentsia, comprised mainly of students, as a viable solution to the South Slav question. These young men were greatly influenced by Frano Supilo, deputy of the Croat-Serb Coalition and editor of the progressive, pro-Yugoslav newspaper *Novi list,* founded in 1900. Both Milan Banić and Lujo Lovrić, key figures in the future volunteer movement, were involved with the newspaper in the immediate pre-war period, and many years later Lovrić would recall the powerful anti-Austrian influence Supilo had on his circle of friends at the time.[4] In an article in *Nova Evropa* written in 1929, Banić, by this time a respected journalist and supporter of King Alexander's dictatorship, said this of contemporary Sušak:

> Just as it was before the war, from the peak to the base of its multi-coloured society, it represents that component of Croatdom which is spiritually closest to progressive and honourable Serbdom, and honest and broad-minded Yugoslavism.[5]

Like the Yugoslav movement in Vojvodina, the Istrian youth focussed their activities on the cultural sphere, boasting the support of such pre-eminent Croats as (aside from Supilo) the poet and author Augustin 'Tin' Ujević and the Dalmatian poet Count Ivo Vojnović, 'the bard of the Yugoslav youth movement'.[6] Events such as the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 or the Balkan wars were covered extensively in newspapers such as *Novi list,* and from 1912 onwards Lujo Lovrić maintained a correspondence with the Bosnian author and Yugoslav nationalist Ivo Andrić.[7] There was also an active Yugoslav youth movement in Zagreb. According to Kazimir Vidas, leader of the Yugoslav Nationalist Youth from 1912 onwards, the movement in the Croatian capital comprised largely of students from the university. Under Vidas' guidance the Zagreb students began to gather and centralize youth groups from across

---

[4] Boris Grbin, *Potret Luje Lovrića* (Zagreb: 1985), p. 13.
[5] Milan Banić, 'Sušak danas i juce' in *Nova Evropa,* No. 3-4 (Zagreb: 1929).
[6] Niko Bartulović *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune: istorijat jugoslavenskog omladinskog pokreta* (Split: 1925), p. 37.
[7] Grbin, pp. 14-15.

the country and even beyond the borders of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. Ostensibly, this group aimed to make contact with progressive-minded youth organisations within the Monarchy, rather than revolutionary groups in Serbia and Bosnia.[8]

From this brief summary of the cultural and intellectual background of the pro-Yugoslav movement before the war, it appears as if a distinction can be made between a *prečani* variant of Yugoslavism with an emphasis on cultural and intellectual concerns, and the revolutionary actions and aspirations of young Serbs and Serbians in Bosnia and Serbia. South Slav culture was certainly at the forefront of discussions and debates about South Slav unity within pre-war youth circles in Croatia.[9] An understanding of this cultural (i.e. non-military) aspect of the movement on the eve of the war allows for a clearer understanding of the motivations and actions of volunteers in the post-war period, and their ideas of how the Yugoslav state should be structured. Nevertheless the distinction between cultural and revolutionary Yugoslav nationalism is not so clear, and to a certain extent reflects a need for youth groups in the Habsburg lands to present a law abiding façade to the authorities. The historian and journalist Vladimir Dedijer has noted the extensive links, some of them open but many of them hidden, between Habsburg youth groups and those in Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro.[10] In Croatia, Serbia's military successes in the Balkan wars raised hopes of forthcoming unification and the possibility of an armed solution to the South Slav question within the Monarchy.[11] The summary has also shown how a small number of Habsburg South Slavs were prepared to countenance a radical solution to the national question within the Monarchy and even unification with Serbia. It will be shown that these men, although few in number, would come to play an important political and propagandistic role both during and after the Great War.

2.2. The Wartime Volunteer Movement

Supporters of South Slav unification from the Habsburg lands were, due to the work of the Yugoslav Committee (*Jugoslovenski odbor*: JO), given a voice throughout

[8] Kazimir Vidas, 'Jugoslovenska nacijonalisticka omladina uoći rata' in *Nova Evropa,* no.14-15 (1925).
[9] Mirjana Gross, 'Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine u Hvratskoj uoći svetskog rata' in *Historijski zbornik* , no. XXI-XXII (1969), p. 96.
[10] Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo* (London: 1966), p. 310.
[11] Gross, p. 127.

Europe at a very early stage in the war. This committee was established by émigré South Slavs who had succeeded in leaving the Habsburg lands during the 'July Crisis' of 1914. Most prominent amongst them were Ante Trumbić (the committee's president and former mayor of Split) the sculptor Ivan Meštrović, and Frano Supilo. These well-connected public figures 'established a nucleus around which later émigrés could gather.'[12] The committee was at first exclusively an organ of pro-Yugoslav propaganda, and eventually established its headquarters in London (1915).

Emigration, however, was not possible for less prominent supporters of Yugoslavism in the Habsburg lands. In Split perhaps as many as two hundred suspected nationalists, including the author Ivo Andrić, were arrested and questioned on the first day of mobilization alone.[13] Many of them were later released, drafted, and sent to the front in Russia. A number of university students and pupils in Croatian academies were also called up from the reserve list to fight in the Monarchy's army, their exemption from military service no longer valid as Austria-Hungary prepared for war.[14] Lujo Lovrić, a correspondent of Andrić, had just finished the third year of merchant school when he was drafted from the reserve list. 'In Ogulin', he wrote,

> I was in a school for reserve officers, then they locked me up in a tower, in which comrade Tito had also been locked up. After a few days I was expelled from the school and sent to the front.[15]

Here, it seems that initial anti-Slav suspicion following the assassination in Sarajevo gave way to the greater exigencies of mass mobilization. It was in this way that a significant portion of the pro-Yugoslav movement and a number of Supilo's erstwhile protégés now found themselves drafted to fight for Austria-Hungary. Whilst Lovrić and many young Croats like him were preparing to fight on the Eastern Front, the JO was agitating amongst the South Slav diaspora throughout the world, but especially in North America, for the formation of anti-Austrian volunteer units to fight with the Allies, to be known, provisionally, as the 'Adriatic Legion'. To this end, Ljubo

---

[12] Gale Stokes, 'The Role of the Yugoslav Committee' in Dimitrije Djodjević (ed.), *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918* (Santa Barbara and Oxford: 1980), p. 52.
[13] Bartulović, p. 51.
[14] Richard Spence *Yugoslavs, the Austro-Hungarian Army, and the First World War* (Unpublished PhD Thesis (Santa Barbara: 1981), p. 38.
[15] Grbin, p. 17.

Leontić travelled to America in order to promote the idea of South Slav unity amongst émigré Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.[16]

Nikola Pašić, the Serbian prime minister, was from a very early stage in favour of the work of the JO and sent emissaries from Serbia to work with the émigrés (November 1914). His support, however, was based on an understanding of its role at odds with the group's members. Pašić regarded the JO as an influential organization well placed to disseminate information and propaganda concerning the South Slav cause and Serbia's pivotal role within it. He did not envisage its authority extending any further than this; the final political and military structure of the future Yugoslav state was to remain an exclusively Serbian prerogative.[17] As a result of this, Pašić and the Serbian government sought to reduce the separate character of these first volunteer units and submerge them entirely into the regular Serbian army. In this he was successful, much to the chagrin of the JO, who feared that this kind of assimilation would negate the political and propagandistic value of the volunteer units.[18]

As the JO and the Serbian government argued over these matters during the first half of 1915, the volunteer question was beginning to take on new dimensions. Austria-Hungary's military setbacks on the Eastern front had resulted in an increasing number of their soldiers falling into Russian captivity. The Serbian consulate in Petrograd received a significant number of letters, almost exclusively from Austrian Serbs, requesting to fight for the Allies.[19] The same debates and disagreements that informed the volunteer question in other parts of the world were now transplanted to these POWs. Once again the JO pushed for independent units, possibly carrying the Yugoslav name, whilst the Serbian government demanded that, in the words of Nikola Pašić, 'they put their assets and their lives at the disposal of Serbia.'[20] A compromise, albeit one which favoured the Serbian government, was reached in which it was decided that an independent volunteer division would be created, separate from the Serbian army but staffed by its officers who were selected and detached from their former regiments especially for this purpose. It was decided, not without controversy and protest, that the unit be called 'First Serbian Volunteer Division'. For the purposes of recruitment, a number of high ranking Serbian officers arrived from

[16] Bartulović, p. 68.
[17] Stokes pp. 53-54.
[18] Ante Mandić, *Fragmenti za historiju ujedinjenja: povodom četrdesetgodišnjice osnivanja Jugoslovenskog odbora* (Zagreb: 1956). pp. 39-40.
[19] Ibid, p. 43.
[20] Ibid, p. 42.

Corfu and visited POW camps throughout Russia, amongst whom was Stevan Hadžić, would serve as Minister of the Army and Navy in Yugoslavia in the 1920s.[21] In Petrograd, the JO established an office to handle systematically and efficiently the high volume of requests to volunteer (almost 20,000 by early summer 1916). The department was headed by JO member Ante Mandić, who also worked closely with Russian newspapers in the capital in order to promote the volunteer cause.[22]

The prospect of volunteering proved popular amongst the Serbian rank and file in captivity in Russia and this, along with the division's staff, gave the corps a predominantly Serbian character.[23] This needs to be kept in mind in subsequent debates about the volunteer question in the post-war period. Former Croatian volunteers and pro-Yugoslav circles in Zagreb often glossed over this Serbian preponderance in order to project an image of the corps as a South Slav melting pot, or as an example of support for the Yugoslav idea amongst Croats during the war. It also needs to be noted, however, that Croats and Slovenes vastly outnumbered Serbs amongst officers who volunteered for the corps.[24] It seems that these were the reserve officers and cadets, the intellectuals and students from the pre-1914 Yugoslav movement. Called up to fight, contrary to their ideological convictions, for the Central Powers, they were now given the chance to provide material support for the goal of 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs. [25] This is also an important point since this small but well-educated group of veterans were amongst the most active agents of war commemoration in Croatia in the 1920s. They were able to define the perception of volunteers in the war through the prism of their own experiences and ideology, and perhaps at the expense of the majority of Croatian veterans.

One Croatian POW who bore witness to attempts to recruit volunteers and the motivations of those Croatian soldiers and officers who chose to fight with the volunteer division (and those who did not) was Josip Horvat, who related his war-time experiences in *To Live in Zagreb 1900-1941* (subtitled 'Notes of those who did not

---

[21] Franko Potočnjak, *Iz emigracije IV: u Rusiji* (Zagreb: 1919) p. 115.
[22] Mandić p. 43.
[23] Ivo Banac, 'South Slav POWs in Revolutionary Russia', in Samuel Williamson and Peter Pastor (eds.), *War and Society in East Central Europe: Volume.5: Essays on World War One: Origins and POWs,* (New York, 1983), p. 125.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Franko Potočnjak, the JO representative in Odessa, the volunteer nerve centre, certainly made this link. In his war-time memoirs, he noted that the idea of national unity had long been popular amongst the *prečani* inellegentsia, and that this was the reason for Croat and Slovene officers volunteering. See Potočnjak, p. 109. See also Spence, p. 180 who states that amongst Habsburg South Slavs, 'intellectuals and urban types' were more likely to volunteer.

Return'). Horvat had worked as a journalist in Zagreb before being drafted into the 25th Honved regiment, based in the Croatian capital. After training there under the guidance of Slavko Stancer,[26] Horvat was sent to the Russian front, where he was captured during the Brusilov Offensive of June 1916. Although an eye witness to the events which he describes, Horvat did not come to write his memoir until 1947. Because of this, Horvat was able to draw on other veteran accounts and stories (many of which he probably heard first-hand from his contemporaries) as well as his knowledge of Yugoslavia's post-war fate (or rather interwar fate, as it had now tragically become). What emerges is an attempt to create a sort of meta-narrative of the Croatian veteran experience in Russia, one which simultaneously tells the story of the young men involved in the fighting and which locates seeds of the Yugoslav kingdom's divisions and eventual downfall in the war years. Horvat described his work as a 'chronicle of stolen youth', a reference to the male wartime generation in Croatia.[27]

Upon arrival in captivity, Horvat described how access to newspapers led to political debate amongst prisoners. This led in turn to blocs being formed between the different groups of soldiers and their different attitudes to the war, and especially to Yugoslavism.[28] In his account, the prison camp becomes a vast ideological panorama in which soldiers from very diverse backgrounds represent the full spectrum of Croatian war-time (and, by implication, post-war) hopes and fears. These range from strict pro-Habsburg legitimists certain of a German victory through to reserve officers, cadets, and former students who admire the Serbian People's Radical Party and dream of the imminent demise of the Monarchy.[29] He punctuates his overview by providing detailed portraits of some of the more vocal exponents of these various ideologies, a similar approach to that which he had taken in his *Political History of Croatia 1918-1929*. That this style of writing, full of characterisation and metaphor, was closer to

---

[26] Stancer would later achieve notoriety in Croatian history as the officer responsible for training the author Miroslav Krleža, as well as Josip Broz 'Tito'. He went on to become a prominent member of the Ustaše army in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during the Second World War. Horvat himself describes Stancer as 'a pure product of the Habsburg Staff School…[a product] of his time and circumstances, a black-yellow imperial officer with links to the Frankists': Josip Horvat, *Živjeti u Zagrebu 1900-1941. Zapisci iz nepovrata* (Zagreb: 1984), p. 54.

[27] Ibid, p. 160.

[28] Ibid, p. 78.

[29] Ibid. This supports Alon Rachamimov's thesis that rather than being 'passive human material' ready to be moulded by external ideological overtures 'prisoners of war interacted, reasoned and weighed their options, and attempted to steer a course which made sense in the context of the period.' See Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: 2002). pp. 121-122.

that of the novelist than the historian seems to have been the author's intention. He claims that he and many of his fellow *povratnici* ('returnees', veterans returning home from Russian captivity) looked to literature rather than politics to help them understand their experiences and the vastly transformed social landscape in Croatia, especially in the period immediately after the war.[30]

Whilst not a volunteer himself, Horvat expressed admiration for those prisoners willing to rejoin the battle in the ranks of the First Serbian Volunteer Regiment:

> To go to Odessa [HQ of the First Serbian Volunteer Division], that meant to burn all bridges with home, to break off the possibility of all epistolary links, to rule yourself out of ever returning, unless the war brought on an unexpected revolution.[31]

Furthermore, the prison camps were seething with intriguers and pro-Habsburg spies, detailing all talk of revolution and volunteering and reporting back to the home front. Of these, the Croatian officer Mirko Puk stands out in vivid detail. A lawyer from Glina before the war, and an implacable opponent of Yugoslavia, Puk spent his time in captivity sending the names of volunteers and Yugoslav sympathisers back to the authorities in Zagreb, via the German Red Cross.[32] Puk also appeared as the personification of imperial loyalty in the war-time memoir of volunteer veteran Ante Kovać, entitled *Impressions of an Epoch*. Kovać recalls that Puk, 'fat, red, and peppery' refused to speak any language other than German during political debates, and swore that he would emigrate to Germany if a Yugoslav state was created. 'That morally bankrupt good-for-nothing from the "twenty-eighth" [regiment]', claimed Kovać,

> cursed the Serbs to the high heavens [*psuje oca i mater Srbima*], since the Serbian uniform was more barbaric than the Austrian. He was in favour of a Croatian republic and for Croatian home-defence in the same relationship with Vienna as Budapest had with Vienna.[33]

---

[30] Ibid, p. 130. This was perhaps due to the lack of political life enjoyed by Croatia under Hungarian rule before the war.
[31] Ibid. p. 86.
[32] Ibid. p. 88.
[33] Ante Kovać, *Impresije iz jedne epohe* (Zagreb: 1923), p. 12.

A poet and author of short stories, Kovać, like Horvat, was at home in the literary mode. Writing in 1923 (the year *Impressions of an Epoch* was published), his caricature of Puk as a pompous Habsburg supporter hopelessly out of touch with the turn of events must have been well received by fellow volunteers and Yugoslav nationalists. ORJUNA, the recently formed nationalist group with literary pretensions of its own, and of which Kovać was an important member, had identified former Habsburg officers such as Mirko Puk as enemies of the Yugoslav state. Mostly harmless and outmoded, these relics of a bygone age were nevertheless worthy of ridicule and occasional violence.

Whether Mirko Puk and other Yugoslav nay-sayers were effective against the blandishments of Serbian recruiters in Russia in 1916 is unclear. Romania's entrance into the war that summer added a new sense of urgency to the volunteer question, opening a window of opportunity for an attack against Bulgaria. Of the 17,925 volunteer soldiers that were sent to Dobruja at the end of July to fight on the flanks of the Romanian army, just a tiny minority were Croats or Slovenes. However, more than half of the 642 officers who would fight at Dobruja were non-Serbs, volunteering proving disproportionately popular amongst officers of Croatian descent.[34] The so-called 'Battle of Dobruja' fought during September and October against Bulgarian and German forces would become the focal point of commemoration for Yugoslav volunteers in Yugoslavia. Participation in this battle was recognised as the single most important war-time experience by volunteer veterans.

In fact, the battle was not a success, with Romanian and South Slav troops failing to capture their objective despite numerous, and in terms of casualties, costly assaults. After the final retreat, the First Serbian Volunteer Division counted up to 2600 of their number dead or missing, and over 7000 wounded.[35] Lujo Lovrić spoke many years later of the 'victory or death' mentality of the volunteers, who knew that if captured, they would be handed over to the Austrians. 'We volunteers knew that we had to hold out at all costs, since we could not be captured. That was why there were so many casualties.'[36] This attitude was certainly reflected in the actions of Lovrić

[34] See Slijepović, p. 12, 'There were very few Croats and Slovenes amongst the soldiers, but amongst the officers they counted for more than half.' *Vidovdan*, an organ of ORJUNA, gives the figure of 642 officers, in an article written by Ante Kovać. See *Vidovdan* 13 September 1925.
[35] Slijepović gives the figures as 2613 soldiers and 32 officers killed, and 7370 soldiers and 300 officers wounded. These figures, like much of the data pertaining to volunteers, would become disputed in the post-war period. See Slijepović, p. 13.
[36] Grbin, p. 25.

himself. Whilst attempting to charge the enemy for the seventh time, he was struck in the temple by a bullet, receiving an injury which permanently deprived him of his eyesight.[37] The battle was also (apparently) a critical juncture in the history of the volunteer movement's cohesion, and in the relations between non-Serbian volunteers and their Serbian colleagues. The momentum of the Serbian recruitment drive actually continued well after the Dobruja debacle, and by the beginning of 1917 the division was now a corps, boasting more than 42,000 soldiers and around 900 officers (most of these latter group were non-Serbs).[38] But low morale within the ranks of the volunteers resulted in an increasing lack of discipline. Officers from the Serbian army, responsible for maintaining the fighting efficiency of the corps, used force to restore order amongst the volunteers. On 23 October 1916, three units openly revolted against 'Serbian terror' in the corps, and in quelling the mutiny, Serbian soldiers shot dead thirteen volunteers of Croatian descent.[39]

The impact of these deaths and the perception that Serbian staff treated their non-Serb colleagues heavy handedly looms large in discourse surrounding Croatia's war.[40] Many volunteers and non-volunteers alike told of how they no longer perceived of Yugoslavism, and particularly Serbia's role in its realisation, as simply a matter of 'liberation and unification'. Horvat talks about the 'hardest blow' the nationalist youth received in Russia during the war: a letter from a volunteer colleague in Odessa which described in shocking detail the situation for non-Serbian soldiers and officers in the volunteer corps. 'Yugoslavism had been a concept of personal liberty, of respect for human dignity, and now this: beatings, shootings, not recognising political persuasions.'[41] This sentiment is echoed in the fiction of M.N. Ribarić, a Croatian veteran of Russian captivity (although not a volunteer) who wrote two novels about the consequences of war and revolution in Russia, published in Zagreb at the beginning of the 1920s. In one, *The Bird of the North*, Ribarić has his Croatian

---

[37] Lujo Lovrić, 'Suzna jesen', cited in Grbin, pp. 28-29.
[38] Slijepović, p. 13.
[39] Potočnjak, pp. 173-174. Potočnjak acknowledges the use of force by Serbian officers to restore discipline, although he was reluctant to give detail about the killings, since that would have an adverse effect on morale in Yugoslavia. Ante Mandić, in his account, accuses the Russians of provoking incidents such as these since they were afraid of a union between Habsburg South Slavs and Serbia. He also laments the fact that non-Serb volunteers bore a grudge against their colleagues from the Serbian army on account of these matters of discipline and notes that, partly because of this, federalism took an anti-Serb character in the post-war kingdom. See Mandić, p. 46.
[40] In the interwar kingdom and beyond: the Croatian soldiers who died in Odessa were recast as the earliest victims of Serbian terror and martyrs of the Croatian nation by Ustasha propagandists in the NDH.
[41] Horvat, p. 96.

protagonist Stanko, an erstwhile officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, now an itinerant spectator to events in Russia, drifting through the country in the aftermath of the February revolution. He considers travelling to Odessa to join in the camaraderie of the volunteer corps, where the presence of so many of his friends would make the barracks feel 'just like home'. However, a chance meeting with a former Croatian volunteer in Moscow alerts him to the savagery of the Serbian commanding officers and the falsity of the Yugoslav ideal: he is thus deterred. [42]

Ribarić's disillusioned volunteer may well have been based on one of the Yugoslav dissidents that emerged in reaction to 'Serbian hegemony' within the ranks at Odessa and in the wake of the February revolution. The Czar's abdication and the installation of Alexander Kerensky's provisional government drastically altered the position of Yugoslav volunteers in Russia. The court at Petrograd had been instrumental in establishing a South Slav volunteer division and giving the Serbian government and its army the position of *primus inter pares* within that division.[43] Its fall led to a further erosion of discipline amongst volunteers, a reflection of both the diminished authority of the Serbian command and of the loss of 'fear of fetters' amongst volunteers.[44] A significant number of soldiers and officers - Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes - were now in open rebellion against the volunteer command. Forming soldiers' councils whose membership comprised of both officers and rank and file volunteers, they debated, *inter alia,* the structure of the volunteer corps and the form the future Yugoslav state should take.[45] Having tried and failed to bring these lapsed volunteers back into the fold, the Serbian army separated them from the rest of the corps (summer 1917) hoping to prevent the spread of rebellion.[46] It was in this way that the 'dissident movement' came into being.

The dissident movement contained two distinct ideological currents: that of revolutionary socialism as pursued by the (mostly Serb) rank and file soldiers, and a strain of (Yugoslav) nationalism supported by the (non-Serb) officers within the movement.[47] These ideological differences soon became apparent in the numerous

---

[42] M.N. Ribarić, *Ptica sjevera* (Zagreb: 1924).
[43] Yugoslav volunteers in the 1920s did not forget the role played by Tsar Nicholas II, and would often mention with pride the congratulatory note that the Tsar personally sent to Odessa after the battle of Dobruja. See, for example, *Vidovdan*, 22 March 1924.
[44] Banac, 'South Slav POWs in Revolutionary Russia', p. 128.
[45] Milada Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor: povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914-1918* (Zagreb: 1925), p. 320.
[46] Ibid, pp. 130-131.
[47] Nikola Grulović, *Jugosloveni u ratu i Oktobarskoj revoluciji* (Belgrade: 1962), p. 142.

councils held by the dissidents. Whereas the soldiers wanted to discuss issues such as land reform and class relations, officers were more concerned with inter-ethnic relations and the national question in the proposed post-war state. One Croatian officer even reflected that any debate with the soldiers should be conducted with great caution, since 'the soldiers are Serbs, which must be taken into account.'[48]

A further point of contention between officers and soldiers was the domestic situation in Russia, particularly the position of the movement towards Kerensky's provisional government. This was an issue of great importance to volunteer dissidents as they had been presented with the opportunity of putting themselves at the disposal of the Russian army. Whilst a majority of officer dissidents were apparently in favour of such a move (being well disposed to the provisional government),[49] the rank and file soldiers were now holding out for a full-scale socialist revolution, and would therefore not compromise or co-operate with the Kerensky regime. They considered the abdication of the Czar and the arrival of the provisional government as merely a step towards the final goal of democracy and socialism in Russia.[50] A number of these soldiers, politically active in the dissident movement, became prominent organisers of the Yugoslav Communist Party in the interwar period. These included two of its most senior leaders, Nikola Kovačević and Nikola Grulović, as well as Vladimir Čopić, who would edit the party newspaper *Borba* ('The Struggle') in the 1920s.

These soldiers were increasingly at odds with the predominantly non-Serb officer corps of the dissident movement, whose goals were of a (Yugoslav) nationalist character. By summer 1917, the number of officers in the dissident movement had risen to over 200.[51] Amongst them were journalist Milan Banić and Josip Srečko Vrgnanin, whose journeying through revolutionary Russia at this time would inspire him to write numerous travelogues in the 1920s. Both were natives of Sušak and had been involved in the Yugoslav youth movement before the war. Other members who rose to fame in the post-war period included Gustav Barabaš, who had joined the

[48] Povijesni arhiv, Zagreb (hereafter PAZG), fond. 6.2/865 'Dobrovoljacki korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)', *Dnevnik Ivana Petrovića* 15/07/1917.
[49] Ibid, *Kratki pregled dobrovoljačkog i disidentskog pokreta u Rusiji (1916-1919)* (compiled by Milan Banić).
[50] Yugoslav communists would apply a similar rhetoric to the demise of the Dual Monarchy and the installation of the Karadjordjević dynasty in the South Slav lands.
[51] Of the initial 149 dissident officers, 4 were Serbs, 98 Croats, 42 Slovene, along with 7 officers of other ethnicity. See Paulova p. 320. A list of dissident officers compiled in June 1917 in Odessa contained 217 names, see PAZG. 6.2/865, 'Dobrovoljački korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)', *Izjavu za stupanje u disidente potpisali.*

dissidents in protest against perceived inequalities in Serb-Croat relations in the corps. Initially an enthusiastic Yugoslav nationalist, Barabaš is a rare example of an officer dissident turning to Bolshevism. He joined the Red Army after the October revolution and eventually settled in the Soviet Union after the war.[52] The dissident movement contained officers and soldiers who had served in the ranks of the First Serbian Division for many months, as well as those who had joined more recently. Not all of the men were veterans of the Dobruja campaign.

The diaries of one member of the dissident movement are still available and give the historian a valuable insight into the interior life of a Croatian veteran in Russia. Ivan Petrović was a Croatian officer who played a prominent role in the soldiers' councils and subsequent dissident movement. His unpublished diaries, written *in situ* starting in the summer of 1917 and ending in the summer of 1920 (with Petrović in Vladivostok waiting to be evacuated back to Croatia) provide one of the few contemporary accounts of the volunteer/dissident movement in Russia, against which the more constructed narratives written in the post-war period can be gauged. They also provide a certain link between pre-war members of the Yugoslav youth movement such as Banić and Vrgnanin and the post-war attitudes towards Yugoslavia amongst the intelligentsia in Croatia. As with the diaries of Miroslav Krleža, studied in chapter four, the historian must try to square the circle between individual response and collective reality. Diaries such as Petrović's are certainly important in that they enable us to see the extent to which attitudes which this section of the male wartime generation held in Yugoslavia were formed during the Great War. In this way, we can continue to trace the thread of part of this veteran group through the war years.

Petrović's account begins at Darnica, the prison camp outside Kiev, in July 1917. From July to November 1917 Petrović detailed the minutes of the soldiers' councils, which he attended along with Grulović and Kovačević, as well as Barabaš (who was not a Bolshevik sympathiser at this stage). The entries for these months chart a growing rift between officers of the movement and the more organised soldiers. The latter group expressed their desire for a socialist Yugoslavia, and chided the officers for their willingness to fight with the Russian army.[53] The background to these debates is the revolutionary mood enveloping Russia, creating a situation of

[52] Ivan Očak, *Barabaš* (Zagreb: 1978), pp. 7-18.
[53] PAZG. 6.2/865, 'Dobrovoljacki korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)', *Dnevnik Ivana Petrovića*. Entries for 3 August, 26 August, 27 August.

acute anxiety and uncertainty about the future of the war, of Russia, and of the corps. Of the Bolsheviks, Petrović writes,

> The newspapers are saying, that this is another German intrigue [...] for which poor Russia will have to pay. [...] Everyone is talking about a union for land and bread, it seems that with this [the Bolsheviks] will take control of the government, and lead Russia to God knows where.[54]

From these entries, the majority of soldier dissidents emerge as a well organised and cohesive group learning valuable lessons from their experiences in revolutionary Russia. It is easy to see how, in the post-war period, this group was able to apply those lessons to form an effective party cadre, revolutionary in its goals, and operating illegally after 1921. The success of the Bolsheviks and Leon Trotsky's call for 'permanent revolution' were taken to heart by these returnees in the immediate post-war period. Vladimir Čopić, evidently impressed by the role of the Red Army in the revolution, attempted to initiate a military uprising using Croatian units of the Yugoslav army (in the spring of 1919).[55] Whilst this coup was exposed and its ring leaders imprisoned before it even began, Nikola Grulović was to prove more successful in uniting left-wing groups throughout the country behind the revolutionary goals of the returnees. In April 1919, he announced the programme of the Pelagić circle, a revolutionary socialist organisation of which he was now the leader. In the programme, he laid out the socio-economic and political causes of the war, laying the blame squarely at the door of the Habsburgs, and lamenting the damage it had done to all the South Slav peoples, but especially to the working classes. 'Only world proletarian revolution,' he claimed, 'can bring humanity peace, freedom, and a true culture.'[56]

Dissident officers such as Ivan Petrović, however, had a more muted reaction to the Bolshevik revolution, both in Russia and in post-war Yugoslavia. For many officers, democracy had arrived in Russia when Kerensky became premier, offering a programme of constitutional democracy which cohered with their own aspirations for a South Slav political structure. The increasing popularity of the Bolsheviks meant

---

[54] Ibid, 11 September 1917.
[55] Očak, 'Povratnici iz sovjetske Rusije u borbi za stvaranje ilegalnih komunisitickih organizacija uoči prvog kongresa SRPJ(k), p. 6. *Histrorijski zbornik*, year xxvii, 1974-1975, pp. 1-26.
[56] Ibid, p. 17.

violence and excess. 'Kerensky will win', wrote Petrović in his diary on 16 September.[57] When Kerensky did not win, Petrović and many Croatian officers were placed in a perilous position. Caught between the Scylla of the Bolsheviks (many dissident officers had declared for Bolshevik enemies such as General Kornilov), and the Charybdis of the advancing German army (surrender was out of the question, just as it had been for those who fought at Dobruja), Petrović and his colleagues decided to move into the Russian hinterland. At the beginning of 1918, with the situation in Russia deteriorating, he wrote, 'Trotsky will fight a war no longer, the Germans are entering Russia in the direction of Kiev, Moscow, Petrograd (their objectives), we have decided to flee.'[58]

Petrović's account complicates the notion, held by many in Croatia in the 1920s (and in much of the subsequent historiography), that Russian returnees were, by definition, Bolsheviks.[59] His comments about the disastrous effect the Bolshevik revolution would have on Russia, as well as the fiery criticism he and his officer colleagues received from dissident soldiers (many of whom were genuine Bolsheviks), should make this clear. In fact, anti-Communism informed much of the output of the volunteer movement in the 1920s and 1930s. Croatian volunteers such as Milan Banić and Lujo Lovrić were suitably perturbed by what they had witnessed whilst in Russia to actively campaign against the spread of Bolshevism in Yugoslavia. Evidence of this stance can be traced back to the war years through Petrović's diaries. For example, whilst making a brief stop over on the way to Samara, Petrović was disappointed to see a number of dissident soldiers break away from the group and pledge support for the Bolsheviks. He described how several officers upbraided them for being 'bad volunteers' and forgetting their duty, to their officers and to Yugoslavia.[60]

Petrović was also able, despite the chaos which had descended over much of Russia, to keep abreast of the progress of the Allied war effort, particularly those developments germane to the formation of a future South Slav state. As a result of his experiences at Odessa, however, he had already lost much of the pre-war optimism

[57] PAZG. 6.2/865, 'Dobrovoljački korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)', *Dnevnik Ivana Petrovića,* 16/09/1917.
[58] Ibid, 27 February 1918.
[59] See Horvat, pp. 121-122. 'Returnees were looked upon with suspicion: anything connected with Russia was connected with Bolshevism.'
[60] PAZG. 6.2/865, 'Dobrovoljački korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)', *Dnevnik Ivana Petrovica,* 14-15 July 1918.

that many of his generation felt about South Slav reciprocity. Commenting on the continuing efforts of the JO to raise volunteer units against Austria-Hungary, he wearily noted, 'Croats fight on so that our idea, the idea of the Yugoslavs is kept alive, although day after day more and more is said about Greater Serbia than about Yugoslavia.'[61]

Two other important and related points pertaining to the impact of Croatian volunteers in the 1920s emerge from Petrović's diary. The first relates to Petrović's commitment to his duties as a volunteer. Reluctant but nevertheless prepared to fight on for Yugoslavia (having received worrying reports about Italian occupation and forced concessions at the Paris peace conference), Petrović was finally relieved of his commission in February 1919.[62] His thoughts now turn increasingly to family back home, and the life left behind before he was mobilized. The sense of distance from home, both temporal and spatial, was brought in to stark relief at the beginning of 1920. Petrović, at that time staying in Omsk, received a devastating letter from home informing him that his parents have died. 'This is the hardest and most torturous day of my life [...] from August 1916 until today, I didn't receive any news from home, oh God!' Returning to Croatia now became his highest priority.[63] It is perhaps revealing that Petrović, having witnessed so much during his time in Russia, would finally be most affected by this small-scale personal tragedy.

These later entries (the diary ends in July 1920, with Petrović in Vladivostok waiting to be evacuated back home) also serve to remind the historian that a significant number of soldiers who fought and were captured on the Eastern front did not return from Russia until long after the Armistice.[64] The accompanying uncertainty about returning home and the inability to maintain regular contact with family and loved ones features prominently in a number of Croatian veteran accounts. The two novels written by M.N. Ribarić in the 1920s both include characters whose belated return home is not without its surprises. In *Aleksandra Andrejevna*, the Croatian soldier Jurij Kokot returns home with a new Russian wife, the eponymous Aleksandra Andrejevna, much to the chagrin of his childhood love Anita. The short novella relates Jurij's journey through Russia (having been captured on the Eastern front, Jurij

[61] Ibid, 13 July 1918.
[62] Ibid, 6-7 February 1919.
[63] Ibid, 10 March 1920.
[64] POWs were still being evacuated from Vladivostok as late as the summer of 1921, see Rachamimov, p. 34.

does not volunteer to fight in the Serbian army), the horror of the civil war, and his flight from the 'fratricidal hatreds and bloodshed' of Russia to a better life back home with his new bride, whose parents have been killed by the Bolsheviks. The novella is subtitled 'A Story from Contemporary Russian Life.'[65] In *The Bird of the North,* Ribarić revisited this premise; his hero Stanko returns from Russia to his home in Glina 'fully Russified' having married in Russia. His mother warns him that he will never fully understand his wife Ženja, and indeed Ženja eventually returns home, sick with worry as her country convulses in civil war. Stanko unhappily reflects that war has cost him both his childhood love Adela (who has left town having been jilted by Stanko) and his wife Ženja, whose yearning to return to Russia echoes his own wartime homesickness for Croatia.[66]

The wives and families of soldiers lost or missing in battle, meanwhile, had stories of their own, and the suffering and dilemmas they faced found literary expression in Milan Begović's 1940 novel *Giga Baričeva* (subtitled 'a Novel from Postwar Life in Zagreb'). The novel, set in the early twenties, tells the tale of a Zagreb woman, the eponymous Giga Baričeva, waiting for the return of her husband, a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army lost to her in revolutionary Russia. In a narrative structure based on Homer's Odyssey, Giga receives visits from seven Zagreb gentlemen, suitors for her hand in marriage, each of whom is depicted by the author as an archetype of contemporary life in the capital. Along with Homer, the author seems to have been inspired by the more prosaic notices appearing in the Yugoslav press in the years following the Armistice, placed by women who were requesting information from their still missing husbands.[67]

---

[65] Ribarić, *Aleksandra Andrejevna: novela iz suvremenog ruskog života* (Zagreb: 1922).
[66] Ribarić, *Ptica sjevera* (Zagreb: 1924).
[67] Numerous notices of this kind can be found in *Službene novine* in the period after the armistice (1918-1922). For example, in January 1920, Draga Vinović, addressed a notice to

> **My Husband Stevan Vinović**: born in Stari Futog (Hungary), called up by the Austrian Military Command March 1916. To this day he has not returned or made contact. His father Gavrilo Vinović, of Stari Futog, replied to me once – at my asking – that he did not know where Stevan was, although I have written to him and asked him many times concerning the where-abouts of Steve. Where-ever my husband Stevan is, he could have contacted me and told me if he was still alive, or if he still thinks about me.

Draga's appeal to her husband ended on a more pragmatic note, perhaps an indication that she had received suitors of her own:

> With this notice I simply ask my husband Stevan to contact me and return to married life, however, if I hear no news within 91 days of the appearance of this notice in the *Službene novine* of our kingdom I will consider myself free and able to seek out the means to live as an

The notion that soldiers returning home from Russia were unable to re-integrate into pre-war family life is an important consideration when measuring the impact of the male war-time generation in Croatia in the 1920s. It is perhaps this failure to return to pre-war life that led a number of veterans in Croatia to seek out new kinship groups in the post-war period. Once again, this is Eric J. Leed's 'liminal' stage. Unable to return fully to civilian society, but demobilized and no longer part of military life, veterans became trapped in a 'no man's land' between peace and war, bringing their experiences from the front line with them into post-war life, creating a new 'veteran identity'.[68]

A Croatian soldier who provides one of the best examples of this new identity forged in war is Lujo Lovrić. As a Yugoslav volunteer who was blinded in fighting, Lovrić fits in to both invalid and volunteer categories, and was looked on as a leader by both groups (in turn he would co-operate with both volunteer and invalid organisations in the post-war period, although, revealingly, it was as a former volunteer that he was usually celebrated). After sustaining this serious injury at Dobruja, Lovrić was given the opportunity to work behind the lines at Odessa with other blind and wounded soldiers. Instead, he decided to travel to England and train as a journalist for the JO, arriving at Southampton towards the end of 1916, and staying for a brief spell in nearby Winchester. *En route,* he came to terms with his disability and started to think about his new role: 'what has happened has happened. For myself I no longer have anything, and whatever I do have, I will endeavour to give to the [Yugoslav] national cause.'[69] From Winchester, he travelled to London, and stayed at Saint Dunstan's, the school for the blind recently established (1915) in Regent's Park. Here, he developed a close bond with the school's principle Sir Arthur Pearson, founder of the Daily Express and president of the National Institute for the Blind. At Saint Dunstan's Lovrić received study materials and tuition in French, English, and Braille. He described his English patron as 'the enlightener of the blind and the organiser of their security in England', and vowed to follow the example of his work back home.[70] He also met some of the leading figures of the JO, such as Ante Trumbić and Joca Jovanović. Lovric described the fascination and anticipation he felt

---

honourable Serbian housewife. 17th Janurary, 1920, Draga S. Vinović (nee Nikolić). *Službene novine* 29 January 1920.

[68] Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: 1979), pp. 14-15.

[69] Grbin, p. 35.

[70] Lujo Lovrić, *Kroz snijegove i magle* (Zagreb: 1923), p. 80.

before meeting the people who were representing the Yugoslav ideal abroad, and the subsequent disappointment at the indifferent reception afforded to him and his fellow volunteers.[71] These sections should be read as an attempt to draw a contrast between the sacred sacrifice of volunteers and soldiers during the war with the profane business of politicians. It was part of the narrative of disillusionment with political process which became an important aspect of veteran discourse in Yugoslavia after the war.

It was in England that Lovrić stayed until after the end of the war, hearing and rejoicing at the news of Austria-Hungary's demise in London. He eventually returned to his home in Bakar in May 1919, and an emotional reunion with his mother. However, he was now steeled for his new role as a veteran volunteer, preparing to face new battles in the new state:

> Mother! Don't cry your eyes out for my eyes, since I am not crying! Don't fret for my future, since I do not fret, since I know that my future lies within the future of our unified nation.[72]

Like many other former Croatian volunteers, Lovrić distanced himself from the private sphere of his family in favour of the new kinship of his fellow veterans. This passage taken from the last page of Lovrić's 1923 memoir *Through Snow and Fog*, serves as an introduction to the hopes and expectations of Croatian volunteers at the end of the war and the role they perceived for themselves in the new state:

> I knew, that from the beginning many people would not rightly understand me, and what is more, that there would be people of various party colours, who would be displeased with my work, and who would try to sabotage it. But after all that, I did not want to stay another hour in England. Duty was calling me, my ideals were calling me. On such a path there must be sacrifices, but I was not afraid of that. Every sacrifice and misfortune that could possibly arrive could not have surpassed that which had already happened. In all else I was thus resolved, I vowed to make the brightest testament to a wounded life through stalwart desire and a masculine character.[73]

---

[71] Ibid, pp. 73-76.
[72] Ibid, p. 222.
[73] Ibid, p. 225.

Like many Croatian volunteers in the post-war period (and especially those who had experience of fighting at Dobruja or on the Salonika Front) Lovrić had a very strong sense of the soldierly sacrifice he had made during the war on behalf of Yugoslavia.

It is now possible to trace a thread from the pre-war youth movements and supporters of South Slav unification through to those handful of men who volunteered to fight in the Serbian army during the Great War. Despite the numerous vissisitudes that the volunteer movement underwent in Russia, pre-war supporters of Yugoslavism and volunteers like Kovać, Lovrić, and Diklić were able to rejoice at the end of the Great War. Their twin hopes for the dissolution of the Monarchy and the creation of Yugoslavia had both been realised. In this sense, and unlike any other veteran group in this study, their war aims had been achieved. Their key concerns in the post-war period were to preserve both the memory of their wartime sacrifice and the integrity of the Yugoslav kingdom. Their search for the meaning of their wartime sacrifice, a preoccupation of so many veterans from Croatia, was already over. It was with a sense of a soldier's duty that Croatian volunteer were veterans such as Lovrić began to organise in the post-war period.

2.3. The Union of Volunteers

The very first meeting of such volunteers took place on 7 June 1919 in Zagreb, just a month after Lovrić's celebrated return to Croatia (his activities abroad had been feted throughout the Croatian press, which usually described him as a Yugoslav). With the process of demobilization still taking effect and a large number of soldiers and volunteers still returning from the front, this first meeting was thinly attended. Those present (including Lovrić) gave a number of combative reasons as to why the contribution of former volunteers was still needed in the fragile new state. Amongst their new duties would be working to strengthen South Slav unity on the basis of fraternal tolerance, disabling those elements of the old order which sought to thwart the country's recently achieved liberation, gathering information pertaining to the conditions and provisions of invalid soldiers and officers, volunteers, and their families, and providing support for those in occupied areas of Croatia. The group

requested that former volunteers and the families of volunteers killed in fighting send their details to 'The Temporary Council for Demobilized Volunteers' in Zagreb.[74]

In November 1919 the Volunteer Union (as it was now known), still undergoing a process of organization, issued the first of what proved to be many public proclamations. Like the Croatian invalids, a number of whom were also starting to coalesce into an organized group in Zagreb at this time, the volunteers attacked the authorities in the most violent terms. 'Those who have sacrificed most for Yugoslavia are volunteers, yet who goes from ministry to ministry looking for bread and support? Volunteers! Who is suspected today of sedition and Bolshevism? Volunteers!' The proclamation went on to complain of 'being ignored'. 'Where is the land we were promised?' asked the Union, a reference to the five hectares of land each volunteer was entitled to for fighting with the Serbian army. The solution to this neglect, they claimed, lay in 'solidarity, organisation, and unity.'[75] Lovrić was very active in this movement from its inception. He had so far been faithful to his vow at the end of the war to work ceaselessly for the Yugoslav national cause, and his activities had done much to raise the profile of the volunteer question at this time. In addition to being instrumental in organising the volunteer movement in Croatia, he had travelled to Belgrade to take part in a rally arranged by fellow returnee Vladimir Čopić. In front of the parliament building, the volunteers had lobbied the constituent assembly for work and money to continue their education (many Croatian students had had their studies interrupted when called up to fight).[76] In Zagreb, Lovrić gave public lectures on the volunteer question, explaining who the volunteers were, as well as their aims in the new state.[77]

Ante Kovać, the volunteer veteran whose memoirs from Russia were studied earlier, was also using his connections to give volunteers a voice in the new state. Now based in Zagreb, Kovać was a member of the Croatian Literary Society, and a regular contributor to their journal *Savremenik*. *Savremenik* was dedicated to showcasing a new generation of Croatian writers and poets, and to ushering in a new post-war epoch, to be based on the progressive ideal of cultural Yugoslavism. Its first issue after the end of the war included a *feuilleton* entitled 'The Day of the South Slavs', extolling the virtues of the nation(s) of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, 'a nation

[74] *Obzor*, 12 June 1919.
[75] Ibid, 18 November 1919.
[76] Grbin, p. 48.
[77] *Obzor*, 20 December 1919.

of martyrs through the centuries, of romantic and realist heroes, [it] has survived the great crisis. It is liberated, Physically and spiritually.'[78] Kovać, who had published poems and articles whilst at secondary school in Vinkovci before the war (under the pseudonym *Pfificus*) and during the war for *Jugoslovenski svijet* (a newspaper distributed in America) and *Srpske novine,* began contributing to *Savremenik* in September 1919. The stories of his experiences as a Yugoslav volunteer, entitled *From a Legionnaire's Reminiscences* became a regular feature in the pages of *Savremenik* throughout 1920, suggesting that they were well received by the gazette's editorial board and readership alike. One reader, Zlatija Turkalj, was greatly moved after reading the first instalment and wrote an article praising Kovać and volunteers like him, which *Savremenik* printed in its November/December 1919 edition. Turkalj praised the volunteer contribution in the highest possible terms:

> O, hail to you, the first and greatest of our heroes, finally you have arrived amongst us! [...] Hail to you, grey falcons, who soared out of the prison camps and into the final battle, a battle in which there could be no more imprisonment, *only death or victory,* a battle behind which stood liberation or destruction, behind which awaited the greatest acclamation or high treason, behind which stood destruction or the fatherland! [italics added][79]

Again, Turkelj's comments highlight the 'winner takes all' risks that Habsburg South Slavs took in volunteering during the war. This was to become a crucial part of the Croatian volunteer's sense of sacrifice for Yugoslavia, examples of which are numerous and were recognised by volunteers and non-volunteers alike (here Turkelj, but also Horvat, Lovrić, quoted above). Turkelj's poetic salutation to the volunteers was in keeping with the style of *Savremenik* at this time, in other words, aspiring to a transcendental cultural Yugoslavism that would give direction to the country's social and political life (a programme which echoed that of the pre-war Yugoslav youth, many of whom were now writing for *Savremenik*). Horvat, speaking of *Savremenik*'s editor Julije Benešić, noted that, 'from him a compass for the new literary life was sought, which the 1895-1896 generation [i.e., the male wartime generation] still

[78] *Savremenik* Jan. 1919, pp. 45-46.
[79] Ibid, November/December 1919, p. 559.

considered to be the most important manifestation of events.'[80] It was in this way that volunteers in Croatia such as Ante Kovać, Slavko Diklić, Lujo Lovrić, *et al,* formed the perception of their own role in the new state. Furthermore, as they looked to *Savremenik* to define the future of cultural life in Croatia, literary circles and gazettes such as *Savremenik* offered volunteer veterans such as Kovać a chance to give meaning to the Croatian war experience within the framework of a cultural and progressive Yugoslav ideology.

Meanwhile, a volunteer society in Croatia continued to develop. At a meeting held on 9 February 1920 in Zagreb, and attended by approximately 500 ex-volunteers, President Branko Kiurina announced the statue's provisional articles and invited the assembled volunteers to submit their own criticisms and comments. The first article, accepted unanimously, decided the group's new name, 'The Union of Volunteers from Croatia, Slavonia, and Istria' (hereafter the 'Union of Volunteers'; volunteers from Dalmatia, like its invalids, had formed a separate society). The second article, pertaining to the Union's purpose, stressed the principles of support for fellow volunteers and their families, and of working to strengthen 'national and state unity'. In this respect the draft of the statute was merely confirming public declarations that volunteers had made thus far. The goal of 'persuading the broad national masses of the essential need for national unification' was accepted by all present (with minor caveats about the involvement of members in party politics).[81] The most heated debate at the meeting was generated by article three of the statute: who should be considered a volunteer. The importance of clarity on this point was two-fold. The members present at this meeting considered volunteer status to be a badge of honour, to be conferred only upon those who had fought and sacrificed during the war for the 'Yugoslav ideal'.[82] In addition to this, a certified volunteer was entitled to certain privileges in the new state. In December 1919, the constituent assembly had announced an act on volunteers to this effect. Anyone who had entered the Serbian army before 18 November 1918, and stayed with the army until they were demobilised or invalided out would be entitled to state support. Families of deceased volunteers would also receive benefits in the new state. Volunteers would be entitled to certain discounts and benefits from public services (such as free transport),

[80] Horvat, pp. 123-124.
[81] HDA, Fond pravila društava, Zagreb, no. 1125 *Savez dobrovoljaca Hrvatske, Slavonije, i Istre.*
[82] Ibid.

volunteer students would have their studies paid for, and each volunteer would be entitled to a plot of land in the forthcoming agrarian reform. A special department was to be established, as well as an inter-ministerial advisory panel on the volunteer question.[83] The Union of Volunteers was responsible for liaising with such bodies on behalf of its members, presented cases for claimants and verifying the authenticity of its members. The proposed draft defined a volunteer in very broad terms: someone who had joined the Serbian army before 17/30 September 1918 (the fall of Bulgaria and the breakthrough at the Salonika Front).[84] This single qualification, however, did not take into account the complexity of wartime events, especially in Russia. The statute implied that dissidents and Bolsheviks would be entitled to the same privileges as volunteers who stood firm behind the Serbian army at Salonika. 'It isn't right that those who fought and then withdrew [from the corps] or remained in Russia can be volunteers the same as I, who held out until the end,' insisted one delegate. Participation in the Battle of Dobruja was also mentioned: 'We [should] divide volunteers in to two categories: those who fought at Dobruja, and those who did not', suggested another volunteer.[85]

The issue of who might be considered a volunteer remained one of paramount importance throughout the 1920s, to the volunteers themselves and also to a number of other interested parties. This issue of volunteer verification was further complicated by its connection with the Yugoslav kingdom's programme of agrarian reform, a highly politicized issue. The Union of Volunteers began to address the matter of colonization for its members and their families in the summer of 1920. Following the meeting at the beginning of the year and a provisional definition of the criteria for membership, the volunteer movement's numbers started to swell.[86] The Union of Volunteers was also receiving an influx of applications from volunteers and the families of deceased volunteers for parcels of land. Part of the Union's remit, as agreed in February 1920, was to handle applications of this kind on behalf of its members, and so the union duly passed these requests on to the local branch of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform in Zagreb. The records of the Zagreb branch attest to the chaotic fashion in which the land reform was handled in the early post-war period,

[83] *Obzor,* 5 January 1920.
[84] HDA, Fond pravila društava, Zagreb, no. 1125, '*Savez dobrovoljaca Hrvatske, Slavonije, i Istre*'.
[85] Ibid.
[86] At a meeting held in July 1920 in Zagreb, those present expressed satisfaction at the increased strength of the volunteer movement throughout the country. See *Obzor,* 13 July 1920.

and to the uncertain position of volunteers within this system.[87] Like Croatian invalids and retired Habsburg officers of Croatian descent, volunteers were another group of veterans whose status remained a grey area in a state attempting to reorganise and reconcile its various regional diversities.

This situation was further exacerbated by an apparent misunderstanding by the Union of Volunteers. Believing that affiliation with their group would form the basis of 'verification' for volunteers (that is, officially recognised documentation which confirmed that the party in question had fought as a volunteer), the Union optimistically passed on their members' requests for land, expecting them to be resettled sooner rather than later. The branch in Zagreb became swamped with volunteer requests received through the Union of Volunteers, but which could not be authenticated. A sample taken from September 1921 shows that of 957 applications, just 295 could be positively verified by the department.[88] These requests were followed up by the Union of Volunteers, complaining that their members, particularly those in Slavonia, were becoming frustrated at the lack of progress being made in the matter. They warned that, 'if all volunteers rose against this mistreatment on the part of the ministry and those responsible for agrarian matters, all of the volunteer unions [...] would come out on the side of the [Croatian] volunteers.'[89]

The Ministry of Agrarian Reform in Belgrade, just like the Union itself, was concerned with fraudulent claims to volunteer status. They noted, for example, that a number of volunteers had put in requests twice in an attempt to secure a double allotment of land.[90] For this reason they preferred the process of volunteer verification to remain a government prerogative. Just like invalids, volunteers would receive the necessary certificate from the Ministry of Social Policy or from a senior military authority which could vouch for their war record. In certain circumstances, two verified volunteers could swear, under oath, that another man was a fellow volunteer.[91] It seems that Serbian politicians, especially those close to Nikola Pašić and the People's Radical Party, exploited Yugoslavia's programme of land reform to serve their own political ends. In areas of potential or actual discontent such as Vojvodina, Macedonia, and Kosovo (known officially in Yugoslavia as 'South

[87] For a comparative analysis of post-war land reform in the region, see Wojciech Roszkowski *Land Reforms in East Central Europe after World War One* (Warsaw: 1995).
[88] HDA, Fond 127 'Agrarna direkcija/Ministarstva za agrarnu reformu kraljevine SHS' box 97.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid, box 99.
[91] Ibid.

Serbia' and 'Old Serbia' respectively) the process of assimilating and subduing the local population could be facilitated by an influx of loyal volunteer veterans. As an added benefit to this policy, the presence of volunteer colonists might boost the People's Radical Party's electoral support in areas where they lacked a majority.[92]

There is evidence that volunteers were willing to co-operate with this policy of colonisation in the post-war period. In 1923, the Union sent a memorandum to the government in Belgrade complaining of the direction in which Yugoslavia was heading (towards corruption, decadence, self-serving egoism) and of the status of volunteers (neglected, forgotten: rhetoric very similar to that of the Society of War Invalids in Croatia).[93] The memorandum went on to note the position of former legionnaires in Czechoslovakia, and their role in the colonization of Slovakia. [94] The Union urged the government to adopt a similar policy in Yugoslavia. The Union of Volunteers suggested that volunteer veterans could be relocated to the country's northern edge, from the Romanian border through to Varaždin, the former military frontier town in northern Croatia. Here they would be able to keep potential threats from Austria and Hungary at bay.[95] The draft of this memorandum had been agreed upon at a volunteer congress held in November 1922, in which various speakers denounced the government's failure to distribute land to volunteers. They also called for a long term solution to colonisation, one which offered a chance to subdue the country's many internal enemies.[96]

Very little trace remains of those volunteers who opted to relocate as part of the government's colonisation programme, and so their impact on post-war society is unclear. Occasional reports in the country's newspapers suggest that friction existed between volunteer colonists and the local population. *Vidovdan,* an organ of ORJUNA, regularly reported on the hardships faced by volunteer colonists in the country's border regions. After an attack on a volunteer and his family in Marija Majur (Vojvodina) in February 1923, for example, the newspaper printed the

---

[92] Land reform was, of course, a top priority for governments throughout Eastern Europe after the Great War, and the policy of the Yugoslav government was in many ways consistent with those of other post-war nation-states in the region. In Romania, for example, concerns about social revolution compelled the government to carry out land reform as expeditiously as possible, just as they did in Yugoslavia. In both countries, the figure of five hectares was considered the desirable size of a viable peasant holding, and ex-soldiers were given priority when it came to allocating these plots. See Keith Hitchens, *Romania 1866-1947* (Oxford: 1994), pp. 347-359.

[93] *Memorandum Saveza dobrovoljaca Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca* (Belgrade 1923), p11.

[94] Ibid, p. 12.

[95] Ibid, p. 15.

[96] See *Obzor,* 16 November 1922.

testimony of one volunteer who had found settling in the area very difficult. He wrote of how he had never imagined during the war that his hardships would continue in liberated Yugoslavia, and how, in a bitter twist of fate, he was still a second-class citizen compared to the town's Hungarians and Germans.[97] In June 1926, the same newspaper printed an open letter to the interior minister drafted by colonists in St. Moravica (Vojvodina). Unhappy with their lot, the volunteers reminded the minister that they had not relocated merely to till the land, but also to act as guardians against the enemies of Yugoslavia. In order to clarify this point, they held an armed rally in the town later that month, inviting volunteers from all over the country to help them break up the 'underground work' of their enemies in the town.[98]

Nevertheless, these examples do not constitute a significant part of the 'volunteer question' in the Yugoslav kingdom. As Jòzo Tomasevich has noted 'internal colonization in the interwar period was of minor historical importance.'[99] Instead, volunteers focussed on what they felt was the shameful tardiness and disorganisation with which Yugoslavia's politicians were carrying out the redistribution of land, and on the proliferation of 'phoney volunteers', non-volunteers who were receiving certificates of verification from corrupt civil servants. As a result of these two related issues, the question of who was and who was not a volunteer, raised at the congress in 1920, remained a contentious point throughout the decade. In 1924, for example, volunteers attacked the government for not allowing volunteer verification to remain the exclusive prerogative of their Union. They felt that genuine attempts to determine the authenticity of their members had been compromised by the (Radical) government's political and economic expediency. The Union of Volunteers' requests for land were ignored by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform in favour of Radical Party affiliates and agriculturalists; Pašić had betrayed his war-time promise to the volunteers.[100]

The debate continued and in 1926, the historian Stanoje Stanojević became involved. Stanojević had contributed to the recently completed 'Serb-Croat-Slovenian National Encyclopaedia' (published in 1926), a depository of South Slav history and culture, intended as a monument to the newly liberated and unified Yugoslav

---

[97] *Vidovdan,* 3 April 1923.
[98] Ibid, 6 June 1926, and 23 June 1926.
[99] Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Oxford: 1955), pp. 329-330.
[100] *Vidovdan,* 17 August 1924.

kingdom. For Stanojević (as for many pro-Yugoslav Croatians), volunteers were the embodiment of faith and commitment to South Slav unity. Stanojević adapted some of his research in article form in the pages of *Vidovdan,* entitled 'Volunteers and Agrarian Reform'. He began his article by pointing out that volunteers did not join the fight against the Central Powers merely to gain a small patch of land. In fact, he noted, they joined the Allied war effort at a time when Austria and Germany looked very strong. His introduction was couched in the same terms that many volunteers used when applying to the ministry. They too were concerned lest their sacrifices for 'liberation and unification' be reduced to a mere appeal for five hectares of land: they had not fought for such self-serving reasons.[101] Stanojević told of how, after a chaotic period during which all applicants had received land, the government decree of December 1919 had brought regularity to the system, specifying stricter criteria for volunteer verification. It was this decree that led to the Union of Volunteers debating its own definition of volunteer membership, and eventually losing its right to vouch for the claims of its members. Stanojević pointed out that since the passing of this decree, exact figures as to the number of volunteers eligible for land were still pending. However, according to the Ministry of the Army and Navy, 26,817 volunteers had been with the Serbian army at Salonika and *only these veterans* were eligible for land. This last was an important point, since the majority of Croatian and Slovenian officer dissidents (Ivan Petrović, Milan Banić) had not made it to Salonika. They were therefore disqualified from receiving land, as were dissident soldiers. So far, the Ministry of Social Policy had handed out 39,526 certificates of volunteer verification (!).[102]

This apparently inflated number seemed to confirm the Union of Volunteers' concerns about Radical Party corruption. It could also be suggested that the 'Salonika qualification' in the decree of December 1919 had allowed the Radicals to define volunteers in very narrow terms, namely, almost exclusively Serbian officers and soldiers who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Serbian army without protest, and would presumably remain loyal in the post-war period.[103] Stanojević, however, reminded readers that the families of deceased volunteers could apply for volunteer certificates, and that this was possibly the reason for such a high figure. He ended the

[101] Ibid, 31 January 1926.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

article by noting that the debate was certain to continue, as volunteers from the Italian front (soldiers and officers who fought alongside the renegade Slovene officer Ljudevit Pivko) and *Četnici* and *Komitadji* from the Balkan wars and even the Bosnian war (1875-1878) might one day apply for land as well.[104]

2.4. ORJUNA and the Volunteer Legacy

The question of who volunteers were and what they stood for in Croatia was further complicated by the emergence of ORJUNA (*Organizacija jugoslovenska nacionalista,* the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists, founded in Split, 1922). This group, represented most strongly in Dalmatia and Slovenia, became notorious during the 1920s for its willingness to embrace Fascist-style tactics (political violence, militarism) in order to intimidate its enemies and to consolidate the 'liberation and unification' of South Slavs. Its glorification of the war-time volunteer movement and the involvement of a number of prominent volunteer veterans with this group led to a wider debate about the history and development of Yugoslavism within Croatia. *Orjunaši* (as the uniformed members were known) felt that unification and liberation, achieved by the sacrifice of South Slavs during Great War, was now at risk of being rolled back by separatists and defeatists (especially Radićists and Communists) at home, and covetous neighbours abroad (most notably Italy). The first issue of ORJUNA's journal in Vojvodina, *Vidovdan,* evoking the memory of those fallen in the war, called on its members to fight on for the national ideal.[105]

For ORJUNA, volunteers, especially those of Croatian descent, were viewed as the personification of both the military ideal and of commitment to Yugoslav nationalism in times of great adversity. This was the image of their own movement that the *Orjunaši* wanted to project to their enemies and to the public, and it was the motivating factor behind the numerous acts of organised violence they undertook throughout the 1920s. The combative ideology of ORJUNA was undoubtedly influenced by a belief in the purifying qualities of war and an idolization of Serbian soldiers and (especially) volunteers. It was depicted by former JO member and

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid. 29 July 1922. A detailed survey of the history of ORJUNA is provided by Branislav Gligorijević, see 'Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (ORJUNA)', *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, vol. 5 (Belgrade: 1963). A critical view of the movement and a contribution to the ORJUNA/*Nova Evropa* polemic can be found in Otokar Keršovani, 'Nove generacije i njihovi pokreti', in *Generacija pred stvaranjem: Almanah jedne grupe* (Belgrade: 1925).

ORJUNA leader Ljubo Leontić in his novel about Croatian volunteer veterans in the interwar period, *Between Two Wars*. One of his protagonists, a demobilized volunteer who became a member of ORJUNA, explains the mentality of the typical *Orjunaš* post-1918 by inverting Clausewitz's famous maxim. 'Peace,' he claims, 'is an extension of war by other means.'[106] The crossover between volunteers and ORJUNA was not confined to fiction, however. Ex-volunteers Slavko Diklić and Ante Kovać, were high-ranking members of ORJUNA. Furthermore, both Kovać and ORJUNA leader Niko Bartulović were members of the Croatian Literary Club, and regular contributors to *Savremenik.*

ORJUNA achieved their highest level of notoriety in a period extending over a year and beginning with a violent brawl against miners at a demonstration organised by Communists in Trbovlje (in Slovenia) in April 1924. ORJUNA had long since identified communists as an anti-state element and targeted them at their public gatherings (which were very few since the Communists had been outlawed in 1921). Both sides were armed and well-prepared for a violent conflict, and by the time the fighting ended four communists and three *Orjunaši* had been killed.[107] The next night ORJUNA returned to Zagreb and held a midnight vigil for their fallen comrades, a ritual which had become characteristic of the movement.[108]

In Croatia, no publication was more concerned about the damage that ORJUNA might do to the Yugoslav concept than *Nova Evropa,* and its editor Milan Čurčin. *Nova Evropa* had adopted its name from the publication *The New Europe*, the British journal which had done much to promote the cause of South Slav unity in Allied countries during the war. It maintained links with R.W. Seton-Watson, the influential Scottish scholar, expert on the Balkan region, and founder of *The New Europe*. Like *Savremenik,* it considered itself part of the intellectual vanguard of the Yugoslav movement, helping to usher in a new South Slav national culture that would serve to unite the various peoples of the new state.[109] In light of events at Trbovlje and the furore surrounding ORJUNA, Čurčin wrote an article in July 1924 which expounded the concept of Yugoslavism, the progress it had made and the direction in which it was heading. Yugoslavism, correctly defined, was an evolutionary concept,

[106] Ljubo Leontić, *Izmedju dva rata* (Zagreb: 1965), p. 15.
[107] *Obzor,* 3 June 1924.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Andrew Baruch Wachtel has addressed these attempts, mainly by cultural and political elites, to create a 'synthetic national culture' in his book *Making a Nation Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: 1998).

which had began in the 19th century and continued to develop to this day. Unlike the *Orjunaši,* who interpreted the war as a revolutionary breaking point which enabled the realisation of South Slav unity (for which the volunteer contribution could not be underestimated), Čurčin claimed that the war was a four-year hiatus in the peaceful development of this *evolutionary* Yugoslavism.[110]

In October 1924, *Nova Evropa* published an article from a former Croatian volunteer now resident in Washington DC, Ilija Petrović. Since Čurčin's article on evolutionary Yugoslavism, a polemic had opened up between ORJUNA and *Nova Evropa.* Niko Bartulović had responded angrily to accusations that ORJUNA were merely hirelings of the government, allowing themselves to be exploited by politicians. Petrović felt that thus far, *Nova Evropa* had not been ardent enough in its criticism of Bartulović and ORJUNA. He recalled his own days as a member of the pre-war youth movement, how he and his colleagues had embraced progressive ideals and respect for individual liberties, a far cry from the activities of today's ORJUNA. The movement was, Petrović felt, a product of its time. The devastation of the war years had produced a brutalized mentality throughout Europe. ORJUNA were merely

> a bad copy of the sort of manifestation which one can see today in every war-torn country, amongst which are the Fascists in Italy, de-Rivera's followers in Spain, Hórthy's bands in Hungary, Ludendorf's mob in Germany, Poincare's chauvinists in France, and those 'Macedonians' on our sacred southern border. In spirit there is no difference between any of them, just differences in allegiance.[111]

The polemic was intensifying as competing circles attempted to stake their separate claims as the rightful heirs of pre-war South Slav nationalism. Croatian volunteer veterans were both passive subjects and active agents of this debate. They were well-organised and had enough intellectuals in their ranks to give voice to their own interpretation of events. But they were also used in various Croatian intellectual circles as a potent symbol of fealty to Yugoslavia, and it seems that this contributed much to a distorting of their war-time role.

In 1925, Niko Bartulović published a memoir/history of ORJUNA, making a series of audacious and exaggerated claims about the movement's heritage and its

---

[110] *Nova Evropa,* 11 July 1924.
[111] Ibid, 1 October 1924.

pivotal role in the new state, and provoking a great response from *Nova Evropa.* His work, entitled *From Revolutionary Youth to ORJUNA: a History of the Yugoslav Youth Movement*, attempted to tie the disparate strands of the pre-war youth movement in to one group, which in turn was presented as the ideological forerunner of ORJUNA. In Bartulović's account, the war was the proving ground of South Slav nationalist youth, its dedication to Yugoslavism undeterred despite suffering persecution and imprisonment.[112] Bartulović was able to fit the volunteer movement into this framework seamlessly and totally. 'Almost the entire pre-war youth movement joined the Yugoslav volunteers,'[113] claimed Bartulović:

> Of course, a large number of active members of the youth movement and today's *Orjunaši* took part in the volunteer assault [at Dobruja]. Many, many of them were killed. But as they did not live, they did not die. Regretfully their names are not noted and preserved.[114]

The ritual of naming *Orjunaši* killed in battle (such as those at Trbovlje) had become a central part of ORJUNA's programme, and Bartulović regretted that he could not add those volunteers killed in the war years to the movement's role of honour in order to commemorate them alongside those who had fallen more recently. He did pay respect to a number of surviving volunteer veterans however, including Lujo Lovrić, Ante Kovać and Stane Vidmar, a Slovene and a key figure in the volunteer movement on the Italian front. In addition to naming volunteers like these, the wartime defection of Slovene officer Ljudevit Pivko with a number of his battalion was cited as evidence of a strong Yugoslav sentiment on the Italian front.[115] As Croatia's youth were

---

[112] See Bartulović, pp. 49-55.
[113] Ibid, p. 59.
[114] Ibid, p. 70.
[115] Ibid, pp. 69-70. In fact, Bogomil Hrabak has found that Yugoslavism had very little resonance amongst Croatian POWs captured on the Italian front, who remained implacably hostile to Italy and distrustful of her post-war intentions. After the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Rome (10 April 1918), limited propaganda work by the JO had likewise limited results amongst Croatian POWs, who counted for 124 of the 210 officers who opted to volunteer at this very late stage. Just as in Russia, these volunteers were mainly educated reserve officers from urban areas of Croatia. See Bogomil Hrabak, *Zarobljenici u Italiji i njihovo dobrovoljačko pitanje 1915-1918* (Novi Sad: 1980), pp. 50-60. Mark Cornwall has found that the 70 soldiers who crossed the line with Ljudevit Pivko in September 1917 were chiefly Bosnian Serbs or Czechs. See Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria Hungary: the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basingstoke: 2000), p. 133. Furthermore, the propaganda work that Pivko was involved in for the JO after his defection had very little effect on Croat and Slovene soldiers fighting against Italy (p. 144), he found very few willing volunteers when he was allowed to visit POW camps in May 1918 (p. 238). As Cornwall concludes, 'The simple fact was that the Yugoslav cause was not a reality for many South Slav prisoners in Italy.' (p. 239)

flocking to fight on the frontline for South Slav unification and liberation, so the hinterland was seething with dissent against the Central Powers. According to Bartulović, the hospital in which wounded Croatian soldiers were being treated in Zagreb had become a centre for organized South Slav nationalist agitation, and 'those that could not find a formal outlet for their desertion escaped into the green cadres'.[116]

The final section of the book catalogued ORJUNA's post-war activities: the process of its formation and the reasons for doing so, as well as several accounts of violent demonstrations the group had been involved in. The author was particularly proud of the group's efforts in breaking up a gathering of retired Habsburg officers in March 1922. ORJUNA, claimed Bartulović, emerged as a 'powerful and energetic force' within the nation's youth capable alone of protecting Yugoslav unity.[117] Bartulović also mentioned a selection of the group's commemorative activities in the post-war period. These included a plaque to fallen volunteers in Split (unveiled after the group's congress there in December 1923), and a series of co-ordinated demonstrations in Ljubljana, Split, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Dubrovnik, and Sarajevo on 28 June 1924. The ceremonies were intended to mark both St Vitus' Day *and* the tenth anniversary of 'the heroic act of our pre-war comrade Princip.'[118]

In response to this, *Nova Evropa* challenged ORJUNA's legitimacy in a series of articles which were published soon after Bartulović's book, many of which were penned by leading figures in the youth and/or volunteer movement. In June 1925, former volunteer and JO member Pero Slijepčević provided a detailed survey of all volunteer units on all fronts covering the period 1912-1918 (i.e., covering the Balkan wars as well as the Great War) to counter Bartulović's nebulous claims on the volunteer movement with his own precise survey. Slijepčević ended the article with a complaint about the contemporary state of volunteer affairs in Yugoslavia:

> The volunteer movement today, several years after liberation, does not look pleasant at all. It has been hijacked by various forms of speculation and misuse [...] Underhanded speculators are bartering with the volunteer title as they do with all other things. It is said that three times as many certificates [of volunteer verification] have been printed than there are volunteers in total. The guiltiest for this are those mean-minded party affiliates and the unquenchable hunger of our gentlemen. The

[116] Hrabak, p. 71.
[117] Ibid, p. 80.
[118] Ibid, pp. 111-115.

> true volunteers are the greatest losers, both morally and materially, of these misuses.[119]

In subsequent issues of the journal, individuals connected with the pre-war youth movement and with the volunteers provided comment and details of their own experiences in order to refute Bartulović's claims. In July 1925, for example, Vasa Stajić wrote of his experiences in the youth movement in Vojvodina, claiming that neither he nor anyone associated with the youth movement there shared any common ground with today's ORJUNA.[120]

With the benefit of hindsight, ORJUNA looks more like the post-war parvenu it was depicted as by its opponents than the rightful heir of the pre-war youth and war-time volunteer movements, although it certainly contained elements of those movements (Ljubo Leontić being a prime example). Ivan Avakumović has called in to question the group's ideological cohesion by noting the diverse careers taken by some of its leading members after the group's dissolution in 1929.[121] Similarly, in Leontić's fictional account of volunteer life in the interwar period, the fiery group has long since burnt itself out at the point where the action of the novel starts, in summer 1928. The *Orjunaši* feature merely in the reminisces of a former Croatian volunteer whose own enthusiasm for South Slav unity is on the wane. The author's implication seems to be that the ideal of 'liberation and unification' burnt brightly and violently for volunteers and *Orjunaši* alike, before being extinguished in a series of national crises. In this sense, the links between Croatian volunteers and ORJUNA appear to be coincidental, rather than deeply embedded in a shared pre-war/wartime history (as *Orjunaši* such as Niko Bartulović suggested). Both groups were committed to spreading the gospel of Yugoslavism in the post-war period and identified a dire need to do so before the recently achieved goal of 'liberation and unification' was lost to the country's many enemies (both external and internal). This was the common cause that, more than anything else, united the two groups in the 1920s.

But in the process of identifying ORJUNA as a purely post-war phenomenon (by separating them from the pre-war youth movement and the war-time volunteer movement), journals such as *Nova Evropa* raised the question of the impact of the

---

[119] *Nova Evropa*, 17 June 1925.
[120] Ibid, 21 July 1925.
[121] Ivan Avakumović, 'Yugoslavia's Fascist Movements' in Peter Sugar (ed.), *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara: 1971), p. 137.

Great War on a new generation of Croatian men. For as Ilija Petrović had pointed out, if the post-war youth movement was so different from its pre-war variant, was it not reasonable to infer that the war had caused this break in continuity? This anxiety over the impact of the war in Croatia on the country's youth became a recurring theme in the pages of *Nova Evropa* and *Savremenik* in the latter part of the 1920s, and was apparently inspired by the activities and claims of the *Orjunaši*. Thus, in October 1925, although the *Nova Evropa*/Niko Bartulović polemic was largely over, Božidar Brkić penned a thinly-veiled attack on ORJUNA, suggesting that 'flags and fanfares' were masking the stagnation rife throughout contemporary youth. This stagnation was surely, he felt, a sign of the times.[122]

The debate in the Yugoslav kingdom over ORJUNA is far from academic, and has important implications for the impact of the war in Croatia in the post-war decade. Was the movement evidence of a 'post-war generation', youths who were too young to actually fight in the war but who nevertheless transposed the values of wartime violence and combat into the post-war period? This would explain the existence of a rift between ORJUNA members such as Niko Bartulović and the editors and writers of *Savremenik* and *Nova Evropa*. The rift can be understood as a generational divide, an argument between two groups whose views about Yugoslavia were conditioned by their experiences, their age, etc. On the one hand, an older generation which believed South Slav unification could be achieved through cultural reconciliation, on the other, a younger generation which believed that Yugoslavia's national revolution could only be protected through the use of violence.

With this in mind, it is important to understand just how central public rituals of violence were to the ideology of ORJUNA in the 1920s. Bartulović's memoir is quite explicit on this matter, reading like a manifesto aimed at South Slav youth, identifying their enemies and glorying in ORJUNA's military prowess and violent demonstrations throughout the country. In this respect ORJUNA were (ironically) quite similar to the Italian Fascists, their sworn enemies, and to Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael. With the latter movement they shared a leadership drawn predominantly from the country's youth (the Legion's leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, was born in 1899 and had been turned away from the Romanian army

[122] *Nova Evropa*, 21 October 1925.

during the war on account of his age)[123] as well as a belief in violence as a means of achieving their goals of integral nationalism in the post-war period.

ORJUNA lacked, however, the religious mysticism of the Legion, and they had no Mussolini or Codreanu, no messianic leader who could embody the spirit and aspirations of the movement. Instead, they had the image of the volunteers and the (partial) myth of their wartime sacrifice for the 'liberation and unification' of the South Slavs. It was through their reverence for these veterans that members of ORJUNA defined the qualities which they themselves aspired to: military discipline and élan, fearless commitment to Yugoslav nationalism, and a merciless desire to seek out and to terrorize their enemies. Once again, Leed's definition of the image of the veteran is appropriate: the volunteer appealed to the young men of ORJUNA precisely because he stood beyond the boundaries of normal society, because he had been to war and back (and they had not, being too young), because he was a 'potentially revolutionary figure.'[124]

If ORJUNA represented the junior side of the generational divide, then *Nova Evropa* and *Savremenik* could be said to be its senior side. In contrast to ORJUNA, who saw the war as a vitalising moment in the nation's national life, these journals wrote of the great damage and stultification suffered as a result of the conflict. The impact of the war was a deadening of cultural and (especially) literary life, and an article in *Nova Evropa,* published in February 1926, identified two dominant trends in Yugoslav writing post-1918, 'ugly' and 'false'. The author suggested that the contemporary social, political, and cultural environment called for a 'progressive literature' to save Yugoslavia from the sterility and mediocrity it was sinking into.[125]

The passing of time, however, could gradually erase the damage caused by the Great War. In May 1928 the celebrated literary critic Antun Barac breathed a sigh of relief and looked with hope upon Croatian youth. Barac felt that the rapid turn of the generational cycle meant that, finally, young writers were free of the burden of the war years. He wrote of how the first generation of writers, those who were active in the first three or four years after 1918, were the 'half-way generation', that is, stuck halfway between war and peace. This generation demanded that the civilian population acknowledge how greatly veterans had suffered; their outlook in the new

---

[123] Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Iasi: 2001), p. 350.
[124] Leed, p. 196.
[125] *Nova Evropa,* 11 February 1926.

state was hindered by their wartime experiences. The new generation, asserted Barac, was more modest (!). Their literary vision was not clouded by the war, all they knew was post-war life, and their clarity of vision meant that they had more to offer than their predecessors.[126]

There is a temptation to interpret Barac's comments as emblematic of a certain section of the Croatian intelligentsia's attitudes towards active veterans. Was this 'break with the past' what the editors of *Savremenik* and *Nova Evropa* envisaged when they wrote of creating a new Yugoslav culture? Did the forging of this new culture presuppose casting aside a generation which was clamouring to drag Croatia back into its violent and traumatic recent history? One might even conclude that Barac's comments were a reflection of the mood felt throughout the population of Croatia, and that he and his colleagues were acting out the role of cultural vanguard that they had set for themselves: guiding people towards the future at the expense of the past. It was shown in the preceding chapter that a sense of isolation and neglect was central to the experience of many Croatian veterans in the 1920s. The rhetoric of the Society of War Invalids in Croatia and the fiction of Josip Pavičić are full of anger and despair directed towards both the ruling elite and the population in general. This derived in great part from a failure to acknowledge the sacrifice of invalids, and this tension remained unsolved throughout the 1920s. Similarly, the direction Barac felt Yugoslavism should take was anathema to many Croatian volunteers. Instead, they demanded that their contribution be recognised and rewarded in the Yugoslav kingdom. A study of volunteer memoir output in the 1920s will reveal the extent to which volunteers felt they were fighting against this cultural trend, and it is to this study that we now turn.

2.5. Volunteer Memoirs and Fiction

The earliest treatment of the volunteer question had arrived in Croatia very soon after the end of the war. *Obzor* serialized the memoirs of JO member Franko Potočnjak, a civilian who had been responsible for organising volunteer units in Russia during the war. In a preface to the memoirs of his time in Russia, published in 1919, Potočnjak noted that many *Obzor* readers had recognised certain parallels between the conduct

[126] *Savremenik*, May 1924.

of the Serbian army towards Croats during the war and their conduct in the post-war period. Nevertheless, Potočnjak's stated aim was to 'show the bare facts' of the volunteer question in Russia.[127] This meant reporting the reluctance of many Croatian and Slovenian soldiers to fight in the Serbian army, and of the attitude of superiority from a large part of the Serbian command. His quotation, attributed to a Serbian officer, 'you Croats want to stay on as Franz [Joseph]'s slaves, only we Serbians are in favour of liberation,'[128] would have been met with nods of recognition by those who felt that the Serbian army in Croatia were behaving like occupiers on enemy territory. The comments are also consistent with the complaints of Croatian invalids about how they were treated as second-class soldiers in Yugoslavia, and may be evidence that these attitudes existed also in wartime. Nevertheless, Potočnjak's account leaves the fighting at Dobruja untarnished by inter-ethnic prejudices and poltical chicanery. Like the volunteer veterans themselves, he also considered the battle an event of historical significance, a day on which 'a new page was turned in the history of the South Slavs, as they fought shoulder to shoulder to liberate their homeland.'[129]

The earliest examples of accounts written by volunteers themselves were Dane Hranilović's *From the Notes of a Yugoslav Volunteer*, published in 1922, and Ante Kovač's *Impressions of an Epoch*, published in a single volume in 1923 but serialized by *Savremenik* 1919-1920, and in *Nova otadžbina* ('The New Fatherland', a volunteer journal) in 1922. Hranilović dedicated his account to 'the strengthening of the Yugoslav idea', and complained in the preface that very little had thus far been written about this important chapter in 'Yugoslav history'.[130] The largest part of the text was concerned with recording in great detail the military exploits of the corps, as well as explaining the circumstances of its genesis. The final chapter was entitled, 'The Purpose of Volunteer Organisations'. Here Hranilović described the reasons behind the formation of the Union of Volunteers, and claimed with some exaggeration that the movement had 50,000 members throughout the country. He also noted that the Union would be negotiating with the government for their members' land entitlement, although he stressed that it was 'liberation and unification' that

[127] Potočnjak, p. iv.
[128] Ibid, p. 141.
[129] Ibid, p. 144.
[130] Dane Hranilović, *Iz zapiska jugoslavenskog dobrovoljaca* (Zagreb: 1922), *predgovor.*

volunteers had fought for, not land.[131] Kovać's memoir, as the title suggests, was a more personal account of his time spent as a volunteer. The book begins with his arrival at Darnica, and ends with Kovać breaking through the front at Salonika and returning to his homeland. In one of the books' appendices, Kovać supplies the text of a letter to a 'war comrade': a French soldier whom he had befriended whilst at Salonika. Kovać complained about the current state of affairs in Yugoslavia:

> Five years on [...] our country today is a sinecure for politicians as serious as pickled cucumbers, our cultural life is like a jacket without sleeves. I do not write poetry any more as I am not inspired by our present circumstances.[132]

In both Hranilović's and Kovać's narratives, Bolsheviks, dissidents, Habsburg loyalists, and other Yugoslav nay sayers are relegated to the absolute margins. Instead of Horvat's ideological panorama, these veterans were inclined to view their wartime experiences in more Manichean terms: either you were for the Yugoslav ideal (as the majority were), or you were against it. Thus Hranilović observed the preponderance of Croatian and Slovenian reserve officers in the volunteer corps as 'a sign that the Yugoslav ideology was deeply rooted amongst the younger generation of Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian intellectuals.'[133] On the other hand, 'the ideas of the Russian [Bolshevik] Revolution did not damage the military organisation of our corps,'[134] and 'despite defeat and revolution, the ideology of Yugoslavism remained strong throughout this time.'[135] As has been shown, careful research into the issue of South Slav POWs in Russia and of their volunteering in the Serbian army does not sustain the interpretations of either Hranilović or Kovać. In fact, the two revolutions in Russia had a hugely detrimental effect on the morale and discipline of the volutneer movement in Russia, as did the debacle at Dobruja. Whilst it is true that there was a preponderance of Slovenian and Croatian reserve officers in the officer corps of the volunteer movement, it is also true that the majority of these soldiers became dissidents in protest at the percieved excesses of the Serbian command. Both Hranilović and Kovać fail to acknowledge this non-Serb exodus. Kovać actually

---

[131] Ibid, p. 87-89.
[132] Kovać, p. 132-134.
[133] Hranilović, p. 16.
[134] Ibid, p. 37.
[135] Ibid, p. 41.

claimed that the dissident movement had been inflated well out of proportion, and its effects on the morale of the volunteers had been minimal. He suggested that pro-Austrian Jewish tailors who worked in Odessa and provided the corps with their uniforms had a more damaging influence on the corps. These undetected intriguers were supposedly privy to the membership of the volunteer movement and were loyally sending this information back to the home-front. 'Jewish spying and defeatist propaganda damaged Yugoslavism in Russia one hundred times more than all of the Banić's [Milan Banić – a leading figure in the dissident movement] and those like him.'[136]

It is possible that Kovać and Hranilović were, like the invalids, merely writing the history of their wartime experience *as they saw it*, that is, their personal interpretation. Perhaps they believed, sincerely but incorrectly, that the Bolshevik Revolution was merely a sideshow to the glorious 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs, or that South Slav POWs of all nationality were equally enthusiastic about fighting within the ranks of the Serbian army. It seems more likely, however, that Hranilović, Kovać and other volunteer memoirists, were using their writing as a means of promoting pro-Yugoslav propaganda in the Yugoslav kingdom. This after all, was one of the stated goals of the Union of Volunteers, and leaders of that society, such as Lujo Lovrić, saw this as their most important function in the Yugoslav kingdom. Moreover, Kovać and Hranilović had included prefaces and appendices in their memoirs in which they complained about the contemporary state of society in the Yugoslav kingdom and stressed the important role volunteers would play in the new epoch. It could also be noted, as a relevant aside, that anti-Semitism was often a function of integral nationalism in interwar Europe, and that by identifying Jewish duplicity as an enemy of the volunteer movement, Kovać had found a suitable 'other' through which to externalise weaknesses in morale and discipline.[137]

The reading of volunteer memoirs and fiction as didacticism can also be applied to Lujo Lovrić's literary output. His two works about the volunteer experience in Russia, *Autumn Tears* (1922) and *Through Snow and Fog* (1923), offer the reader the same moral universe and pro-Yugoslav message as the memoirs of Hranilović and Kovać. Indeed, the title *Autumn Tears,* is a reference to the Bolshevik Revolution,

---

[136] Kovać, p. 23.

[137] Although, interestingly, there is little evidence in the 1920s of anti-Semitic violence within ORJUNA, another important point on which that movement differed from the Legion of the Archangel Michael.

presented in tragic terms through the eyes of a group of Croatian volunteers who become unwitting witnesses to the violence it unleashes. *Through Snow and Fog,* published the following year, was a more conventional memoir (narrated by the author in the first person), in which Lovrić recounts his wartime experiences, beginning as a volunteer in Russia and ending with his return to the newly-liberated homeland after the end of the war. For Lovrić, the national revolution was experienced through spiritual and physical transformation, as his resolve as a pro-Yugoslav was tested both on and off the field. Although sightless on his return home, Lovrić now had a greater clarity of vision regarding South Slav unity and his role in the new state.

It may have been his physical disability which led Lovrić to understand his experience of war in such a solipsistic fashion. Lovrić's interpretation of his war was of an intensely personal sacrifice, and one which had irreversibly transformed him. In this he was different from Hranilović and Kovač, yet similar to fellow invalid Josip Pavičić. However, whilst Pavičić's veteran was dissolved in melancholy and despair because of his new veteran identity, Lovrić rose again like a phoenix from the flames, finding a positive and vitalising cause in the post-war volunteer movement. Lovrić acknowledged, in an interview given in 1985, that the veteran experience (and especially the invalid experience) in the Yugoslav kingdom was one of isolation, but that this isolation merely served his purpose:

> I gave very little attention to private life. I never smoked, every day I went to the office as if I was paid. I never once in my life considered having a family and children, since that was almost impossible. We, invalids of the Yugoslav army, reserve officers, had nothing.[138]

Just as Yugoslavia and the ideal of South Slav unity were tested during the war, so his dedication as an individual to those ideals would now be tested. He expressed this resolve in a short verse which prefaced *Through Snow and Fog*: 'On the difficult trail of life/A desperate man rages ceaselessly/Retreat, only cowards turn from the fight/A real man looks death straight in the eye.'[139] Taken together, these two passages hint at the character of the volunteer and veteran sacrifice in Croatia in the interwar period.

---

[138] Grbin, p. 65.
[139] Lovrić, p. 11.

Lovrić wrote of 'a desperate man' and that 'a real man looks death in the eye.' In so doing, he defined the criteria necessary for correct masculine behaviour in the post-war period, as well as exalting the sacrifice made by men during the war (above that of women). Furthermore, in shunning the kinship group of the family, Lovrić sought to preserve the integrity of his wartime sacrifice in the post-war period. Just as during the war, Lovrić is a solitary figure, striding into battle unfettered by women, children, and other such ballast.

Was this, then, the true figure of the veteran in Croatia in the interwar period? The parallels between the writing of Lovrić and Pavičić lend further substance to the qualified conclusions made in the previous chapter. Like Pavičić, Lovrić wrote of a break with pre-war life and kinship groups as a result of his experience as a soldier. Paradoxically, Lovrić mastered his new destiny by embracing a role in Yugoslavia which was, as he saw it, a continuation of his pre-war activities as a Yugoslav nationalist. The war had given this role a military flavour, and he shared the vision of an army of ex-volunteer veterans loyal to the Yugoslav state with Hranilović and Kovać and, of course, with the Union of Volunteers. Whilst these men differed from Croatian invalids over what had been gained and lost in the war, they were united in that they exalted the sacrifice of men such as themselves over any other group. Indeed, the notion that the male wartime sacrifice was superior to that made by females is consistent to all the veterans' groups studied in this thesis.

Unfortunatley, Lovrić's third volume of memoirs, which he intended to call *Return in Spring,* was neither completed nor published. This volume would have addressed the volunteer and veteran questions in Yugoslavia and may have solved a number of the problems which the first two chapters of this thesis have raised. Lovrić abandoned the project claiming that his critical views on contemporary politics and society in the Yugoslav kingdom would not have been allowed past the censors.[140] This was, of course, the fate that befell Pavičić's stories in the 1930s (although not Krleža's *The Croatian God Mars,* republished in 1932); it could be that the lack of veteran publications hostile to the war for South Slav 'liberation and unification' is due in part to this censorship. In contrast, the numerous positive accounts of the war published by ex-volunteers and Serbian veterans suggest that censors were not adverse to the topic of the war *per se,* just war publications of a certain variety. In

[140] Grbin, p. 80.

fact, the volunteer sacrifice was acknowledged publicly and officially in 1926, with the unveiling of a large ossuary at Dobruja, which became an important memory site for volunteer veterans.

2.6. The Decennial Celebrations at Dobruja

The monument was dedicated to the volunteers who had lost their lives fighting for 'liberation and unification', and the ceremony to be held there annually was intended to replace the small officially-sanctioned ceremony held every year in Zagreb. The monument took the form of a large stone ossuary in the shape of a pyramid, surrounded by a small landscaped park. A pedestrian trail leading to the monument was named 'The Boulevard of Yugoslav Heroes'. The Yugoslav government also arranged for a ship to take volunteer veterans who wished to attend the unveiling ceremony to Romania (for a small fee). It is unclear as to why a pyramid design was chosen for the monument at Dobruja. It seems likely that religious or historical images were discarded as they would prove too divisive on an object which was supposed to celebrate the unity of the South Slav peoples. Despite the neutral design, an exclusively Orthodox Christian rite was held at the unveiling ceremony (see figure 1.).

As part of the commemorative celebrations, Vojin Maksimović, former commander of the First Serbian Division, wrote a thorough account of the volunteer contribution at the battle of Dobruja. In a short preface, Ante Kovać noted that it was hard for a new generation which had grown up in the liberated kingdom to understand the magnitude of the volunteer sacrifice made in 1916. The intention of the book and of the monument was, he claimed, to ensure that this new generation did not lose sight of the volunteer sacrifice. Commemorative initiatives such as these would help strengthen Yugoslav sentiment throughout the population, and this was the aim of the volunteers. He also suggested that a naturally occurring (Yugoslav) national instinct existed amongst the Yugoslav kingdom's peasants (the broadest strata of society), and that this needed to be nurtured and guided by the educated minority.[141]

Kovać's dream of ex-volunteers as a Yugoslav vanguard remained unfulfilled in Croatia, however. Two years after the unveiling at Dobruja, the assassination of

[141] Kovać, 'predgovor', in Vojin Maksimović, *Spomenica prve srpske dobrovoljačke divizije 1916-1926* (Belgrade: 1926).

Croatian Peasant Party deputies in the national parliament further distanced the majority of Croats from the notion of South Slav unity. Perhaps sensing this new mood, the Union of Volunteers believed the need for a pro-Yugoslav force was greater than ever. They began collecting items for a proposed volunteer museum and archive, to celebrate their sacrifice and to ensure that it would not be forgotten. An article published in the volunteer journal *Dobrovoljački glasnik* worried that as the new post-war age brought about new problems, the achievements of the war and the wartime generation were fading fast from national memory. A new generation was coming of age that had known only post-1918 freedom, and it was important for volunteer veterans not to allow their wartime sacrifice to be forgotten.[142] To this end, volunteers in Croatia remained faithful to King Alexander throughout his five-year dictatorship, one of the very few groups in the region to do so. Lujo Lovrić met a number of times with the King to discuss volunteer matters, as well as national and constitutional questions. This was also true of Milan Banić, who became a vocal supporter of the dictatorship in Yugoslavia and throughout Europe. The fact that Banić had dissented against Serbian command during the war but was now in favour of the royal dictatorship suggests that he had faith in the King's project of creating a Yugoslav identity 'from the top down'. It was, after all, what volunteers had been trying to achieve ever since the end of the war. Banić had pursued a successful career as a journalist after returning to Croatia from Odessa in 1921 (he had worked in Odessa after 1918, facilitating the return of South Slav soldiers from revolutionary Russia). In 1933, concerned at the negative attention the dictatorship was receiving in Europe, he published a series of articles in France about the situation in Yugoslavia. These were translated into Serbo-Croat and republished the following year under the title *On the Cross: a Croat in Yugoslavia*. In these articles, Banić catalogued the successive failures of parliamentary democracy in Yugoslavia, culminating in the shootings of 1928. when these failures were considered alongside the threat of hostile neighbours and the increasing appeal of fascism, Alexander's dictatorship appeared to be the only workable solution to the country's problems.[143] Banić expressed his loyalty to the dynasty and to the person of the King in more direct terms in 1935. Following Alexander's assassination the previous year, he wrote what amounted to a homily for the late King, entitled *Ecco Homo: The Character of a Hero and a Martyr.*

[142] *Dobrovoljački glasnik*, November-December 1929.
[143] Milan Banić, *Raspeti na raskršću* (Zagreb: 1934), pp. 92-101.

Along with the implied comparison to Jesus Christ in the title, Banić also held Alexander equal to medieval South Slav rulers such as Simeon, Dušan, Tomislav, and Tvrdko.[144] Furthermore, the King was superior to Napoleon Bonaparte, since whilst the latter was indeed great, he was amoral. Alexander, on the other hand, was blessed with both greatness and a Christian sensibility.[145] Such was the respect these volunteers had for their king.

2.7. Conclusion

In charting the progress of Croatian volunteers in Yugoslavia it has been possible to address a number of issues relevant to the study of the war-time generation in Croatia. The process of captivity and recruitment of Croatian volunteers has revealed much about the impact of time spent by members of the male war-time generation in Russia. It was been shown through personal recollections and memoirs that many of the inter-ethnic prejudices and attitudes that were present in the 1920s were established during this period in Russia. It has also emerged that many Croatian veterans who spent time in Russia saw their ties to the home front and their families deteriorate due to the difficulty of returning home and of maintaining contact with home whilst in Russia. For veterans such as Lujo Lovrić, Josip Horvat's '1895' generation, and the protagonists of M.N. Ribarić's fiction, this subsequent separation from pre-war kinship groups led them to seek out the company of fellow veterans in the post-war period.

Within Yugoslavia, the volunteers' support for integral Yugoslavism raises the question of Croatia's position in the new state and the contribution it could and should make to a new synthetic culture. The Croatian volunteers who have been studied in this chapter clamoured to take a lead in this new cultural course. Their failure to do so seems to reflect both reluctance on the part of the civilian population to confront the war years, and desire on the part of a Croatian cultural elite to move away from a literature which dwelt on the years 1914-1918. Like the Croatian invalids, volunteers lobbied the government with increasing despair for the benefits they felt they were entitled to from the new state. More than anything, this lobbying can be seen as a

[144] Banić, *Ecco Homo: lik heroja i mučenika* (Belgrade: 1935), p. 25.
[145] Ibid, pp. 17-19.

Figure 1: Unveiling of the Monument to Yugoslav Volunteers at Dobruja 1926, from 'Dobrovoljacki glasnik'. Lujo Lovric is second from left. Note the ceremony's Orthodox rites.

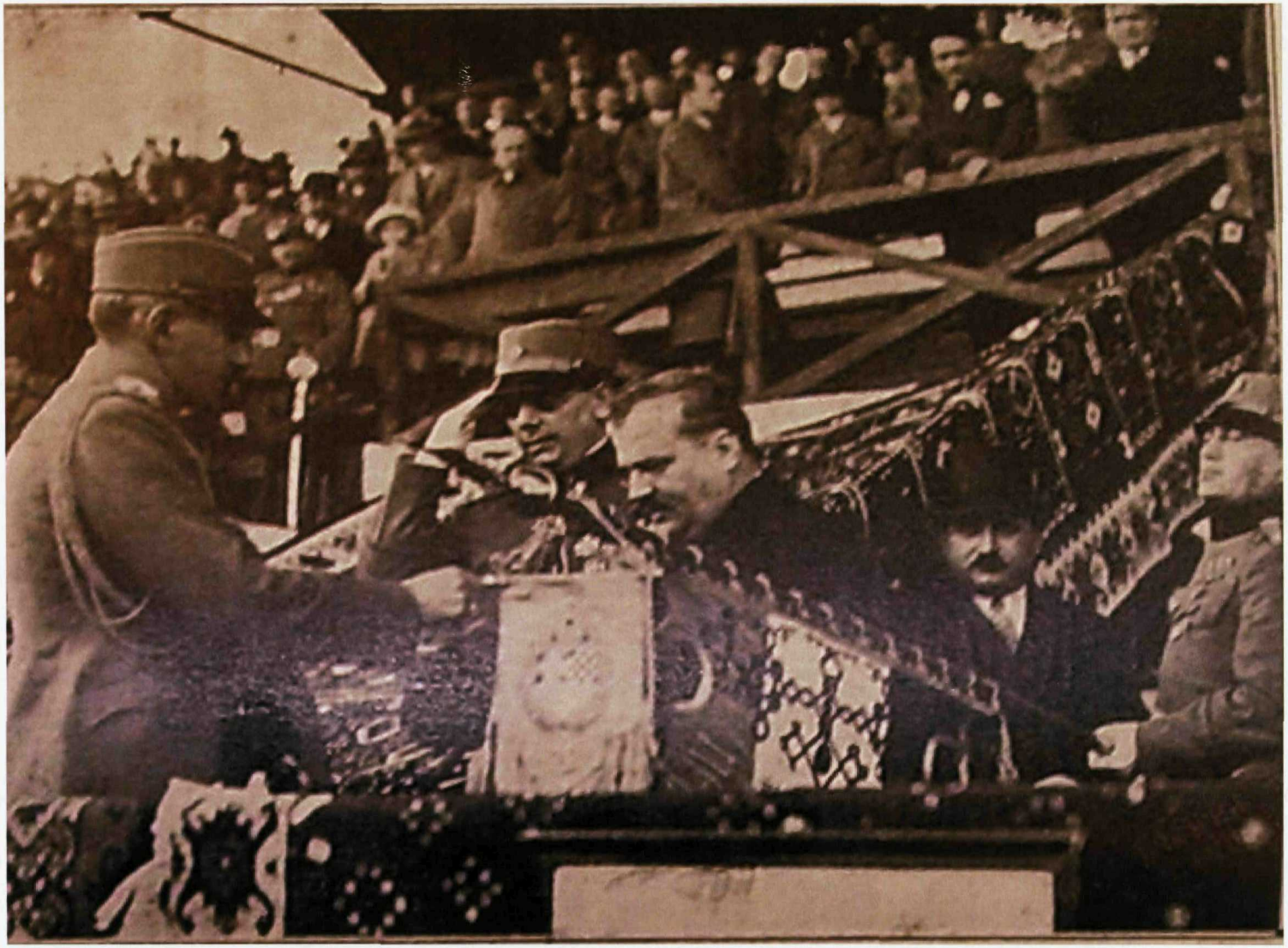

Figure 2: King Alexander (left) and Lujo Lović (second left, saluting) in Belgrade 1931. From 'Dobrovoljački glasnik'.

desire on the part of Croatian veterans to have their war-time sacrifice acknowledged in official and public spheres.

Volunteer links with the pre-war nationalist youth and its self-professed successor ORJUNA raise the question of exactly where a historian should set the generational demarcation line, in other words: how to define the male wartime generation. The emergence of a violent and relatively popular youth movement in the 1920s which claimed to have links with pre-war revolutionary groups and with volunteers suggests a lingering consequence of the war on a new generation of Croatian men. It seems unlikely that ORJUNA, with its glorification of military values (personified by volunteers), its armed and uniformed cadres, and its 'cult of death' would have emerged without taking its cue from the war years. Again, the Romanian Iron Guard movement provides a trans-national comparison, and Codreanu provides an example of a man too young to fight during the war but old enough to cause violence by its end. Unlike the Iron Guard, however, ORJUNA did not identify their enemies along exclusively ethnic lines. *Orjunaši* instead attacked Communists, Frankists, and Radićists. The violence, which has been studied in this chapter and which shall be revisited in the following two chapters, is evidence of the contested nature of both Croatian national sentiment and of the legacy of the war in the period under study. ORJUNA and the volunteers, however, differ from Frankists and Communists in so far as their were using violence not to bring about a revolution, but to protect the acheivements of 'liberation and unification' made during the Great War. It is also notable that by the end of the 1920s, ORJUNA had all but died out. Its fortunes were throughout the decade tied to those of Svetozar Pribićević and the Independent Democratic Party, which gave ORJUNA support and sometimes political protection.[146] Since Pribićević's party was at this time the champion of the *prečani* Serbs in Croatia, it seems likely that the rank and file of ORJUNA were also predominantly Serbs from Croatia. Again, we are reminded that veterans from Croatia are not exclusively Croats, and that the presence of Serb veterans further complicates the legacy of the Great War on the male wartime generation.

There are also certain parallels between the volunteer movements in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and the way that they reveal the cultural and political aspirations of small nations in Eastern Europe after the Great War. In both cases, the

[146] See Hrvoje Matković, *Svetozar Pribićević i Samostalna demokratska stranka do Šestojanuarske diktature* (Zagreb: 1972), pp. 127-135.

image of the volunteer and the myth of volitional sacrifice for the national cause are sacred in the post-war period. In Czechoslovakia, the legion filled the gap created by the absence of a national army during the Great War. The Yugoslav case was complicated by the divided nature of the legacy of the Great War, the belief (in Serbia) in the Serbian army's 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs and the role of Croats and Slovenes in the Habsburg war effort. In this sense, a Yugoslav volunteer army was an important symbol of South Slav national integration in the post-war period. The propaganda value of both of these movements reached back into the war. For Tomaš Masaryk, the creation of a national army was an important part of the wartime diplomatic battle he fought in favour of the creation of a Czech-Slovak nation state,[147] and this was true also of JO members during the Great War. In both Yugoslav and Czechoslovak cases, reluctance on the part of men to rejoin the war hampered recruitment efforts. Before the Bolshevik revolution just 15% of Czech and Slovak prisoners in Russia had volunteered, whilst around 10% of South Slav prisoners fought as volunteers in the Serbian army.[148] That those figures are comparable suggests that caution should be exercised when examining post-war claims about the willingness of men to volunteer (such as those made by Kovać, Diklić, *et al*).

The wartime successes and failures of the two movements seem to have conditioned their impact during the war and after. For the Czech volunteers, the 'victory' at Zborov (July 1917) removed official resistance to the legion and encouraged more Czechs and Slovaks to serve.[149] The commemoration of this battle in the interwar republic of Czechoslovakia is comparable to but greater than the commemoration of the battle of Dobruja in Yugoslavia.[150] The Czech 'anabasis' and subsequent battles against the Bolsheviks during the civil war in Russia were also incorporated into the myth of the Czech Legion during the interwar period.[151] Hostility towards the Bolsheviks and the violence of the Russian civil war is present

---

[147] Z.A.B. Zeman, *The Masaryks: The Making of Czechoslovakia* (London: 1976), p. 98.
[148] Ibid. and Banac 'South Slav POWs in Revolutionary Russia', p. 120.
[149] Zeman, pp. 96-97.
[150] Nancy Wingfield, 'The Battle of Zborov and the Politics of Commemoration in the Czech Lands during the Postwar Period', *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 17, no. 4 (Winter 2003), pp. 654-681.
[151] Indeed, Robert Pynsent has found that Czech writers depicted the legion as 'an island of civilization amidst the barbarous Russian revolutionaries.'. See Robert B. Pynsent 'The Literary Representation of the Czechoslovak "Legions" in Russia' in Mark Cornwall and Robert Evans (eds.), *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalist and Fascist Europe* (Oxford: 2007).

also in the volunteer literature studied in this chapter, and can be attributed to the antithetical position of nation-states throughout Eastern Europe in relation to this kind of socialist revolution. This too was an important aspect of the impact of the Great War in Yugoslavia and throughout the region.

Finally, the study of volunteer veterans from Croatia show how a small group of men fought energetically to carve out a role for themselves as veterans in Yugoslavia, and how they were able to stir non-veterans into action as well. They differ from the other men studied in this thesis in that they are in line with Yugoslavia's foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification'. This chapter has shown how powerful this concept was as a mobilizing force in the Yugoslav kingdom, and has therefore helped us to understand the difficulties Croatian veterans who were not part of this narrative faced in the 1920s.

Chapter Three - Former Habsburg Officers and the Croatian Party of Right 1918-1929

As soldiers in the Monarchy's army, officers of South Slav descent were held in particularly high regard. The regimental annals of the Monarchy recognised that the military frontier in Croatia/Slavonia and its *grenzer* units had served the Habsburgs with fierce loyalty. The reputation of soldiers from this long strip of land (both Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs) survived the frontier's dissolution in 1881, as a new generation of South Slav soldiers kept the region's military tradition alive. Both Svetozar Boroević and Stjepan Sarkotić, ethnic Serb and Croat respectively, were sons of *grenzer* officers from this region. During the war, Boroević commanded an entire army group on the Italian front, attaining the rank of field marshal. Sarkotić, meanwhile, reached the rank of governor-general in Bosnia and Hercegovina. They were just two of a significant number of South Slav officers of high rank fighting for the Monarchy during the Great War. More specifically, a number of officers of Croatian descent proved their loyalty to the Habsburg colours in battle. On the Italian front for example, General Vladimir Laxa fought with distinction alongside Boroević. Both men were awarded the Order of Maria Theresa for their services to the Monarchy's war effort. In occupied Poland, Antun Lipošćak served as governor-general, whilst in Serbia, Johann Graf von Salis Sewis occupied this position for a short period. Also involved in the military occupation of Serbia were lieutenant colonel Slavko Kvaternik and sub-lieutenant Emanuel 'Manko' Gagliardi, the latter serving as chief of police in Kragujevac. For many Serbian civilians and veterans, these men were associated with the odium of occupation in the post-war period. Beyond the army, Croatian officers were well represented in the air force and (especially) in the navy, with the highest ranks being held by staff of this nationality.[1]

This chapter studies how former Habsburg officers of Croatian descent made the transition from war to peace and from empire to nation-state in Yugoslavia. It examines to what extent their training as officers in the Monarchy's army conditioned their fate in the Yugoslav kingdom. Perhaps more than any other group of Croatian veterans, these officers were identified by many with the now defunct Monarchy, and

[1] General Uzelac served as commander of the Monarchy's air force, and Admiral Maksimilijan Njegovan as commander of the navy.

as a dissatisfied group that, despite being defeated, might still try to upset the new order. To what degree this identification was justified can be examined through their activities and organisation in this period. Similar to Croatian volunteers and invalids, a number of these officers formed a society which they claimed was solely constituted to lobby the government for better financial and material conditions.

Their impact on society after the war can also be assessed through the links they had with the Frankists, supporters of the post-war Croatian Party of Right. The deputies of this small Zagreb based party had remained loyal to the Monarchy in the Croatian *Sabor* until the very end of the war, holding out for a 'trialist' reorganisation of the empire which would put South Slavs (i.e., Croats) on an equal footing politically with Germans and Hungarians. For the Frankists, the defeat of the Monarchy and the declaration of unification with Serbia soon after thwarted their hopes of Croatian autonomy. The group found themselves even further adrift when the introduction of universal manhood suffrage in Croatia revealed overwhelming support for the Croatian Peasant Party throughout the country. This revolutionary transformation of the Croatian electorate revealed that the Frankists lacked any kind of popular base in Croatia: their faction in the *Sabor* had previously been flattered by a hugely-restricted franchise. Nevertheless they continued to enjoy the support of a small section of Croatian society. This support, as will be shown, was centred largely in Zagreb, where the Peasant Party was less of a force than in the rest of the country. In the capital, the Frankists' legalistic arguments in favour of Croatian state right and their exclusivist ideology appealed to a certain section of Zagreb's middle class. Furthermore, its identification in the 1920s with Croatia as a defeated nation (closer to successor states such as Austria and Hungary than erstwhile allies such as Serbia) was embraced by a number of former Habsburg officers who resented their loss of status in Yugoslavia. Two leading Frankists would come to epitomise this synthesis in the 1920s, the lawyer Ante Pavelić, and the soldier Gustav Perčec. The former was the party's sole elected representative in Yugoslavia's parliament in the 1920s, the latter served as party secretary and edited the Frankist journal *Hrvatsko pravo.* Pavelić and Perčec helped to establish in Yugoslavia a narrative of resistance to the *status quo* that would remain largely eclipsed by the Peasant Party in Croatia, at least until the death of Stjepan Radić in 1928. This narrative, and the suspicion that Habsburg officers formed a putative anti-state element, originated in the national revolution in Zagreb, October 1918, and this must be the starting point for a discussion of its impact.

3.1. 29 October 1918 and the National Council

Habsburg officers and Frankist legitimists were just part of an aggregation of potential and actual threats the new leaders in Croatia faced as the war in Europe came to an end. The National Council of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (hereafter the National Council) had been formed at the beginning of October 1918 from elements of, *inter alia*, the Croatian wartime Sabor and Slovene delegates to the *Reichsrat* (the Slovene clerical leader Anton Korošec became the council's president). The context for its establishment was the increasing certainty that Austria-Hungary was facing military defeat, and that the empire had lost all control of the region.[2] This loss of control was evinced by the anarchic state of the Croatian countryside at this time. Thousands of conscripts who had deserted the imperial army or had returned from revolutionary Russia had formed armed gangs, so called 'green cadres', and were now roaming the woodlands and countryside of Croatia. Co-ordinated attacks by green cadres on police stations and the property of large estate holders seemed to suggest that these gangs were attempting to carry out a revolution of their own. This was certainly the impression held by sections of the National Council, who feared that many of these men had returned from Russia 'infected' with Bolshevism.[3] In Zagreb itself, contemporary accounts speak of a decay in living standards and the visible effects of a long period of war. Josip Horvat, returning home from Russian captivity, noted the transformation that had taken place in the capital: hospitals full of wounded soldiers and streets teeming with refugees from the south of the country.[4]

Throughout October, the National Council negotiated with elements of the fast disintegrating Monarchy in order to consolidate its position in Zagreb. Significantly, the Croat generals Luka Šnjarić and Mihovil Mihaljević served as intermediaries between the leaders of the National Council and the emperor's circle at Schönbrunn. Initially unwilling to break the oath they had made to the emperor, these two high-ranking officers put themselves at the disposal of the National Council after receiving

---

[2] Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: 1988), p 127.
[3] See Ivo Banac, '"Emperor Charles has become a Comitadji": The Croatian Disturbances of Autumn 1918', in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 70, no.2 (1992).
[4] Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija izmedju dva rata* (Zagreb: 1961), pp. 68-69.

instruction to do so from Charles himself.[5] In Bosnia-Hercegovina, Stjepan Sarkotić was compelled to hand over his regional command to the newly-formed National Council in Sarajevo, also accepting the demise of the Monarchy as a *fait accompli.*[6] In this way, the leaders of the National Council in Zagreb were able to break all ties with the Habsburgs, ending a union which had endured for almost four centuries. The decision to this effect was made on 29 October, and announced by the vice president of the National Council. This act also transferred the power of the Croatian Sabor to the National Council, which prompted the Frankist president Vladimir Prebeg to dissolve his party and await further developments.[7]

29 October 1918 and the severing of all ties with the Monarchy, rich with historical and legal significance, became a key date for Frankists and Habsburg officers alike in the years to come. For them, this was the day that the Croatian nation had finally realised its millennium-old state right. In their interpretation, it marked the beginning of a short period of legitimate national autonomy which was usurped by Serbia, acting in concert with National Council members and without the consent of the nation on 1 December, the day of unification. In fact, this period was marked by an increasingly chaotic situation in the Croatian countryside, and it looked as if the national revolution would be overtaken by a full-scale socialist revolution. This was envisaged by many as a 'Bolshevik' takeover of power which the National Council's meagre military forces, comprised of a minority of former Habsburg soldiers and officers (the majority of soldiers had taken to the countryside), would be unable to resist.

Many former Habsburg officers of Croat descent were perceived by the National Council as a separate threat, but as a threat nevertheless. The National Council sent an armed force to surround the train carrying Sjtepan Sarkotić as it arrived in Zagreb on 8 November.[8] After holding him for ten days he was released from custody and ordered to leave the country (which he did, travelling to Graz).[9] In similarly dramatic fashion, the National Council panicked when learning of the return to Zagreb of Antun Lipošćak, the former governor-general of occupied Poland. The

---

[5] Ibid, p. 136.
[6] Bogdan Krizman, *Hrvatska u prvom svjetskom ratu: hrvatsko-srpski politički odnosi* (Zagreb: 1989), pp. 317-320.
[7] Krizman, p. 309.
[8] *Obzor,* 9 November 1918.
[9] Richard B. Spence, 'General Stephan Freiherr Sarkotić von Lovčen and Croatian Nationalism', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism,* Vol. xvii , no. 1-2 (1990), p. 151.

National Council seemed unconvinced by the general's note of 12 November, welcoming the creation of 'Great Yugoslavia' and offering to put his soldiers at the disposal of the national guard.[10] It was believed instead that he intended, along with a group of fellow officer co-conspirators, to overthrow the National Council and replace it with a military dictatorship. The National Council arrested Lipošćak and a fellow conspirator on the night of 22 November, announcing the next day that they had thwarted a plot involving ex-Habsburg officers throughout the country. [11]

Writing long after the events of autumn 1918, Josip Horvat used the 'Lipošćak Affair' to illustrate the mishandling of contemporary events by the National Council. Horvat claimed that Lipošćak had been harmless, and it was a testament to the National Council's lack of competence that they had not understood this at the time.[12] For Horvat, an eye witness to the national revolution in Zagreb, the fall of the Monarchy had left its supporters in Croatia at a complete loss. His archetype for the small, unreconstructed Frankist/Habsburg officer faction was, as it had been during the war, Dr Mirko Puk. According to Horvat's memoir, Puk had envenomed the atmosphere for South Slav POWs in Russia (1916) by serving as an informant for the Habsburg authorities, providing information on those who had volunteered to fight against the Monarchy (see previous chapter). But in autumn 1918, and without the might of the Habsburg secret police behind him Puk, according to Horvat, was more ridiculous than threatening: 'At that moment the figure of Dr Puk seemed funny and harmless, a fallen caryatid from the discarded curtain of the Habsburg Monarchy.'[13] Horvat, of course, had had a long period to reflect on the events of autumn 1918. He knew what the National Council did not know at the time: that people like Puk and Lipošćak could not muster enough support to roll back the national revolution. But there was also a bitter sense of irony implicit in the author's description of Puk as a disarmed soldier. Horvat knew that this product of the Habsburg staff school would later use his expertise and experience to train volunteers in Ustasha training camps abroad throughout the 1930s.

The perceived threat of officers like Lipošćak and (more urgently) the lawlessness prevailing throughout Croatia/Slavonia provided the immediate context for the National Council's fateful all-night session on 24 November, at which the

[10] HDA, Fond 124 ,'Narodno viječe SHS: Sekcija za organizaciju i agitaciju', opči spisi, box 9.
[11] *Obzor,* 15 February 1919.
[12] Josip Horvat, *Živjeti u Hrvatskoj 1900-1941: zapisci iz nepovrata* (Zagreb: 1984), p. 142.
[13] Ibid, p. 120.

members discussed unification with Serbia and Montenegro. The pro-unification wing of the National Council, dominated by erstwhile Croat-Serb Coalition member Svetozar Pribićević, was able to make a more persuasive case than the Croatian People's Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić, the one member of the central committee who voted against the unification proposal.[14] Radić's famous appeal to the council members not to go 'like drunken geese into the fog' was not ill-considered in the sense that the details of unification had yet to be expressed in clear terms. But the demonstrable inability of the national guard to measure up to its military challenges throughout the country meant that a more protracted debate, as recommended by Radić, would delay the arrival of much needed support from the Serbian army. Nevertheless, his claim that the National Council was acting without the consent of the people of Croatia and therefore without legitimacy would become a tenet of both the Peasant Party and Frankist opposition to the Yugoslav Kingdom in the 1920s.

3.2. 5 December 1918: The Soldiers' Revolt

Immediately after the declaration of unification on 1 December 1918, Frankist leaders in Zagreb began to agitate against the National Council's decision. On 3 December, the Frankists distributed leaflets in Zagreb decrying the unification and claiming that the delegation of the National Council, comprised of just twenty eight people, was not authorised to make such a decision on behalf of the nation. According to the Frankists, the Croatian state had waited one thousand years for just a few weeks of autonomy (from 29 October until 1 December), which was subsequently thrown away in a rash transaction with Serbia.[15] The National Council responded quickly against the pamphleteers, arresting (on 3 December) party leaders Vladimir Prebeg, Josip Pazman, and Milan Kovačević, as well as prominent members Ante Matasić, a former Habsburg general, and Horvat's fallen caryatid, Mirko Puk. [16]

Just two days later, on 5 December, the Frankists were implicated by the National Council once again in a revolt involving soldiers of the 25th Honved Infantry Regiment and the 53rd Infantry Regiment, both stationed in Zagreb. The 25th had only recently returned to the capital having participated, on behalf of the National Council,

[14] Banac, *National Question,* p. 137.
[15] The full text of this leaflet is cited in Čulinović, pp. 157-159.
[16] Bosinka Janjatović, *Politički terror u Hrvatskoj 1918-1935* (Zagreb: 2002), p. 135.

in the occupation of Medjumurje (an operation overseen by Colonel Slavko Kvaternik). Other security assignments had been carried out by these regiments without incident, so it seemed reasonable that the National Council could count on these soldiers as a 'reliable element'.[17] Despite this, Bogdan Krizman, who has written the most complete account of the events of 5 December, notes that by the end of November a 'republican mood', understood by soldiers as an end to war and militarism, had spread to the barracks in Zagreb.[18] That soldiers arrived at this interpretation of republicanism from their experiences in revolutionary Russia and the anti-militarist rhetoric of Stjepan Radić is apparent in the slogans and chants heard on the day of the revolt ('Long live the Croatian Republic!', 'Long live the Bolshevik Republic!', 'Long live Stjepan Radić!').[19] The Frankists, well connected and well organised in Zagreb, were quick to champion the republican cause, dropping their former loyalty to the Habsburgs and demonstrating the kind of opportunism that would come to characterize the party in the 1920s.[20]

After a small group of soldiers, the revolt's ringleaders, handed out weapons in the barracks, the rebels marched through the streets of Zagreb, converging on Jelačić Square where they were met by sailors and (pro-Yugoslav) Sokol gymnasts loyal to the National Council. The ensuing violence resulted in the death of fifteen people: fourteen soldiers and one Sokolist, who was apparently the first to die, shot dead by a soldier.[21] Dušan Simović, in command of the Serbian forces in Zagreb, prudently held his own soldiers back until the revolt had exhausted itself. Not wishing to aggravate the situation by involving the Serbian army, he entered Jelačić Square with his forces at 5pm that day, peacefully disarming the rebels without meeting any kind of resistance.[22] That night the National Council dissolved both of the regiments, and by 10 December their entire army, the national guard, had been liquidated. The National Council also closed down *Dom* and *Hrvatska,* the Peasant and Frankist party newspapers, and arrested the Frankist leaders Ivo Elegović and Vladimir Sachs.[23]

Apart from the immediate consequences of the events of 5 December, the date would continue to resonate with Frankists and their supporters throughout the 1920s.

---

[17] Josip Horvat, *Političke povijest Hrvatske 1918-1929,* p. 166.
[18] Krizman, pp. 361-362.
[19] Ibid, p. 364.
[20] Ibid, pp. 361-362.
[21] Ibid, p. 365.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Horvat, *Političke povijest*, p. 169.

In the Frankists' interpretation of events at the end of 1918, the soldiers' revolt vindicated their opposition to the unification with Serbia and Montenegro, proving that the National Council's decision was illegitimate and that Croats were, from the very beginning, opposed to Yugoslavia. The date 5 December, was understood as an expression of Croatia's desire for autonomy, regained after a thousand years on 29 October and lost, or rather stolen, on 1 December. It would provide an alternative to the officially-sanctioned celebrations of 1 December, and the 'December Victims', the soldiers who died that day, would be recast as the first martyrs of the Croatian nation in the new state.

3.3. Habsburg Officers into Yugoslav Officers

The 5 December revolt and the Lipošćak affair also highlighted the challenges that faced those responsible for creating a coherent and effective army in Yugoslavia. The tiny forces of the National Council had proven unequal to the daunting array of security threats throughout the country. Furthermore, the loyalty of soldiers who had until recently fought under Habsburg colours was still not certain. In one respect, the creation of such an army was another of the administrative challenges facing a state comprised of divergent cultural, political, and social traditions. These challenges included land reform, unifying the state's tax code, and introducing a single currency. But the army issue also touched on the crux of the South Slav state-building experience in the 1920s: how to create a unified and effective body comprised of elements that had been on opposing sides (although not always in combat against one another) during the war.

Mile Bjelajac, in his study of the Yugoslav kingdom's army, has carried out extensive research into official correspondence and orders in its formative years, 1918-1921. He has concluded that the army's commanders, the majority of whom were Serbian, believed that the most important unifying factor in the new army would be its officer corps. Furthermore, policy makers and military leaders felt that good relations between officers of the former Serbian army and those who had fought in the Austro-Hungarian army were of the utmost importance in creating a unified spirit and effective level of morale.[24]

[24] Mile Bjelajac, *Vojska kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca 1918-1921* (Belgrade: 1988), p. 94.

The delicate task of creating a 'Yugoslav' officer corps was facilitated, to a certain extent, by two factors. Firstly, a number of the most intransigent ex-Habsburg officers had already decided to 'opt out' of the newly formed corps. For many of these, Stjepan Sarkotić would become a kind of totem. He was not the only officer of Croatian descent to leave Yugoslavia at this time in order to 'await developments', but he certainly had the highest profile.[25] In addition to this, reductions in the size of the corps meant that a number of officers from the 'newly-associated' lands (i.e., outside of Serbia) were also retired from the active list.[26] These included Baron Salis-Sewis, whose role as head of the occupation in Serbia, despite lasting just six months, made his application unacceptable to officers from that country. Antun Lipošćak was also taken off the active list and kept under close surveillance by the authorities, in wake of the events of November 1918.[27]

Slavko Kvaternik, who had also been involved in the occupation of Serbia, was admitted into the new army in March 1919, having served as chief of staff for the National Council's small armed forces. However, this politically-active officer served for just a short spell in the Yugoslav kingdom's armed forces. In 1920, after an interview with the minister of defence Mate Drinković, he resigned his commission; his next military engagement would be with Ante Pavelić's Ustasha organization, and at the expense of the Yugoslav kingdom. Gustav Perčec's term in the Yugoslav army also ended soon after that of Kvaternik. He resigned when it was discovered that he had been involved in corruption surrounding the supply of meat to the army's Zagreb garrison.[28]

Perčec and Kvaternik were not isolated examples. In March 1920, General Branko Jovanović of the Fourth Armoured Division (Zagreb) sent a classified memorandum to the High Command in which he voiced concerns about the integration of ex-Habsburg officers into the new corps. These officers, he noted, had made a number of complaints regarding their status in the new army, including being passed over for promotion, and being treated 'tactlessly' by their Serbian colleagues. Jovanović was clearly suspicious of these ex-Habsburg officers, since he suggested to

---

[25] Ibid, p. 33.
[26] Ibid, p. 92.
[27] In June 1919, a request made by Lipošćak to travel to Sisak to visit his parents was refused by the military authorities in Zagreb. The refusal note claimed that Lipošćak, 'was not well disposed towards our national cause, and was probably working against it.' HDA, fond 78, 'Predsjedništvo Zemalske vlade 1869-1921' box 979.
[28] Bjelajac, *Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multietničkom armijom 1918—1991* (Belgrade: 1999), p. 24.

his superiors that they install a quota system which would ensure a preponderance of Serbian officers in every regiment. This was desirable, he argued, since Serbian officers were more reliable than their ex-Habsburg colleagues.[29] He ended his report with a pessimistic estimate of the chances of integrating these officers into the new army, stating:

> It can be perceived in every single one of them that they are 'dynastic' and that the Austrian military education had *killed any sense of nationalism.* As far as training is concerned, most of them are modestly equipped. A large number of them are constantly off sick, which leads to resentment from those who do work, and from Serbian officers.[30] [italics added]

Jovanović's memorandum and the difficulties experienced in trying to create an integrated officer corps may be another reflection of the prejudice and distrust which seems to have marked relations between Serbian and non-Serbian veterans in the 1920s. In addition to Jovanović's memorandum comments such as these made in May 1920 by Marko Skuljević, a Croatian captain in the Yugoslav kingdom's army suggest that ex-Habsburg officers were suffering a similar stigmatization

> We, officers, are upbraided by the "patriots," who claim that *we are Frankists*, Austrians – that we are unreliable. I ask myself, can I, can any man with a morsel of honour, remain in this kind of army? My service as an active officer in the former A-H army should not imply that I am a traitor – though this was said to us at the end of 1918 and at the beginning of 1919 – or a thief.[31] [italics added]

A discussion, then, of Croatian ex-Habsburg officers in the 1920s and their links to anti-state elements at home and abroad needs to take into account these negative attitudes towards non-Serbian veterans which, if not prevalent, were certainly present in the post-war atmosphere, as the study of Croatian invalids has shown. This is important background to police and military reports into ex-Habsburg officers in the 1920s, and should qualify any conclusions made from these sources. Undoubtedly a Serbian officer such as Branko Jovanović had a different

[29] Bjelajac, *Vojska*, p. 95.
[30] Cited in Ibid.
[31] Captain Marko Škuljević to Djuro Šurmin, Zaprešić (Croatia), cited in Banac *National Question,* p. 151.

understanding of what constituted the national spirit in Yugoslavia than, say, a Croatian officer such as Marko Skuljević. The latter notes that he was unfairly associated with the Frankists. If this association, as Skuljević asserts, is false, then he was merely being stereotyped with officers such as Mirko Puk, Gustav Perčec, and Slavko Stancer. All of these veterans were prominent members of the Frankist party and were able to reconcile this affiliation with fighting willingly and loyally for the Monarchy. These officers, then, were not so much 'beyond nationalism'[32] during the war, as they were fighting for their (Croatian) national cause within the framework of the Monarchy. To what extent this Frankist/ex-officer synthesis was a reality and to what extent it was a stereotype needs to be examined further before any conclusions about its character and impact in the 1920s can be made.

3.4. Habsburg Officers as Anti-State Element: The Croatian Legion and the Croatian Committee

In the spring of 1919 the American Lieutenant Leroy King and the British officer Major Arthur Temperley, were reporting on conditions in Zagreb on behalf of their respective governments. The two Allied officers met and compared their findings, referencing one another in their reports home. King had been sent from Belgrade to Zagreb at the end of February to investigate rumours that the Croats did not want to be part of the new kingdom.[33] Under the heading 'The Reactionaries and Discontented', King placed 'ex-officers of the Austrian Army (Jugoslavs by blood) who have been retired because of their political leanings to the old regime.'[34] These officers, he reported, were a source of potential trouble in Croatia, they 'are passive now, but [...] spread pessimism and are ready to urge discontent.'[35] He also noted that the presence of the Serbian army was increasingly becoming a cause of resentment amongst Croats in Zagreb:

> I can imagine what the ex-Austrian officers, who glare at one from the cafes, must say about the Serbs. This growing unpopularity of the Serbian army will easily be

[32] The term is Istvan Deak's. See Istvan Deak, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York, Oxford: 1990).
[33] 'Leroy King's Reports from Croatia, March-May 1919', *Journal of Croatian Studies,* vol. 1 (1960).
[34] Ibid, p. 83.
[35] Ibid, p. 84.

> transformed into dislike of the Serbian people and influence. It is a dislike which already exists to some extent, and Major Temperley agrees with me in thinking it a real danger.[36]

Temperley had passed on similar intelligence to the regent Alexander in Belgrade. Reporting on the 'Political Situation in Croatia' at the end of March, he informed the British that he had been questioned by Alexander on the Croats. He had noted in that interview that thirty six retired generals and perhaps '500 staff or field officers' resided in the neighbourhood of Zagreb, and that 'generally speaking the officers are a more active body of discontented persons than the nobles.'[37]

Any conclusions made about these reports must first consider the violent state of flux which post-war Zagreb was in at this time. King and Temperley, as well as the National Council and the regent, could not possibly have predicted the dramatic transformation of society that would come as the result of the introduction of universal manhood suffrage throughout the country. This transformation would shift the focus of political life in Croatia from the capital to the countryside and make Stjepan Radić the *de facto* spokesperson of all Croats. But in March 1919 observers like King and Temperley were more likely to look to the recent past and the old order for potential troublemakers. This was also the wisdom which informed the National Council's cautious treatment of officers in the immediate post-war period. After all, a Habsburg restoration or some form of counter-revolution affected by elements of the old order remained a real possibility.

Indeed, a plot involving ex-Habsburg officers and Frankist émigrés was formed and eventually exposed by authorities over the course of 1919 and 1920. The impact of the 'Croatian Committee' and of the 'Croatian Legion' is important to the study of both these groups in the 1920s as it compounded the suspicion with which they were treated by authorities in the Yugoslav kingdom. The former was established in the summer of 1919 for the purpose of effecting the kind of counter-revolution that the authorities feared. The latter was a paramilitary group comprised of Croatian ex-officers and POWs and based, eventually, in Miklós Horthy's Hungary. Exact data concerning the Croatian Committee and the Croatian Legion (especially numbers of those involved) remain sparse, and historians such as Ivo Banac and Bosiljka

---

[36] Ibid, p. 85.
[37] NA, FO371/3508, 'The Political Situation in Croatia – 31st March 1919'.

Janjatović have noted the difficulty of trying to reconstruct their story.[38] These problems are exacerbated by the unreliability of one of the key sources on the group's activities, the account of its leader-turned Yugoslav government informer, ex-Habsburg officer and Frankist, Emanuel 'Manko' Gagliardi, made available in 1922.[39] According to Gagliardi, the Committee started out as a propaganda council, with the intention of calling for the withdrawal of the Serbian army and free elections in Croatia. This course of action had been decided in Austria in February 1919, after Gagliardi had met with two former Habsburg officers of Croatian descent, Beno Klobučarić and Vilim Stipetić. The latter, according to Gagliardi's account, had considered joining the Yugoslav army, but decided not to having been dissuaded by Slavko Kvaternik.[40] In Austria, the émigrés maintained contacts with Hungarian legitimists and with the Italian embassy.[41] Both had an interest in destabilizing Yugoslavia and saw the Croatian émigrés as a means of doing so.

The formation of a Croatian Legion, a volunteer force based in Hungary (Koszeg, and then later Zalaegerszeg), was announced by the Committee in November 1919.[42] Its chief recruiter was Stipe Duić, a former lieutenant colonel in the Monarchy's army and a Habsburg legitimist. He was allowed by the Italian government to tour their POW camps garnering support for the Committee's cause.[43] The extent to which the Croatian Committee and the Croatian Legion posed a credible threat to Yugoslavia remains unclear. The Committee's propaganda boasted of 300,000 soldiers, although this was certainly an exaggeration designed to boost its support.[44] Authorities in Belgrade and in Zagreb were aware of the activities of the two bodies from a very early stage.[45] They supplied a figure derived from 'various sources' of 250 officers, with a further fifty 'higher officers', also noting the support of Hungarian legitimists and the existence of a spy network in Vojvodina (Novi

---

[38] See Banac, *National Question*, p. 264: 'The history of Frankist emigration is complex and must of necessity be constructed from sources that are hostile.'; and Janjatović, *Politički teror,*, p. 196, 'on the basis of everything put forward it can be concluded that the political activity of the Croatian Committee and the work of the Croatian Legion have not been satisfactorily researched, and that this historiographical problem remains in need of further research.'

[39] Emanuel Gagliardi, *Istina o hrvatskom emigrantskom revolucionarnom komitetu 1919-1921,* (n.p. : 1922).

[40] Ibid, p. 6. In fact the committee was formed a few months later, in May 1919. See Banac, *National Question,* p. 264.

[41] Vuk Vinaver, *Jugoslavija i Mađarska 1918-1933* (Belgrade: 1971), p. 120.

[42] Banac, *National Question,* p. 264.

[43] HAD, fond 1363, 'Politička situacija' box 5.

[44] Banac, *National Question,* p. 264.

[45] HDA, Fond 1363 ,Politička situacija' box 5.

Sad).[46] In a letter addressed to Peasant Party deputy Vladko Maček and reprinted in Belgrade's *Politika* newspaper, Vladimir Sachs, a Croatian Committee member and Frankist, suggested the actual total was nearer to 100 men.[47]

Presuming that Sachs' figure is closest to the truth, it seems likely that these émigrés were counting on a number of other factors which might offset their lack of manpower. Widespread discontent within Croatia at the unification was taken for granted amongst Frankists, as has been shown. More specifically, it was felt that disgruntled Croatian officers and soldiers within the Yugoslav army would support any putative uprising against the Serbians, if only because conditions in the barracks were so appalling. If there were any doubts about this, they had the events of 5 December as well as the word of the Legion's commander, a former captain in the Habsburg army named Josip Metzger. Metzger had served briefly in the army of the National Council, where he had attempted to organize a military revolt in concert with Bolshevik sympathisers such as Vladimir Čopić. His alliance with the Communists was merely tactical however. When the revolt fell through, Metzger left the country and remained abroad for the rest of the decade, becoming one of the founder members of Pavelić and Perčec's Ustasha.[48] He had assured his Bolshevik co-conspirators that Croatian soldiers would support a revolt, and it can be presumed he would have assured the Croatian Committee in similar terms.[49]

In addition to the potential for revolution at home, this group of officers and would-be militants could look to the example set by other paramilitary groups in Europe, such as the *Freikorps* in Germany, Gabriele D'Annunzio's volunteer army in Fiume (Rijeka), the Szeged counter revolutionaries in Hungary, and the Austrian *Heimwehr*. For each of these groups, comprised mainly of former officers and soldiers, the Armistice of 1918 marked a new stage in the war, rather than its cessation. These veterans had proven, with varying degrees of success, that treaty obligations need not be considered binding, and that political process could be abandoned in favour of military action. They provided a context and a precedent for the Croatian émigrés, and examples of the Croatian Committee seeking allies or co-

[46] Ibid.
[47] NA, FO 371/6194.
[48] See 'Josip Metzger' in Darko Stuparić (ed.), *Tko je tko u NDH* (Zagreb 1997).
[49] See Ivan Očak, *Afera Diamenstein: prvi antikomunistički proces u kraljevstvu srba, hrvata, i slovenaca (1919),* (Zagreb: 1988), pp. 126-138.

operating with like-minded parties in these groups have been well-documented.[50] Indeed, the Croatian Committee appear to have shared D'Annunzio's taste for spectacle; a flight over Zagreb in February 1920 (in a plane on loan from Italy) for the purpose of dropping propaganda leaflets echoed D'Annunzio's famous flight over Vienna in August 1918.[51]

The denouement for the Croatian Committee came at the end of 1920, after the émigrés' foreign connections became known to the press in Yugoslavia (September). The government in Belgrade sent a letter of protest to Vienna and Budapest, and this was enough to end the group's capacity for armed insurrection (if it had ever had such a capacity).[52] In Zagreb, a number of Frankists believed to have co-operated with the émigrés, most notably the historian Milan Šufflay and lawyer/publicist Ivo Pilar, were arrested and tried on charges of treason. The trial, which took place over the summer of 1921, became a *cause célèbre* in the national press, and the defendants were represented by leading Frankist Ante Pavelić. Of the accused, Pavelić told the court, 'that this revolutionary organisation was not serious, rather it was very trivial...the whole group did not amount to anything, a few trivial people, playing at being diplomats and politicians, who were not capable of taking any serious action.'[53] Pavelić was, of course, attempting to diminish the severity of the charges against his clients, but Josip Horvat, a less partial observer, also considered the whole plot somewhat fantastic. Gagliardi, he wrote, had been the puppet master of the whole affair, 'that man with the stature of Sancho Panza, with a mask of a most smiling and good-natured gentleman which was a kind of 'lock', which securely concealed a scoundrel.'[54] By the time of the trial, Gagliardi had betrayed his erstwhile co-conspirators, providing information on them to the Belgrade authorities in exchange for leniency.

Notwithstanding this apparent lack of efficacy, the Committee did provide a kind of prototype for the wave of Frankist émigrés, led by Gustav Perčec and Pavelić himself, who left the Yugoslav kingdom at the beginning of 1929 and established the

[50] The Interior Ministry in Belgrade reported that a number of former officers of Croatian descent were receiving food and equipment from Budapest, and that Andrassy planned to use Croatian officers in an attempt to restore Charles to the throne in Hungary. See Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, 'Lomljene višestoljetnih veza između Hrvatske i Mađarske nakon prvog svjetskog rata', *Historijski zbornik,* god. xlviii. 1995, pp. 134-135.
[51] Vinaver, pp. 121-122.
[52] Ibid, p. 124.
[53] Janjatović, p. 218.
[54] Horvat, *Hrvatski panoptikum* (Zagreb: 1965), p. 218.

Ustasha paramilitary group against King Alexander's dictatorship. Veterans of the Croatian Legion and former Habsburg officers such as Josip Metzger (who had been living in Hungary since 1921) and Stipe Duić were once again involved, and Stjepan Sarkotić provided support and advice for both groups. On both occasions, émigré groups maintained links with supporters in Croatia and allowed themselves to be used by countries which had an interest in destabilizing the regime in Belgrade. Finally, both the Croatian Legion/Committee and the Ustasha comprised to a large extent Frankists and ex-Habsburg officers, the latter providing the military knowledge and experience with which to realise the political goals they shared with the former.

It is clear that the Croatian Committee and the Croatian Legion were qualitatively different from the other veterans' groups that have thus far been analysed. Unlike invalid or volunteer veteran societies, the ex-officers involved with the Croatian Legion were motivated solely by political factors; they wanted to achieve autonomy for Croatia and sought to do so by effecting a revolutionary change in the Yugoslav kingdom. Again, they seem closer in kind to the various armed groups of veterans which emerged in the 1920s throughout Europe, some of whom the Croatian émigrés made contact with.

3.5. The Retired Officers' Society in Zagreb

The Croatian Legion and Committee were not the only examples of ex-Habsburg officers organising in the post-war period. A society of retired officers, which bore greater similarity to invalid and volunteer veteran societies in Croatia, soon emerged in Zagreb. Whilst professing to be a non-political organisation, the group had enough Frankist connections to earn the enmity of the authorities, including the interior minister, as well as certain sections of the public. The sources reveal that some Habsburg officers in Zagreb were meeting to discuss their position in the post-war kingdom at a very early stage, far sooner than invalids or volunteers. *Obzor* reports that a small number of officers met on 7 December 1918, less than a week after unification with Serbia and Montenegro, to discuss issues which would arise from their imminent demobilization.[55] These officers made a series of 'demands' which

[55] *Obzor,* 10 December 1918.

they must have felt would ease their transition to civilian life.[56] *Obzor* followed up this report a day later by noting that those who had resisted and fought against the Monarchy during the war had not issued any such demands as yet. The implication was that others were more deserving in the new state than these officers.[57] *Obzor* reported on two more meetings of this embryonic veterans' society in December 1918. The second of these, despite being attended by Vilim Bukšeg from the Department of Social Protection, was broken up by local authorities since the officers did not hold the correct permit.[58] This issue was very probably a red herring. *Obzor* would later report (April 1919) that these small gatherings were suppressed by the National Council since it considered the officers a potentially subversive group. This would certainly correlate with the National Council's cautious attitude to officers such as Sarkotić and Lipošćak. The article also reported that the general public showed very little interest in these veterans.[59]

After this initial period of meetings and suppression, there appears to be no further attempt amongst retired officers to organise themselves until spring 1920. The reasons for this hiatus are unclear, and none are given by members of the newly-formed society. It is possible that, after experiencing difficulties with the authorities they decided to leave their 'demands' until they had a clearer understanding of their position in the new state. It may also be the case that the emergence of other veteran societies throughout the country provided the impetus for this second wave of organisation amongst retired officers, or that the increasing number of ex-Habsburg officers who were removed from the active list over the course of 1919 created a greater demand for such a society.

The first meeting of the newly-formed society was held in March 1920, and presided over by Antun Lipošćak, the former Habsburg general who had been arrested by the National Council during the revolution of 1918. Lipošćak announced that the aims of the society were 'to promote the material welfare of retired officers and military personal/widows and orphans of military personal.' According to the statute submitted to local authorities in Zagreb, the 'Society of Retired Officers and Military Personnel in Croatia and Slavonia' was, like the volunteer and invalid societies, a

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid, 11 December 1918.
[58] *Obzor,* 14 December 1918, 22 December 1918.
[59] Ibid, 1 April 1919.

non-political organisation.[60] Lipošćak underlined this last point, emphasizing the society's loyalty to Yugoslavia, and claiming that officers such as himself had joined the army for material reasons (i.e., they were career officers trying to make a living), and that, in what was surely a reference to the now exposed Croatian Committee, 'we are not a destructive element; rather, if we organize, a group of serious and free men, each with their own political persuasion, but as citizens not amenable to political adventures and suggestions.'[61] Lipošćak also suggested that a congratulatory note should be sent to the National Council [sic], which the society agreed to, as well as electing the former general as their first president.[62]

The first meeting was attended by 145 people,[63] slightly less than the 200 (approx) who came to the first meeting of the Croatian Invalid Society. The officers were a smaller and more elite group of veterans, and this may also explain why the society restricted its activities to Zagreb. Unlike other veteran organisations, the majority of its small membership was based in the capital. They also merited, at least initially, less attention than both invalids and volunteers in the press. *Obzor* reported that the society was holding its annual general meeting at the beginning of 1922.[64] The newspaper followed this up with a report on the decisions made at the meeting, but refrained from further editorialization.[65] *Hrvat,* the main organ of the *Hrvatska zajednica* (Croatian Union), reported on the first meeting of the society in spring 1920 and printed a quotation from Antun Lipošćak (see above).[66] In the summer of that year, *Hrvatski misao,* a Frankist newspaper, wrote about the several hundred Croatian officers who found themselves in a legal limbo in the new state, and of their unenviable position because of this. The newspaper also suggested that there were around 600 such officers in and around Zagreb.[67]

It was an article printed in *Politika*, however, that raised the profile of the group and, indirectly, prompted a full investigation of its activities by local authorities in Zagreb. In March 1922, with the Croatian Committee and the treason trial in

---

[60] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'.
[61] Reported in *Hrvat,* 2 April 1920.
[62] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'.
[63] Ibid.
[64] *Obzor,* 21 January 1922.
[65] Ibid, 24 February 1922.
[66] *Hrvat,* 2 April 1920.
[67] *Hrvatski misao,* 20 July 1920.

Zagreb still relatively fresh in the public mind, the Belgrade daily printed an article on the officers' society. In it they claimed that the retired officers were separatists and that they were meeting in order to organize an army to fight for a republican Croatia.[68] These claims, although unsubstantiated, were enough to mobilise the recently formed Yugoslav nationalist youth group J.N.N.O. (*Jugoslovenske Napredno-Nacionalne Omladine*, the Yugoslav Progessive Nationalist Youth, soon to be known as ORJUNA), who decided to take action during a 'Family Evening' the society was due to hold on 25 March. According to reports, around 200 members of the J.N.N.O., led by the leader of the group's Zagreb chapter, Berislav Andjelović, stormed into the building on Woodrow Wilson Square in which the society was holding its function and, brandishing sticks, clubs, and pistols, demanded that the officers (about 80-90 of them) disperse.[69] Although no one on either side was seriously injured (later demonstrations would prove more lethal) and peace was eventually restored, local authorities called to the scene decided that in order to avoid further trouble, the meeting should be dispersed.[70] J.N.N.O. leader Niko Bartulović would later boast of the incident in his memoirs:

> Under the auspices of Salis-Sewis, the former governor-general of occupied Serbia, they held a provocative Austrian-military celebration. The celebration took place in the halls of the separatist Croatian Sokol [gymnastic association] but was halted by members of J.N.N.O [*Jugoslovenska Narodna Naciolnalistička omladina:* the Yugoslav Nation's Nationalist Youth] in Zagreb, the appearance of which was noted as the first counter-strike against the shameful remnants of Hungaro-Austrian butchery.[71]

The events of 25 March seem to have alerted the authorities in Zagreb to both the J.N.N.O. and the Retired Officers' Society as groups which warranted further investigation. On 4 April, Zagreb municipal council sent a note of protest to Belgrade that the existence of the J.N.N.O. was tolerated by the government, even funded by

---

[68] Reported in *Obzor* 26 March 1922.
[69] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'
[70] Ibid.
[71] Niko Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune: istorijat jugoslavenskog omladinskog pokreta* (Split 1925), p. 79.

it.[72] This was the first of several notes sent to Belgrade in the 1920s concerning the J.N.N.O. and its links with the government, notes which seem to confirm both the existence of such links *and* that various governments continued to tolerate the movement and its violent demonstrations.[73] The Retired Officers' Society, on the other hand, fared less well from official interest. The Zagreb authorities deemed the group worthy of a thorough investigation, the purpose of which was to discover whether or not the officers really did pose a threat to state security. This investigation and the subsequent official interest in the society is a key source for understanding the nature of the connections between Frankists and ex-Habsburg officers in post-war Zagreb, as well as attitudes towards these groups in official circles.

The investigation, conducted by local authorities in Zagreb, supplied a full list of members of the society, which was divided into two parts. The first list of 'founder members' was comprised of 226 names, individuals as well as companies and organisations, which supported the Retired Officers Society. The list revealed that a number of prominent public persons were involved with the society, including the mayor of Zagreb Vjekoslav Heinzel, his colleague in the *Hrvatska zajednica* Svetozar Rittig, and the archbishop of Zagreb, Ante Bauer. Major Zagreb companies such as the Bank of Croatia (*Hrvatska banka*), and the First Croatian Building Society (*Prva hrvatska štedionica*) were also on the list, as well as *Dom,* the newspaper of the Croatian Republican Peasant Party, which was based in Zagreb. Finally, the investigation revealed that the larger part of the Frankist leadership was also amongst the society's founders: Vladimir Prebeg, Ante Pavelić, Josip Pazman, and Dragutin Hrvoj. At the top of the list the investigators had placed Milan Gregorić, a former captain in the Austro-Hungarian Army who was suspected of having links with the Croatian Committee. Because of this suspected involvement, a full dossier on Gregorić was supplied, although it was also noted that this member was now permanently based in Budapest.[74]

The second list, 'regular members', was comprised of the officers themselves, and included over 320 names. The list included some of the highest ranking South

---

[72] HDA fond 1363 'Politička situacija', box 8.

[73] In 1925, a civil servant working for the Interior Ministry complained that a parliamentary deputy from Sisak was actually passing weapons to members of ORJUNA. See ibid, box 16. Another complaint was made in 1926, this time specifically against Berislav Andjelović, and how he was 'protected by state authorities' in order that he might continue his violent occupation. See ibid, box 17.

[74] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'.

Slav officers from the former Habsburg army. As well as Lipošćak and Salis Sewis, both of whom had served as presidents of the society, there was Slavko Kvaternik, and former generals Vladimir Laxa, Veceslav Henneberg and Vjekoslav Petković (the last of whom had served in the military occupation of Montenegro).[75] The list included a large number of officers (over 25) who had achieved this rank.[76] Again, the list included a number of prominent Frankists or officers associated with the Frankist party.[77] A notable Frankist/officer absentee, however, was Gustav Perčec, who at the time of the investigation was still serving in the Yugoslav army. Marko Skuljević, the captain who had complained of being branded a Frankist by his Serbian colleagues in the Yugoslav army, was also a member.[78]

Despite the notable presence - perhaps even predominance - of a 'Frankist wing' in the society, it would be an oversimplification to conclude, as the J.N.N.O. had, that the retired officers' society was comprised exclusively of such elements. As has been noted, the list of the group's founder members included a cross section of Zagreb's political and civil society. In addition to this, cross-referencing the list of regular members with files of officers on Yugoslavia's active list during the 1920s reveals a similar level of diversity. Vilim Klobučar, for example, was a member of the retired officers' society *whilst* on the Kingdom's active list. Far from being considered dangerous, Klobučar was promoted to commander of the Adriatic Division in August 1921, and continued to serve in the Yugoslav army throughout the interwar period.[79] Another member, Božidar Amšel, had served on the Russian front during the war before being accepted into the Yugoslav army in March 1919. Amšel also remained on the active list throughout the 1920s.[80] The same was true of Antun Lovrić, although Lovrić differed from Amšel and Klobučar in that, born in 1901, he had not even fought in the war.[81] This was also the case for Tomo Katušić, another

[75] See Vjekoslav Petković, in *Tko je tko u NDH*.
[76] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'.
[77] Such as Milan Praunsperger, Milan Babić, Slavko Stančer, Mihal Pisačić, Krunoslav Cvitaš, and Dušan Kralj.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Vojnoistorijski institut Beograd, 'Dosije oficira Vojske Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca' 735/727, 'Vilim Klobučar'.
[80] Ibid, 21/505, 'Božidar Đuro Amšel'.
[81] Ibid, 904/490, 'Antun Ivan Lovrić'.

non veteran, born in 1900, who spent the war in military academy and also served in the army throughout the interwar period.[82]

The list also contained a number of officers who, according to their files, had been relieved from the Yugoslav army for no other reason than that they were physically unfit for soldiering. Amongst these was Petar Milutin Kvaternik, who, like his brother Slavko, was initially accepted into the Yugoslav army. Petar Kvaternik was taken off the active list, however, in October 1921 and pronounced an 80% invalid by a commission in 1923.[83] Dušan Grubić, a *prečani* Serb who served in the Monarchy's army and later with the national guard in the liberation of Medjumurje was also declared unfit for service, having lost his right leg during the war.[84] The society even had a fully certified Yugoslav volunteer amongst it membership. Mirko Posavec, from Zagreb, had served in the 8th Volunteer division in Russia, having been captured fighting on the eastern front in April 1915.[85]

The presence of such a varied group of veterans seems to suggest that the society was both more and less than what the authorities had feared. More, in that it was not comprised merely of former officers with a grudge against Serbia. In fact, as has been shown, the society boasted members of various backgrounds, and even some Serbs. But it was also less in that, since it was comprised of so many different elements, it could not possibly have been the 'republican army' in waiting that *Politika* had claimed it was. On the contrary, after reporting on the society's meetings over the preceding years, the investigators decided that there was 'nothing suspicious' about the group.[86] Nevertheless, the society was dissolved in the interests of public security (the authorities feared further attacks), only to be allowed to reconvene in spring of 1923, after an intense period of lobbying on the part of the society's lawyer, a Frankist named Milan Dečak.[87]

Like the Croatian Invalids' Society, the Retired Officers' Society was established with a non-political, humanitarian statute, and with the express intention of improving the material conditions of its members. This broad platform attracted

[82] Ibid, 711/141, 'Tomo Katušić'.
[83] Ibid, 852/925, 'Petar Milutin Ljudevit Kvaternik'.
[84] Ibid, 487/674, 'Dušan Milan Grubić'.
[85] Ibid, 1420/558, 'Mirko Posavec', his file, however, reveals that his spell in the Serbian army ended in March 1917, suggesting that he dropped out of the division following the February Revolution.
[86] HDA, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb, 4998 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji'
[87] Ibid. The lawyer in charge of this lobbying was Milan Dečak, himself a Frankist and one of the leaders of the renegade Croatian Sokol movement in Zagreb.

small but diverse memberships and led to a lack of homogeneity in both groups (here there is a marked difference between Croatian invalids/ex-officers and the Croatian Volunteer Union, the latter closely vetting its membership to ensure that only genuine volunteers could benefit from the privileges the union provided). Also, both invalids and ex-officers were identified by certain sections of Yugoslavia's bureaucracy as soldiers of a defeated enemy. For ex-officers the culmination of this association came in July 1923, when the (Serbian) interior minister Milorad Vujičić demanded that the society be dissolved. The minister, in a revealing slip, incorrectly identified the society as 'The Union of Officers of the former Austro-Hungarian Army' and stated in a letter to authorities in Zagreb that, 'it is an anomaly that they [the ex officers], under the name of a former state which acted against our liberation, associate to this day...'[88] Despite protestations from authorities in Zagreb that the society did not go by that name, and that its membership included a number of Serbs as well as people such as Guido Hrenjanović (an erstwhile deputy of the Croat-Serb Coalition who had done much for the liberation of the South Slav lands), the minister's order was carried out.[89]

The retired officers, then, paid the price for being targeted by the Yugoslav nationalist youth and for having links to the Frankists in Zagreb. It has been shown that authorities in Yugoslavia were hostile to both Habsburg officers and Frankists from the very beginning of the state's existence. This hostility was compounded following the exposure of the Croatian Committee and the Croatian Legion, and the actions of Zagreb authorities in investigating the group must be understood in this context. It should also be noted that no substantial links were found between the Retired Officers' Society and the Frankist émigrés, and in all likelihood did not exist. With this in mind, the attack in 1922 can be seen as a symbolic, Sorelian act of violence against a perceived enemy, rather than a measured response to a genuine threat. The previous chapter established the existence of links between ORJUNA and the volunteer movement in Croatia, and showed how ORJUNA perceived the post-war period as a struggle to protect the volunteers' war-time goals. It is no coincidence that the movement singled out Baron Salis-Sewis, who at the time of the attack was the society's president, as their main target. Salis-Sewis, as a governor-general of occupied Serbia during the war, was an important symbol of the old, defeated order,

[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

and therefore an object of enmity to the Yugoslav nationalists, as were all Frankists and ex-officers. Similarly, Vujičić's decision to dissolve the society in 1923 was based less on an objective understanding of how great a threat the society posed than hostility towards veterans of an enemy state. His comments are quite unequivocal on this matter, and it is further evidence to suggest that an institutionalised prejudice existed against non-Serbian veterans in the Yugoslav Kingdom in the 1920s. The existence of numerous directives and orders concerning problems in relations between Serbian and Croatian officers also suggests that such prejudices existed in the Yugoslav army.

Finally, despite the apparent lack of a substantial connection between the Croatian Committee/Legion and the Retired Officers' Society, the group's two membership lists seem to suggest that a significant connection did indeed exist between ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent and Frankists in Zagreb. As evidence of this, there is the presence of many Frankist leaders on the society's membership list, as well as the large number of ex-officers who were also members of the party. A study of the publications, public speeches, and actions of this party and its members in the 1920s, with particular reference to the war and to Croatian soldiers, will therefore reveal more about ex-officers' sense of sacrifice during the war, and their impact on post-war society in Yugoslavia.

3.6. The Frankists

It will be necessary, before such a discussion, to clarify as far as possible how the term 'Frankist' was applied in Croatia in the 1920s, as well as the position of those to whom the term was applied. The Frankists of the post-war period were, to a greater or lesser extent, the heirs of the political legacy of Josip Frank, a lawyer from Osijek who founded the 'Pure Party of Right' after splitting with Ante Starčević's Party of Right in 1895. The followers of Frank, unlike those of Starčević, came to favour closer co-operation with Vienna, with the aim of gaining greater autonomy for South Slavs (i.e., Croats) within the Monarchy. It was hoped that, in this way, the emperor would eventually allow all the Monarchy's South Slavs to be unified in one political unit, which would enjoy an equal status with Hungarians and Germans in a re-organized empire. This was the so-called 'trialist' solution, and the Frankists showed support for it and for the Monarchy through characterizing the Serb minority in

Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia as a fifth column against the Habsburgs, on account of its support for Serbia and Serbian nationalism.[90]

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand could be interpreted as both a set-back and an opportunity for Frankists and South Slav trialists: a setback since the heir-apparent had reportedly been in favour of a trialist solution (as a bulwark against Hungary), and an opportunity since it presented a chance to eliminate Serbian nationalism within the Monarchy, the 'mortal enemy of the Frankist "trialist" solution'.[91] This was undoubtedly the motivation behind Stjepan Sarkotić's measures against Bosnian Serbs during his time as governor-general of Bosnia-Hercegovina during the war. Trialists such as Sarkotić saw Bosnia and Hercegovina as integral parts of the Croatian lands and therefore to be included in the Monarchy's putative South Slav element. The war presented a chance to ensure this element would be dominated by Croats, and Sarkotić was determined not to let this chance pass by. It has already been noted that, according to the memoirs of veterans such as Josip Horvat and Ante Kovać, Croatian officers and Frankists further down the ranks such as Slavko Stancer and Mirko Puk were also supporters of trialism and fought with this goal in mind. Away from the battlefield, Frankist deputies such as Alexander Horvat and Vladimir Prebeg gave vocal support to the Monarchy until the very end of the war, and often clashed bitterly with deputies of the ruling Croat-Serb Coalition in the Croatian *Sabor*.

The Frankists abandoned trialism and indeed support for the (now defunct) Monarchy at the time of the national revolution in Zagreb, but the idea of Croatian state right (the substance of Starčević's ideology) and support for Croatian autonomy throughout the 1920s remained central to their programme. The virulent anti-Serbian position that Frankists had paraded in word and deed before and during the war became politically unacceptable in the post-war period, but this position still found an outlet during the 1920s, albeit in a more subdued form. Frankists based opposition to Serbian hegemony and dominance over Croats in the new state on the premise that whilst Croatia was part of a culturally superior western civilization, Serbia was the heir of an eastern, Byzantine heritage. The two traditions were incompatible and

[90] Banac, *National Question*, p. 95. For more English language analysis of Ante Starčević and his legacy, see Sabrina P. Ramet 'Ante Starčević: Liberal Champion of a "Citizens' State"' in Sabrina P. Ramet, James R. Felak, Herbert J. Ellison (eds.)*Nations and Nationalisms in East-Central Europe, 1806-1948: A Festschrift for Peter F. Sugar* (Indiana: 2002), pp. 135-144.
[91] Spence, 'General Stephan Freiherr Sarkotić von Lovčen', p. 148.

therefore Yugoslavia was doomed to remain dis-integrated. One of the most eloquent and persuasive exponents of this theory was Milan Šufflay, a Zagreb historian and Frankist ideologue.[92]

The arrival of mass democracy in Croatia post-1918 meant that, as a political force, the Frankists were eclipsed by the Croatian Peasant Party. Nevertheless, as Ivo Banac has noted, the party enjoyed a modicum of electoral support amongst the intelligentsia in Croatia, especially in Zagreb.[93] The chief beneficiary of this support throughout the 1920s was Ante Pavelić, elected to the Zagreb municipal council from 1921 onwards, and to the country's parliament in 1927. Pavelić was the only Frankist deputy to represent his party at a national level in the 1920s, although other candidates included ex-officers Mirko Puk, Gustav Perčec, Ivan Heneberg, and Dušan Kralj (Milan Šufflay and the writer Mile Budak also put themselves forward, unsuccessfully, as Frankist candidates). This small but not insignificant base of support was recognised by politicians as diverse as Stjepan Radić and Nikola Pašić. The former made a short-lived alliance with the Frankists (and the *Hrvatska zajednica*) to contest elections in 1923, hoping to shore up support which the Peasant Party lacked in Zagreb. Pašić, rather improbably, discussed the possibility of transforming the Frankists into a Croatian wing of the People's Radical Party, thus to undermine Radić's position in the Croatian capital. The negotiations, handled for the Frankists by Ante Pavelić and Manko Gagliardi, came to nothing.[94]

Their marginal support amongst the Croatian intelligentsia and policy of resistance towards the Yugoslav state also earned the Frankists ridicule in literary circles. Josip Horvat was just one of the Frankists' opponents who associated the party with 'Vlach Street', a street in Zagreb where the post-war Croatian Party of Right had a number of offices; for Horvat and many like him, the address assumed a broader meaning. 'Vlach Street' politics were characterized by lofty historical appeals and consistent opposition to the ruling elite, 'The burgher,' claimed Horvat, 'is a great patriot. His patriotism knows only one expression: principled and stubborn opposition.'[95] Miroslav Krleža also lambasted the Frankists' oppositional tactics and preoccupation with Croatia's historic 'state-right', in a number of essays written

---

[92] See Milan Šufflay *Izabrani politički spisi* (ed. Dubravko Jelić) (Zagreb: 2000), pp. 39-45
[93] Banac, *National Question,* p. 263.
[94] See Hrvoje Matković, 'Veze izmedju frankovaca i radikala od 1922-1925', *Historijski zbornik,* god. 15 (1962), pp. 51-59.
[95] Horvat, *Živjeti u Zagrebu*, p. 141.

throughout the 1920s. In response to the Frankists' claim that Croatian state right had been realised on 29 October 1918 only to be lost on 1 December, Krleža noted sardonically that, 'in eight hundred years, thirty days of sovereignty, this is the sum of the Croatian political balance on the scales of sovereignty.'[96] For Krleža, a Marxist, state right did not lie with the Frankists and their petit-bourgeois supporters on Vlach Street, but with the peasant masses who were the majority in Croatia. 'The concept of "Croatian Right" is the "Right" of the wretched, peasant, illiterate, exploited people not to remain eternally wretched, illiterate, and exploited for the foreign profit of other peoples.'[97] Both writers alluded to the small scale of the Frankist party in the 1920s, contrasting their portentous and somewhat shrill rhetoric with their lack of popular appeal. In the face of this ridicule, the Frankists themselves embraced their role as defenders of Croatian sovereignty, adopting intended pejoratives such as 'Vlach Street', and the term 'Frankist' itself (the party's official name in the 1920s was the 'Croatian Party of Right') for their own use. Gustav Perčec, in an article outlining the party's history written in 1924, even complained that the term Frankist was losing its exclusivity, and was now applied to 'traitors' and 'Serbophiles', at the expense of true Rightists.[98]

If state right and opposition to Serb-dominated Yugoslavia were the pillars of the party programme in the 1920s, then the Croatian war-time sacrifice was interpreted by the Frankists as a struggle for this historic state right, followed by its betrayal by Serbia and by treacherous Croats (on the National Council) in December 1918, a kind of Croatian *Dolchstoss*. Each year, on 29 October, 1 December, and 5 December, the Frankists reminded their supporters that Croatia had been cheated of its historic rights, rights which only they could restore. In 1922, for example, Mirko Kušutić called on Frankists to celebrate 29 October and 'freedom, a pledge for the future.' Kušutić reckoned that Croatia, a part of western civilization, had enjoyed a form of independence for a thousand years, an independence which was fully realised on 29 October 1918. That independence, he felt, was now under severe threat.[99] In November 1925, as the seventh anniversary of unification approached, the Frankists printed a list of National Council members entitled 'Grave-diggers of Croatian Independence', and contrasted their treacherous behaviour with the Frankists own

[96] Miroslav Krleža, *Deset krvavih godina i drugi politički eseji* (Belgrade: 1977), p. 94.
[97] Ibid, p. 459.
[98] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 19 December 1924.
[99] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 25 October 1922.

anti-union declaration on 3 December (see above).[100] The following year *Hrvatsko pravo* printed a list of parties in the Yugoslav kingdom whose members had been involved with the National Council.[101] As Krleža and Horvat pointed out, resistance and opposition were the essence of the Frankist ideology.

The Frankists were also vocal opponents of the Serbian prerogative on war memory in the Yugoslav kingdom. Again, the party defined itself through its opposition, questioning the results of Serbia's war(s) of 'liberation and unification' and suggesting that Croatia, far from being liberated, had more in common with the defeated nations of the Great War in the 1920s. At a meeting of the party in October 1922, members discussed the forthcoming decennial celebrations of the battle of Kumanovo, Serbia's historic victory against Turkey in the first Balkan war. The celebrations were the largest of their kind to date in Yugoslavia, and had generated much debate in the press and amongst veterans of all nationalities. The Frankists took the position that it was absurd for Croats to follow the programme of the Serbian government vis-à-vis the celebrations in Kumanovo. After all, Croats enjoyed good relations with the Turks and the Bulgarians: why should they celebrate their defeat?[102] The Frankist message was clear, that Serbian victory was by no means Croatian victory. A week later, Mirko Kušutić wrote his article about Croatia's independence and its western tradition (cited above), once more alluding to the incompatibility of Serbians and Croats.

In 1925, during the millennial celebrations of the founding of the Zagreb bishopric, Gustav Perčec alluded more specifically to Croatian war sacrifice and Croatian dissatisfaction with the post-war order. Perčec asserted that the Croatian soldiers who fought in the war had not been worn down by fighting; in fact they had not been defeated at all. Instead, they had laid down their weapons as an act of faith, fully expecting that Croatia's right to self-determination, as vaunted by Woodrow Wilson, would be realised when they came home:

> Returning to their homes in a disorganised fashion from the battlefield, Croatian soldiers had to look tearfully at how every traitor, degenerate, speculator, and *naïf* betrayed the 1000-year-old right of the Croatian homeland [...] The Croatian people

[100] Ibid, 27 November 1925.
[101] Ibid, 27 November 1926.
[102] Ibid, 18 October 1922. In fact it was only victory over Turkey, and not Bulgaria, that was celebrated at Kumanovo in 1922.

> still seeks and will continue to seek the fulfilment and implementation of the promised self-determination; if this is not realised, Europe will come to resemble a powder keg.[103]

Whatever the veracity of these statements, Perčec, as an officer veteran, must have been considered an authority on these matters in Frankist circles. Mile Budak, who had also fought in the war, wrote in 1927 that Croatia's tragedy was that it had collapsed in the face of the 'Kosovo Idea', Serbia's blueprint for a greater Serbia, now being realised at Croatia's expense in Yugoslavia. Having been robbed of freedom in 1918, Budak wrote that Croatia need not hope to have it restored by outside powers.[104] Like Perčec, Budak was levelling his critique both at Serbian hegemony and the post-war order in Europe.

Less than a month later, as relations with Italy continued to deteriorate and the possibility of a new war was being discussed in the Croatian press, *Hrvatsko pravo* reflected on the likelihood of renewed bloodshed and on the consequences of the last war, in an article entitled 'On War.' The author suggested that whilst the consequences of war had been terrible for all, the so-called winners were now in worse shape than the losers:

> States which were created as a result of the war spread dissatisfaction across half of Europe. The best testament to this is their miserable economic conditions. And not only are the victorious nations dissatisfied with their fate, they are actually in a more chaotic state than they can handle.[105]

As for Croatia's position, the author challenged the assumption that the Yugoslav kingdom's enemies were *ipso facto* Croatia's enemies. Italy, he said, had negotiated during the war on behalf of Croatian independence (!), whereas Hungary, who might have been guilty of committing much wrong against Croatia in the days of dualism, had now realised her past errors.[106] Finally, Bulgaria had never laid a glove on Croatia and there should be no quarrel between the two nations now or ever:

---

[103] Ibid, 13 August 1925.
[104] Ibid, 30 April 1927.
[105] Ibid, 21 May 1927.
[106] What a turn-around since the pre-war days of hated Hungarian oppression! In fact, these comments are part of a broader rhetorical trend present in Croatia during the 1920s, which sought to draw

> Head into a village, and ask a Croatian peasant what he thinks of Bulgarians. Each one will answer in the same way. Why should they be our enemies? They have done nothing wrong to us, so should we then provoke them into having an unfriendly orientation towards us? [...] The Croatian nation is pacific, but robust, patient, and sober. That is why the nation cannot fall, even if a war greater than the last were to arrive.[107]

Each of these articles and statements is underlined by the Frankist belief that Serbia's war narrative and Serbian or pro-Yugoslav interpretations of what was lost or won in the war were not applicable to Croatia. Of course, this non-applicability was not exclusive to Frankists, but they went further than other Croatian veterans in that they actually expressed their opposition to Serbia's war and, perhaps more significantly, their support for states and groups which were normally considered to be Yugoslavia's enemies (especially Hungary and Bulgaria).

The examples cited show a challenge to the *status quo post bellum* and therefore to Yugoslavia itself through support for its enemies, or potential enemies. Without wishing to overstate the case or suggest links where there are none, one could trace a consistency in Frankist policy back to the Croatian Committee and the émigrés' attempts to co-operate with revisionists in Hungary, legitimists in Austria, and Italian nationalists such as Gabriele d'Annunzio. Looking forward, it is worth noting here that as Ante Pavelić and Gustav Perčec changed the character of their opposition to Yugoslavia following the proclamation of king Alexander's dictatorship (by forming the Ustasha paramilitary group in exile), their most important alliances, at least initially, were with Italy and Hungary. The destruction of Yugoslavia and the re-drawing of the post-1918 map of Europe at that state's expense were the common interests that these unlikely allies held, from the end of the Great War until the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941.

The Frankists also reinforced their separate Croatian identity on All Saints' Day, the Catholic feast day when, traditionally, Croats visited Zagreb's vast cemetery Mirogoj to pay respects to the departed. As well as annual visits to the graves of the party's founding fathers Ante Starčević and Josip Frank, Frankists incorporated the

---

comparisons between pre-war Hungarian and post-war Serbian oppression of Croatia. They will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

[107] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 21 May 1927.

soldiers who had been killed in 5 December revolt in Jelačić Square into their annual commemorations. In November 1924 for example, the Frankists laid a wreath at the grave of 'those who had fallen for Croatian liberation on 5 December'. Frankist Stanko Hranilović made a graveside speech saluting those 'who had raised their voices against the treachery of the National Council.' Hranilović promised to return in greater numbers

> One night when our wishes and struggles are realised, we will come, not just those of us here now, but the whole of the Croatian people, to call out to you that the idea which the Party of Right has fought 63 years for has finally been brought to life, the idea for which you fell, namely, that only God and the Croats rule in Croatia.[108]

After this speech the Frankist procession laid wreathes at the graves of two other recently deceased Croats, the poet and Party of Right supporter Milan Orgrizović, and Antun Lipošćak, the general who had served as the first president of the Retired Officers' Society in Zagreb, and who had died earlier in the year. [109] The decision to honour the memory of these two men was highly symbolic for the Frankists. As has been noted, Lipošćak, rightly or wrongly, was an officer associated with counter-revolution and support for the Monarchy. During the war, Orgrizović had edited the Austro-Hungarian official occupation newspaper in Serbia, *Beogradske novine*. A figure closely associated with the Monarchy and the military occupation, the Frankists' commemoration of his life would have sent a provocative message to Belgrade. Commemorating the so-called 'December Victims' was also a highly symbolic gesture for the Frankists and their followers. As has been noted, the Frankists saw the soldiers killed in December 1918 as victims of Serbian aggression directed against the Croatian people. As such, their revolt was incorporated into the Frankist narrative of continuing opposition and resistance in Yugoslavia. But as the struggle against Serbian hegemony was ongoing, so the list of victims grew as the years went by, as the Frankists added the names of Croatian youths who had been killed in fighting with ORJUNA to the original list of 'December Victims'.[110]

---

[108] Ibid, 4 November 1924.
[109] Ibid.
[110] See Ibid, 5 November 1927. In this article, the Frankists commemorate All Saints' Day by paying respects both to the December Victims and all the Croatian victims of ORJUNA violence.

These 'December Victims' and ORJUNA victims received a permanent monument in Mirogoj in 1932, courtesy of the Society of Croatian Women, a charitable organization which opened branches throughout Croatia in the 1920s. The Society of Croatian Women insisted that they were merely a 'cultural-educational' organisation, but like the Retired Officers' Society (on whose behalf they held a number of fund-raisers) they had notable connections with the Frankists, and like the officers were closely watched by the authorities in Zagreb. The organisation's president Zora Trnski (daughter of the poet Ivan Trnski) and secretary Slava Fürst were both members of the Frankist party, and reports on the group's meetings noted an anti-state tone that was similar to that of the Frankists. One official observer, attending a meeting of the group in January 1922, reported on how he had interrupted the evening a number of times on account of the 'tendentious nature' of the proceedings. On that occasion, the observer noted that, 'the real mission of the society is to stimulate pure Croatian nationalism as the antithesis of Yugoslavism and Serbian nationalism.'[111] In fact the authorities shut down the Society of Croatian Women for a period after members shouted anti-state slogans on a visit to Mirogoj to pay their respects at the graves of Ante Starčević and Ante Radić (June 1922). This move was rigorously protested by the highly regarded Zagreb historian and Peasant Party deputy Rudolf Horvat, whose wife Jelisava was a member.[112]

The Society of Croatian Women had taken over responsibility for war graves at Mirogoj in 1922. Their care of these graves, however, remained a subdued affair which the Croatian press occasionally noted, usually on All Saints' Day, and usually commenting on how few visitors these graves received. The newspaper *Hrvat,* for example, reporting from Mirogoj in Novemeber 1923, contrasted the vast numbers of wreathes and flowers strewn over the grave of Alija Alijegić, the young Communist hanged for his role in the murder of former interior minister Milorad Drašković in 1921, with the few placed on the 3,800 war graves at Mirogoj.[113] In November 1927, the same newspaper, again reporting from Mirogoj, noted that

[111] HDA, fond 'Pravila društava', Zagreb 4502, Hrvatska žena.
[112] Ibid.
[113] *Hrvat,* 2 November 1923.

> One section of the cemetery was poorly decorated. [That section in which lie] those who fell for us in the war, as if they did not deserve the slightest gratitude or remembrance. Very rarely has anyone been to their graves.[114]

The contrast between the apparent neglect of these Croatian graves and the popular and frequent commemoration of war dead in Serbia could not be greater, and it is this lack of interest that may serve as a context for the complaints of Croatian invalids and Croatian volunteer veterans about how their sacrifice was forgotten in the 1920s.

In November 1928, during the critical period in Yugoslavia's history between the death of Stjepan Radić and the promulgation of King Alexander's dictatorship, the Society of Croatian Women sent a letter to the local authorities in Zagreb proposing a monument to commemorate the soldiers who had died on 5 December 1918. Like the Frankists, the Society of Croatian Women saw these soldiers as part of an ongoing sacrifice for the Croatian national cause. In addition to the 14 soldiers that had died that day, the Society of Croatian Women proposed to add the names of the handful of Croatian nationalist youths (mostly members of the Frankist 'Croatian Sokol')

> fallen at murderous hands [i.e., killed in skirmishes with ORJUNA] at a time when they, full of ecstasy and enthusiasm, cheered for the freedom of Croatia. Those are our Croatian martyrs from 5 December 1918 to 20 June 1928 [the day of the shootings in the parliament building].[115]

The monument itself divided the names of those killed on two plaques: the soldiers killed on 5 December 1918 and separately, Croatian youths killed in clashes with ORJUNA. It appears that the Croatian Women, like the Frankists, wanted to maintain the integrity of the cult of the 'December Victims'. In the narrative of Croatian resistance, this cult had a double-significance, its symbolic meaning derived not just from the soldiers that had died, but from the date on which they had died. In its proximity to the day of unification (1 December 1918), the events of the 5 December served both as an alternative celebration to the 1 December, and as evidence of the immediacy of Croatian resistance to South Slav unification in 1918.

---

[114] Ibid, 2 November 1927.
[115] HAD, fond 'pravila društava', Zagreb 4502, *Hrvatska žena.*

Figure 1.1. The monument to the 'December Victims' at Mirogoj Cemetery, Zagreb. The Plaque on the left (as one faces the monument) has the names of the soldiers killed on 5 December 1918, the plaque on the right shows Croatian nationalist youth killed fighting ORJUNA and in clashes with the police.

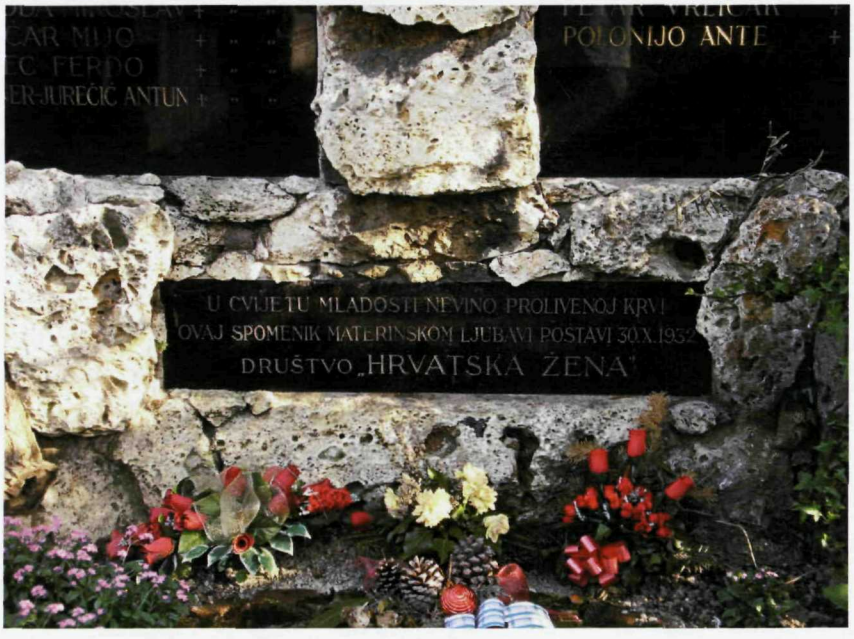

Figure 1.2. Inscription: 'to the innocent blood split in the flower of youth, this monument was raised with maternal love by the society of Croatian Women 30 October 1932'

The monument also asserted the separate national identity of the Croats in its use of Catholic iconography. At the head of the monument was a plaque depicting the Virgin Mary being consoled by Jesus Christ. The identification of Croatian sacrifice and suffering with Catholicism has already been noted in the choice of commemorating that sacrifice on All Saints' Day, and the biblical scene depicted was another example of how religion was used in this way. Furthermore, in choosing this particular scene for their monument, it seems that the Croatian Women were conforming to traditional gender roles of sacrifice and mourning, consistent with other women's groups throughout the country. The association of the Society of Croatian Women with the Virgin Mary promoted the idea of a chaste, maternal, feminine sacrifice, appropriate for Croatian women in post-war society and a role which was embraced by the group. The suffering of the saviour on the other hand evoked notions of innocence and a selfless sacrifice made so that others might benefit, entirely appropriate for the role of martyrs into which the Society of Croatian Women had cast the young men commemorated in this monument. These constructed gender roles were supported in the dedication at the foot of the monument, which read, 'to the innocent blood spilt in the flower of youth, this monument was raised with maternal love by the society of Croatian Women, 30 October 1932.' In her work on gender and Croatian Fascism, Melissa Bokovoy has noted that when Ante Pavelić and the Ustasha came to power (April 1941), they set about promoting a narrative of Croatian suffering and resistance based on clearly-defined gender roles (for example, 'national heroes', not 'national heroines').[116] Here we see that these roles were already being constructed by Frankists and their supporters in the interwar period, and put to use in the narrative of Croatian national resistance against Yugoslavia. Throughout the 1920s, *Hrvatsko pravo* was full of praise for the patriotic and humanitarian work of the Society of Croatian Women, even gallantly defending the group following the incident at Mirogoj on Ante Starčević's name day (see above).[117]

The construction of gendered notions of sacrifice and resistance also has implications for the role of ex-soldiers in the movement. Much of the charitable work the women were involved with during the 1920s was conducted for the benefit of the

[116] Melissa Bokovoy, 'Croatia' in Kevin Passmore (ed.), *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945* (Manchester: 2003), pp. 111-124.
[117] See *Hrvatsko pravo* 29 October 1921, an article about the recent formation of the group, and in the same newspaper 19 July 1922, offering support after its dissolution by the authorities, and 4 November 1924, saluting the way the women were tending to Croatian war graves.

retired officers, whose activities have been noted in this chapter. The society held a number of tea parties to raise money for ex-officers, and indeed, they had organized the 'family evening' which was ended so abruptly by ORJUNA's intervention. There is a sense that the Frankists saw these men as worthy of such reverence because they were soldiers and because they fulfilled gendered notions of masculine military sacrifice and resistance. It is perhaps useful to acknowledge these constructed notions of gender as a way of understanding the position of ex-officers in the Frankist movement and the reason their involvement was so important to the party. But if these men were important to the Frankist narrative of resistance in the 1920s, then they were far more important to the Ustasha in the 1930s which was first and foremost a paramilitary organisation. In this sense, the gendered roles of men and women in the Independent State of Croatia also bear the imprint of the movement's interwar struggle, as the Frankists in the 1920s and as the Ustasha in the 1930s, and ex-officers were essential to the narrative of this struggle.

3.7. The Croatian Sokol

Ex-officers also appear to have played an important role in the Croatian Sokol, a youth group which came to the attention of authorities in Zagreb at the same time as the Society of Croatian Women. Like the Society of Croatian Women, the Croatian Sokol was banned for a short period by the authorities for chanting anti-state slogans at Mirogoj in 1922, and the two movements maintained a number of links throughout the decade. Unlike other European Sokol movements, the Croatian Sokol did not share a heritage with the gymnastic associations which had opposed the Habsburgs throughout Central and Eastern Europe before and during the war. The Croatian Sokol was in fact a renegade movement which broke away from the newly unified Yugoslav Sokol in 1921, and which counted a large number of Frankists amongst its members.[118] Investigations into the group during the first half of the 1920s led to some alarming, if ultimately unconfirmed, reports. In the summer of 1922, authorities in Croatia noted that the Croatian Sokol, 'anti-state and political' in character, had

[118] Nikola Žutic, *Sokoli: ideologija u fizičkoj kulturi Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929-1941*, (Belgrade: 1991), p. 13.

been involved in a number of brawls with pro-Yugoslav youth in Croatia.[119] In 1923, authorities in Gorski kotor reported that the Croatian Sokol was more like a 'national guard' with a republican agenda and its membership included a number of 'former Austrian officers.'[120] The Ministry of the Interior went on to state in a report to all regional branches in Croatia that the Croatian Sokol, 'is organized in the same fashion as the Austrian army, and many former Austrian officers are involved.'[121]

At the beginning of 1925, the Ministry of the Interior sent a memorandum to Zagreb stating that they believed weapons were being smuggled into the country, via Hungary, by Sokol leaders for the purposes of an armed insurrection. The names of the Sokolists involved in the plot including former Austrian officers Ferdo Haller and Slavko Stancer, as well as a Zagreb lawyer named Milan Dečak.[122] Authorities in Zagreb replied that Stancer was not involved with the Sokolists, Haller had been a leader but was not any longer, and Dečak was a leader of the movement, but there was no evidence that he was involved in smuggling guns into the country.[123]

It is possible that the Ministry of Interior had treated the Croatian Sokolists in an overly-suspicious fashion, since no evidence of plans for an armed insurrection were found in their subsequent investigations. The attitude taken by the ministry towards the group appears to be similar to that taken towards the Retired Officers' Society, and a reflection of the government's hostility and suspicion towards anything connected with the old order (ex-officers) and/or with the Frankists. On the latter point, there can be no doubt that the Croatian Sokol had a substantial connection to this party. Sokolist leaders included the Frankists Budak, Dečak, former Habsburg officer Milan Praunsperger (one of the Croatian Sokol's founders, and an officer in the Yugoslav army until retirement in 1921), and Ante Pavelić.[124] The organization even had offices in Zagreb on Vlach Street.

---

[119] HDA, fond 137, 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju u Zagrebu', box. 23. The British Foreign Office made similar conclusions. After attending a festival in Dubrovnik organised by the Croatian Sokols, they reported that, 'though nominally a cultural gathering it soon became clear that the festival had a definitely political and separatist character' (see NA FO 371/11405).

[120] HDA, fond 137, 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju u Zagrebu', box. 45.

[121] Ibid.

[122] HDA, Fond 1363, 'Politička situacija', box. 16.

[123] Ibid.

[124] As early as 1922, Pavelić, as a municipal councillor in Zagreb, defended the Croatian Sokol and attacked the government's decision to dissolve the group. See Ante Pavelić, *Poglavnikovi govori 1922-1929: putem hrvatskog državnog prava* (Zagreb: 1942), p. 7. Furthermore, Milan Dečak linked the Croatian Sokol to the Retired Officers' Society. As a lawyer, he had defended the veterans' organization from attempts by the government to have it dissolved.

The parallels between this Croatian nationalist youth group and ORJUNA are striking, in form if not in content. Both groups comprised cadres of young, uniformed men, members of the 'post-war generation' who asserted their ideology at a series of demonstrations and rallies throughout the country, many of which ended in violence. Just as ORJUNA were protected and to a certain extent led by Svetozar Pribićević and the Independent Democratic Party,[125] the officer class of the Croatian Sokol comprised Frankist leaders such as Pavelić and Budak, keen to inculcate a new generation of Croats with the ideas of their party. Extending these parallels to incorporate the role of veterans, it is tempting to suggest that ex-officers such as Haller and Praunsperger played a comparable role in the Croatian Sokol as ex-volunteers did in ORJUNA, and that the authority they derived from their war-time experiences served as an example and as an aspiration for a generation of Croatian nationalists too young to fight in the war themselves. This relationship, however, is less clear than that between ex-volunteers and ORJUNA members, since the Sokolists themselves did not write extensively about the role of veterans in their movement in the same way that ORJUNA members did. There is evidence, however, to suggest that Frankists such as Ante Pavelić saw in the Sokols a potential Croatian national army. In 1927, the future *poglavnik* assured Italy that the Croatian Sokol could be used as an army against the Serbians, that the youth group had about 40,000 members throughout the country who were 'of excellent discipline, arranged in a similar fashion to Fascist organizations'.[126]

The use of violence against political opponents was certainly a part of both the Croatian Sokol and ORJUNA programmes. These two groups often contrived to hold rallies in the same place and on the same day in order to provoke street fights. Like ORJUNA, the Sokolists saw it as their duty to fight in order to defend their national interest, although unlike ORJUNA, the Croatian Sokolists characterized their violence as defensive. As one Sokol leader said at a meeting of the group in 1924, if people tried to stop them realising their goals, then they would return to 5 December.[127] Present at this meeting was Slava Fürst, the secretary of the Society of Croatian Women and a member of the Croatian Sokol. Years later, she ensured the names of

---

[125] The relationship between ORJUNA and Svetozar Pribićević's Independent Democrats is described by Hrvoje Matković in *Svetozar Pribićević i Samostalna demokratska stranka do šestojanuarske diktature* (Zagreb: 1972), pp. 127-135.
[126] Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše* (Zagreb: 1993), p. 14.
[127] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 10 September 1924.

Croatian Sokolists killed fighting *Orjunaši* would be included on her society's monument to the soldiers killed on 5 December 1918, locating their sacrifice within the same context of a Croatian national struggle.

3.8. A 'Black Decenial' : The Death of Radić, Dictatorship, and Insurgency

To suggest that the opposition of the Frankists and their ideological supporters amongst ex-officers, the Society of Croatian Women, and the Croatian Sokol developed in a unilinear fashion in the interwar period would be inaccurate. Whilst all these groups remained loyal to the principle of Croatian state right and opposition to Yugoslavia, the method of resistance and their expectations of success was transformed in late 1928. The shooting of Peasant Party deputies in June 1928 and the subsequent death of Stjepan Radić a few weeks later meant that mainstream attitudes in Croatia moved closer to the Frankists' autonomist platform. As hostility towards Belgrade became more prevalent in Zagreb, the Frankists were able to assert their message with more confidence than at any point in the preceding decade. That this critical juncture in Serbian/Croatian relations coincided with the decennial celebrations of the end of the Great War and the creation of the Yugoslav kingdom added great resonance to the Frankists' calls for separation, and demonstrates the renewed vigour with which they pursued their long-held aims. Perčec and Pavelić had already, through rituals and ceremonies at Mirogoj cemetery and elsewhere, created a narrative of Croatian suffering based around key dates such as 29 October and 5 December. In 1928, these rituals and Frankist rhetoric had a revitalised urgency as the party and its supporters attempted to capitalise on the mood in the Croatian capital.

Ante Pavelić, an elected deputy in the country's parliament from 1927 onwards, was quick to attack the government's attempts to characterize the shootings as the work of just one man and reinforce the notion that this was in fact an attack on the Croatian people by the Serbian people.[128] The very day of the shootings, Pavelić told newspapers that, 'The Croatian population cannot interpret this event as the crime of one man, but as one of countless crimes which have been inflicted on the Croatian people over a period of ten years.'[129] A week later, at a party meeting in Zagreb,

---

[128] See Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji 1919-1929* (Belgrade: 1979), p. 258.
[129] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 30 June 1928.

Pavelić reminded those present that Frankists such as himself were merely reiterating what they had been saying since 29 October 1918, that Croatia should be free and the master of her own affairs.[130]

On All Saints' Day 1928, the Frankists once again led a procession to Mirogoj, where Mile Budak told those assembled that, 'the graves of our fathers teach us many truths.'[131] Once again, the Frankists described how the dead were watching over the living, and Budak went on to say that,

> You [all] will personally hear the great voices of the victims of the past ten years, who are these days gathering around the canton of Ante Starčević, under the leadership of the newest and greatest victim: Stjepan Radić; listen to them and you will hear the deadliest song of Croatian pride and the most enduring celebration – of a black decennial.[132]

Like Pavelić, Budak stressed the continuity of his party's goals, saying that all parties within Croatia now sought that which the Frankists had sought for the past decade.[133] Whilst the Frankists were certainly exaggerating their role as the vanguard of popular interest in Croatia, other sources also reveal the new mood in the Croatian capital. *Obzor,* which had remained staunchly pro-Yugoslav throughout the 1920s, complained that the significance of 29 October had been neglected in the post-war state. The failure to celebrate this day, the newspaper claimed, was more proof of 'Belgrade hegemony.'[134] *Hrvat* dedicated its entire front page to the decennial of 29 October, comparing that which Croatia had in 1918 (her own territory, government, etc) to the situation in the country in 1928 (chaos, disorder, and Croatia's leadership, army, diplomatic corps, gendarmerie and police 'in the hands of Serbians').[135] *Jutarnji list* explicitly supported the Frankists and 'the politics of Vlach Street', writing that the Frankists, who were conducting their protests against the government in a peaceful fashion, had been unfairly branded as troublemakers by the

---

[130] Ibid, 4 August 1928.
[131] Ibid, 3 November 1928.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] *Obzor,* 29 October 1928.
[135] *Hrvat,* 30 October 1928.

authorities.[136] Pavelić acknowledged both the continuity of his party's goals and its new position closer to the centre of political gravity in Croatia by saying:

> A lot has been written about the politics of Vlach Street in the newspapers these days. I have already said a few words about that and there will soon be occasion to say more. For today, it will be enough to say to you that it is an eternal shame that in 1918, the politics of Vlach Street did not lead the country instead of the National Council, since I am certain that [had that been the case] Croatia would today be free.[137]

The decennial celebrations of unification in Zagreb also turned into an opportunity to express hostility towards Belgrade and Croatia's position in Yugoslavia. Pavelić described 1 December 1918 as 'the blackest day in Croatian history,' and promised that, 'When Croatia is free, it will be outlined in a responsible fashion to Croatian children, the manner in which they should interpret the dark pages of that day on Croatian history.'[138] The Frankist message was the same as it had been in the preceding years, although Pavelić now had reason to believe that his goals were shared by a number of Croats in the capital. The official celebrations at Zagreb Cathedral were sabotaged when unknown persons unfurled three large black flags along the front of the building. One had the date '1 December' sown into it in large white letters, another '20 June 1928', and the third covered with black and red squares, the coat of arms of medieval Croatia and Slavonia.[139] Violent clashes between police and demonstrators throughout the day resulted in the deaths of four Croats (sixteen were injured in the clashes), a further reason for deteriorating relations between the Croatian capital and the Belgrade government. The Frankists posited 5 December, as they had throughout the 1920s, as a more suitable day for Croats to mark. Just as they had done after the unification in 1918, the party distributed leaflets calling on people to show their dissatisfaction with the way Croatian state right was being violated. The leaflets, written by Frankists at the University of Zagreb, asked that Croatian men and women commemorate the anniversary of the 'heroic deaths on Jelačić Square' of the soldiers who were 'bloodily killed by Serbs.' The leaflet went

---

[136] Ibid, 3 November 1928.
[137] Ante Pavelić, *Poglavnikovi govori 1922-1929: putem hrvatskog državnog prava,* (Zagreb: 1942), p. 78.
[138] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 1 December 1928.
[139] *Novo doba,* 3 December 1928.

on to call on Croats to take part 'in a struggle like the Irish...an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.'[140]

It is possible, even probable, that the leaflets were masterminded by Branimir Jelić, a student at the University of Zagreb and the leader of the Frankist academic club, 'Kvaternik.' Jelić's emergence as a key personality in the Frankist movement at this time seems to be the result of Pavelić's careful cultivation of a new generation of Croatian Frankists who would be able to continue the struggle for Croatian autonomy.[141] Jelić was a veteran of the Croatian Sokol, and it was involvement in groups such as this and 'Kvaternik' which prepared like-minded young Croatian Frankists to intensify the struggle for Croatian autonomy and to capitalise on anti-Serb sentiment in Zagreb after the death of Stjepan Radić. Under the tutelage of senior Frankists such as Pavelić, Jelić established the Croatian Homeguard (*Hrvatski domobran*), a 'phalanx of unified Croatian youth widening its grip' according to the first issue of group's journal.[142] Jelić wrote of the urgent need for the youth of Croatia to organize into 'units' which could put aside party differences and factional interests and unite in the battle for 'Croatian freedom.' These 'units' would not know 'equivocation, rather discipline.'[143] Jelić went on to note the 'false epoch on Kajmakčalan, the Balkan-Serbian lie about Kajmakčalan-liberation achievements, [is] an infection that will not plague us.' Jelić claimed that the science of Ante Starčević had inoculated Croats to this particular infection. According to the Croatian Homeguard, the Great War had weakened all nations and introduced to the world 'the red bacilli' and the 'Asiatic plague' which had its purest manifestation in Russia. It was the historic role of the Croatian people, as part of western civilization, to serve as border guards against this plague.[144]

The reference to Western civilization was typical of the kind of Frankist ideology articulated by intellectuals such as Milan Šufflay. Jelić also used the term *graničari* to refer to the Croats, a deliberate reference to the frontiersmen who had garrisoned the military border in Croatia until the 19th century and to the tradition of

---

[140] HDA fond 1363 'Politička situacija', box. 20.
[141] In November 1927, for example, Pavelić addressed the annual meeting of Kvaternik. Introduced by Jelić, Pavelić told the assembled students of how Croatia was 'on the cross', and that university students would play an important role in the fight for Croatian state right. See *Hrvatsko pravo,* 26 November 1927.
[142] *Hrvatski domobran - omladinski list,* 16 October 1928.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

martial values in these parts of Croatia. Indeed, it is clear from reading the pages of this short-lived journal (banned, of course, under King Alexander's dictatorship) that Jelić and his colleagues were expecting some kind of armed confrontation to achieve their goal; the role of the Croatian Homeguard was to prepare the youth for the forthcoming battle. The group claimed that like-minded youth were responsible for the demonstrations on 1 December in protest at unification:

> Croatian youth have shown, that the whole of the Croatian nation has no reason to fear its fall, and that shortly, very shortly, we will see days when the sun of freedom will shine on the Croatian horizon, and the clouds of non-fraternity, force, and blood will disperse.[145]

Many years later, Eugen Dido Kvaternik, the son of the retired Habsburg officer Slavko Kvaternik and a member of the 'Kvaternik' student group, talked in similarly war-like terms of the revolutionary potential within Croatia at the time. Kvaternik claimed that ex-Austrian officers such as his father were willing and able to bring about such an uprising:

> ...the military expert Slavko Kvaternik and a group of former officers, of whom I could mention Stancer, Begić, Laxa, Šablljak.[146] All of them were at that time still relatively young, combative, and confident of success [...] the uprising which was planned over the summer of 1928 was not a rebellion of the unorganized masses. Its preparation, just as the formation of the first Croatian military formations, would have been in the hands of first-class officers and non-commissioned officers. In Croatia at that time there were several thousand officers and several tens of thousands of non-commissioned officers with many years of war experience. Since the end of the First World War only ten years had passed. Besides this, the majority of those officers and non-commissioned officers had served at least some time in the Serbian army [the Yugoslav army]. The military craft, therefore, was not alien to them. Those who had been youngsters during the First World War, were in the prime of their lives in 1928. Higher officers, from the rank of major upwards, were between forty and fifty years old. This gathering of officers and non-commissioned officers was nationally conscious and politically united. The majority were members of the H.S.S.

[145] *Hrvatski domobran,* 'Krvavi 1. Prosinac'
[146] That is Slavko Stancer, Vilko/Vilim Begić, Vladimir Laxa, and Adolf Šabljak.

> and amongst us were Austrian officers who, over the years, had lost the nostalgia for Austria and in whom patriotism for Croatia had sprang up. [147]

Just as the numbers of the officers involved in the Croatian Committee were inflated in that group's literature, Kvaternik was certainly exaggerating the support for an armed uprising in Croatia at this time. The Ministry of the Interior did send a memorandum to Zagreb citing 'reliable sources' and warning that former officers of the Austro-Hungarian Army were organizing with the intention of coming to the aid of the Peasant-Democrat Block, the new political constellation that encompassed most opposition parties in Croatia, including the Frankists.[148] Nevertheless, Kvaternik's comments are more useful in so far as they show how he valued the importance of armed struggle for Croatian autonomy, and how he valued the role that former Habsburg officers might make in such a struggle. This is important since Pavelić's Ustasha, formed shortly after the promulgation of King Alexander's dictatorship was, at least initially, a paramilitary group which would succeed or fail on the strength of its military efficacy. Kvaternik, like Jelić, would become a member of this insurgency, and the officers he mentions, Stancer, Begić, Laxa, and Šabljak, also all joined the Ustasha.

The latter part of 1928 then, from the death of Stjepan Radić until the promulgation of King Alexander's dictatorship, as well as the activities of groups like the Frankists and the Croatian Sokol in the 1920s, is essential for understanding the nature of the Ustasha insurgency in the 1930s. In the months immediately before the dictatorship, there was a renewed confidence within the ranks of the Frankists and their supporters that their goal of Croatian autonomy, pursued throughout the 1920s, was now attainable, as Croats become increasingly alienated from the government in Belgrade. Nowhere is this clearer than in the rituals surrounding days such as 29 October and 5 December. This latter was again marked in 1928 at Mirogoj by Pavelić and Perčec, who called the date their 'alternative' to Belgrade's 1 December ceremonies. 'These heroes were the first,' claimed Perčec, 'who gave their lives for the honour of the Croatian people.'[149] On 29 December, just a few days before the

---

[147] Eugen Dido Kvaternik , *Sječanja i zapažanje: 1925-1945: prilozi za hrvatsku povijest,* (Jare Jareb, ed.), (Zagreb: 1995), p. 201.
[148] HDA, fond 1373, 'Politička situacija', box 20.
[149] *Hrvatsko pravo,* 1 December 1928.

dictatorship, Pavelić told *Hrvatsko pravo* that nothing short of full autonomy was now acceptable to him and his supporters.[150]

In fact, Pavelić's expectations were disappointed at the beginning of 1929, when King Alexander promulgated his so-called 'Sixth-of-January Dictatorship' ending all talk of amputation and separation for Croatia. Furthermore, Frankist expectations of a full-scale revolt within Croatia also proved misplaced. The majority of the population within Croatia appear to have accepted the King's dictatorship as a necessary solution, even welcoming the end of the parliamentary paralysis that had made the country ungovernable since the shootings in the parliament building. Pavelić and his long-term collaborator in the Frankist party Gustav Perčec certainly did not accept this as a solution. They left the country shortly after the King's announcement, along with Branimir Jelić, founding the Ustasha. Both Perčec and Pavelić were sentenced to death *in absentia* for their co-operation with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), with whom they joined forces in April 1929.

Branimir Jelić would become the movement's most senior representative in Berlin during the 1930s, from where he directed a centre for Ustasha propaganda. Gustav Perčec became the military commander of the Ustasha training camp in Janka Pustza (Hungary); once again called upon to serve in a military capacity, it was felt that as a former Habsburg officer, he would be well qualified for this role.[151] Ex-officers Stjepan Sarkotić, Ivan Perčević, and Stjepan Duić, long-time exiles in Vienna, were also involved with the Ustasha and had great prestige within the tiny movement. Sarkotić especially, was practically deified amongst Frankists for his long-held opposition to Yugoslavia.[152] Significantly, Pavelić's first port of call after leaving Yugoslavia in January 1929 was Vienna and the coterie of ex-officers gathered around Stjepan Sarkotić.[153] Other Frankist/ex-officers who immediately joined the ranks of the Ustasha paramilitary units included Mirko Puk, Slavko Stancer, Manko Gagliardi, and Johann von Salis-Sewis. Vilim Begić was arrested a number of times over the course of 1929-30 for crossing the border into Hungary to assist Pavelić and Perčec. Slavko Kvaternik joined the movement in 1933, at the

[150] Ibid, 29 December 1928.
[151] Krizman, *Ante Pavelić*, p. 60.
[152] In 1924 in an article in *Slobodni dom*, Stjepan Radić derided Sarkotić as the 'spiritual leader' of the Frankists: cited in Šufflay, p. 67.
[153] Krizman, *Ante Pavelić*, p. 53.

personal request of Pavelić.[154] All of these veterans were amongst the highest ranks of the Ustasha in the 1930s, and those who survived the vicissitudes of exile in the 1930s were rewarded with positions in the upper echelons of Pavelić's Independent State of Croatia. It should, however, be emphasized that, as in 1919, the majority of Croatian officers, career soldiers, remained in the Yugoslav army after the promulgation of the dictatorship. Many of these officers remained there until the army's defeat at the hands of the Axis powers in April 1941. The loyalty and performance of these soldiers in Yugoslav colours remains an open question in the historiography, although Ustasha agents, working undercover, managed to persuade two regiments (about 8,000 soldiers) to rebel on 8 April and refuse to fight.[155]

3.9. Conclusion

Whilst it is tempting to see ex-Habsburg officers in the Croatian Legion or the Croatian Sokol as proto-Ustasha the numbers of those involved are too few to talk about a serious and significant ideological cohesion amongst these veterans. These men did not constitute a formidable military force such as the *Freikorps* during the civil war in Germany. Nor did they influence the politics of the country in the same way that the *Heimwehr* were able to in Austria, or the Szeged counter-revolutionaries who supported Admiral Horthy in Hungary.

It is perhaps better to think of these officers in terms of a number of 'personalities' un-reconciled to Yugoslavia and resentful of their loss of status post-1918, and longing, as Juan Linz puts it when talking of officers and veterans and their links to fascists, for 'the rigid status structures of pre-First World War society in which the aristocracy still occupied a distinct position particularly among the professional officers.'[156] Sarkotić is the archetype for this unreconstructed, disgruntled and, at least until 1928, largely irrelevant ex-Habsburg officer of Croatian descent. Miroslav Krleža, a fierce opponent of the Frankists and of the Ustasha alike, saw these ex-officers in similar terms. In his memoirs, Krleža recalls a celebration held by the National Council in November 1918, at which Slavko Kvaternik, head of the National Council's small armed forces at the time, was honoured by Mate

[154] See Slavko Kvaternik in Stuparić.
[155] See Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History* (London: 2001), p. 133.
[156] Juan J. Linz, 'Comparative Study of Fascism', in Walter Lacquer (ed.), *Fascism, a Reader's Guide: analyses, interpretations, bibliography* (London: 1979), p. 59.

Drinković as a hero and a patriot. Krleža wrote, in breathless style, of his horror as he described how a figure from one of his anti-war stories came to life before his eyes:

> I had the impression that this celebrated deputy for military affairs of the National Council of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes [Drinković] was completely senile! His pet, the son-in-law of Josip Frank, colonel Kvaternik, chameleon-like, kissing royal officers of King Peter Karadjordjević and who would that evening shoot anyone who was against King Peter Karadjordjević just as last night he hanged anyone who supported Peter Karadjordjević, just as at the first opportunity he would again hang people for the Habsburgs against Peter, or for Peter against the Habsburgs, or for whoever appeared on the Drava or in this town on a white horse as victor, this was not a man, but a caricature from my war-prose.[157]

Like Josip Horvat and his bitter sense of irony and ridicule when describing Mirko Puk, Krleža was writing at a time (1942) when Kvaternik, like Puk, was serving amongst the very highest ranks in the Independent State of Croatia. In the same essay, Krleža wrote of his disgust of how we looked out on that 'enormous gallery of those Laxas, Stancers, Glaise-Horstenaus, Borojevićs, count Salis-Sewis', Dankls, Lipovčaks [sic], Raymond von Gerbes, Lukačićs, Sarkotićs, Matašićs, Hórthys, Metzgers, Gömbös, etc, on those military black and yellow condotierres, landsknechts, junkers, and soldats, those butchers...'[158] Horvat and Krleža, sophisticated writers, were creating a kind of antithesis to the myths of heroic and stalwart military valour, exactly the qualities the Frankists valued in these veterans, to mock the soldiers who had, they felt, paved the way to a fascist Croatia.

The ideological influence of the Frankists cannot be questioned. Like the ex-officers, the end of the war meant a loss of status and the end of their hopes for greater Croatian autonomy within a reorganized imperial framework. Frankists such as Perčec were able to take a positive message from Croatia's role against the Allies during the Great War since they rejected outright the Yugoslav foundational narrative which dominated discourse about the war during the 1920s. If one rejected the unification of Serbia and the creation of Yugoslavia as a desired outcome of the war, as the Frankists did, it was not difficult to posit a counterfactual cause in its place

---

[157] Miroslav Krleža, 'Čajanka u počast srpskih oficira', in *Davni dani: zapisi 1914-1921* (Zagreb: 1956), p. 505.
[158] Ibid., p. 516.

(greater autonomy for Croatia) and assert that Croats had fought for this instead. This was a real contrast to Croatian invalids and the pro-Yugoslav intellectuals associated with *Nova Evropa* and *Obzor,* who spent much energy during the 1920s attempting to dismiss the idea that Croats had fought willingly against the Allies.

The study of the Society of Croatian Women and the Croatian Sokol in relation to the Frankists in the 1920s gives further clarity to this group's ideological cohesion in the 1920s and their attitudes to the war. The Society of Croatian Women and especially their commemoration of the December Victims reveal the gendered nature of war sacrifice according to the Frankists, i.e., a patriarchal sacrifice in which women play the role of widow or bereaved mother, whilst men are soldiers fighting for the cause of Croatian independence. The Croatian Sokol reveals much about Frankist attitudes towards youth and the important role of the post-war generation, and Pavelić's careful cultivation of this group shows how the Frankists were able to regenerate their flagging ideology in the post-war period. In this instance, the death of Radić and the more critical attitudes towards Yugoslavia that this produced in Croatia is an important turning point. Again, there are similarities to volunteer veterans associating with ORJUNA and attempting to keep the memory of their war sacrifice and the ideology of integral Yugoslavism alive in the post-war period. However, whilst ORJUNA dissolved at the end of the 1920s, the Frankists were able to create a small network of supporters in the 1930s, many in Zagreb University's law faculty, to continue the fight for Croatian autonomy.

This constellation of cultural and youth groups, political factions, ex-officers and their respective attitudes to Croatian war-time sacrifice is crucial for understanding the nature of the Ustasha and of Croatian fascism. The historian Bela Vago, in an article on fascism in Eastern Europe, makes the questionable claim that the Ustasha had 'hardly any history before April 1941, [their] programme and ideological foundation were little known amongst the Croatian masses.'[159] This latter point, whilst certainly true, is no less true of the ideological foundations of Yugoslavia amongst the Croatian masses, as this study shows. When one remembers that the Peasant leader Vladko Maček opted out of the quisling role in the Independent State of Croatia, and that the right-wing of his party, which did have support amongst the Croatian masses, joined forces with Pavelić, the notion of an

[159] Bela Vago, 'Fascism in eastern Europe' in Lacquer, p. 216.

Ustasha-led state was perhaps not as alien to as many Croats as Vago suggests. As for having no history, this chapter has shown that for men like Pavelić and his supporters, the opposite was true. The Frankists had a surfeit of history, a thousand years of Croatian state-right funnelled into a catastrophic denouement at the end of the war on 1 December 1918, and reborn as a narrative of resistance and opposition in the 1920s. There is something fascistic about abut the Frankist emphasis on opposition and the need for revolution.[160] If, as Krleža and Horvat believed, the Frankists' sole principle was opposition, one might reflect on the 'emptiness of a programme fulfilled'[161] when Pavelić gained autonomy for Croatia in 1941.

This chapter has also depicted what could be considered the most extreme rejection of Croatia's position in Yugoslavia, the opposite pole to that occupied by ex-volunteer veterans in the interwar period. Whereas that latter group adopted the vocabulary of 'liberation and unification' in the commemoration of their role in the Great War, the Frankists enthusiastically attacked the 'false epoch on Kajmakčalan'. Their resistance was positioned on both the top and middle storeys mentioned in the introduction. These veterans rejected the foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification' because it went against the grain of their understanding of Croatian national identity, but they also sought to locate this resistance at a European level, finding common cause with interwar Europe's revisionist states. In this way, we can trace a thread in the radical right in Croatia from ex-Habsburg officers seeking Allies in the Austria and Hungary through to Ante Pavelić being named by Hitler as *poglavnik* (*führer*). Like volunteers, ex-officers and Frankists also prized the masculine and military sacrifice of the soldier above all others, and like the volunteers, they transmitted those values to a new generation of men in Croatia. We have seen how, in skirmishes between ORJUNA and the Croatian Sokol, national sentiment and the legacy of the Great War was a matter of violent contest in the 1920s. However, not all veterans came home from the Great War determined to cause more violence in Yugoslavia. We will now see how the opposite was also true in the Yugoslav kingdom, and how the majority of veterans returned to Croatia committed to pacifism and anti-militarism.

---

[160] See, for example, George L. Mosse, 'Introduction: The Genesis of Fascism', in *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 1, no. 1 (1966), p. 19.
[161] Ibid, p. 25.

Chapter Four - Reflections of the War in the Countryside

The final study of this thesis, the impact of the war on the tens of thousands of peasants conscripted from the countryside of Croatia, and their impact on society in the 1920s, must through necessity be conducted in a different fashion to the studies of Croatian invalids, ex-officers, and volunteer veterans. In comparison to these groups, peasant-veterans are the least 'historically visible' in so far as they have left few traces pertaining to the impact of their war experience in the 1920s for the historian to analyse. In the decade after the war, the villages of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia were not filled with *poilu*-style monuments which could serve to link local commemoration to a national vocabulary. Nor could Croatian peasants recognise their sacrifice in the literary output of a handful of 'representative' authors, as many veterans in France and Britain would come to do.[1] Within the Yugoslav Kingdom itself, there is a marked contrast between the energetic commemorative activities of veterans of the Serbian army from comparable socio-economic backgrounds and the near 'silence' of their Croatian counterparts. This last point seems to suggest that the problem of understanding the meaning of the war in the Croatian countryside is related as much to a lack of agency on the part of Croatian veterans as to a paucity of sources. Considered together, these problems mean that any analysis of the impact of the war in the Croatian countryside and any conclusions made in this chapter will remain at least partially qualified.

Lack of sources notwithstanding, a study of Croatia in the 1920s would be seriously flawed if it did not acknowledge the overwhelmingly rural character of its society and the central position of the newly-enfranchised peasant in post-war Croatian politics. More specifically, the experience of fighting in the Habsburg army during the war uprooted tens of thousands of Croatian men from their families and homes, often for long periods of time. For many of these men, their spells on the battlefields in Italy, Serbia, and Russia would be the first and the last time that they were separated from home for such a sustained period, and for some of them, mobilization was the first time they had travelled outside of Croatia at all. Many of these men bore witness to the serious social and political upheavals that engulfed

[1] See Paul Fussell *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: 1975) and Frank Field, *British and French Writers of the First World War: Comparative Studies in Cultural History* (Cambridge: 1991).

Europe and (especially) Russia during the war years. Whilst conventional examples of war commemoration may be less common in the Croatian countryside than elsewhere in Europe (or in Serbia), the case of the 'green cadres' demonstrates the impact of these upheavals amongst peasants towards the end of the war. In the political sphere, Stjepan Radić, the *de facto* spokesperson for the Croatian peasant masses in the 1920s, linked his party's programme of pacifism and anti-militarism to the sacrifice made by Croatian conscripts during the war. Whilst he expected his constituency to be rewarded for their sacrifice with the right of Wilsonian national self-determination, another group of Croatian peasants returning from Russia were persuaded by the example of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, hoping to carry out a similar revolution back home. It must also be remembered that the Croatian peasant, broadly defined, is the largest and most important group examined in this thesis (socially, politically, and perhaps culturally). Whether or not they were, as Radić claimed, the 'soul of the Croatian nation' they were certainly the centre of public life in Croatia in the 1920s. Urban intellectuals in cities such as Zagreb were obliged to reach out to them, rather than vice-versa. Their experiences inform and often guide the debates and discussions, on the war and on other issues, which have been examined elsewhere in this thesis.

4.1. The End of Habsburg Authority and Russian Returnees

In the preceding chapter, it was shown that the attitude and policy of the National Council towards ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent were shaped in part due to the revolutionary temper of the final days of the war in Croatia. The cautious approach of the National Council towards potential enemies such as Stjepan Sarkotić and Antun Lipošćak must be seen in the broader context of the social disorder that made large parts of the countryside ungovernable at this time. That this social unrest was fuelled in large part by South Slav soldiers, conscripts, unwilling to return to the front and fight in Habsburg colours, has been acknowledged by both contemporary observers and historians alike.

This unwillingness amongst so many of the Monarchy's South Slav soldiers to fight on seems to be related both to the deteriorating efficacy of the Monarchy's army and to the impact of the Russian Revolution. In fact, historians have suggested that at the outset of war South Slav soldiers, especially Croatian soldiers, had fought well

under Habsburg colours.[2] As the number of Austro-Hungarian casualties mounted, however, the quality and loyalty of its troops started to decline. The need to call up reservists introduced a number of students who had been involved with pre-war Yugoslav youth movements; their subsequent participation in the volunteer movement during and after the war has already been noted. On the Italian Front, the Slovenian officer Ljudevit Pivko conspired with Allied troops to put his units at their disposal, a plan which came to fruition in September 1917.[3] Whilst soldiers such as Pivko had been opposed to the imperial war effort from the very beginning, Mark Cornwall has shown the deleterious effects of fighting and Allied propaganda on a South Slav unit which had been considered one of the Monarchy's most loyal. The 42nd Honved division, comprised almost exclusively of South Slav soldiers (Croats) had earned itself the sobriquet 'Devil's Division' and the right to use Serbo-Croat as its language of command on account of its proven martial ardour. Nevertheless, an influx of less-experienced soldiers replacing those killed in battle, and a sustained Allied propaganda effort, eventually took its toll on the division, regiments of which revolted in October 1918.[4]

On the Eastern Front, Austro-Hungarian forces suffered huge losses, most notably after the so-called 'Brusilov Offensive' of June 1916, which resulted in as much as one third of the Monarchy's armed forces captured by the Russians.[5] Ivo Banac has calculated that around 200,000 South Slav prisoners surrendered or were captured on the Eastern Front as a result of engagements such as this, and that most of these prisoners (80%) were peasant conscripts.[6] Whilst Croatian rank and file soldiers did not show great enthusiasm for fighting as volunteers within the ranks of the Serbian army, there is evidence to suggest that they were increasingly less enthusiastic for the Monarchy's war effort. The nature of internment in Russia during the war means that sources relating to conscripts and peasant soldiers are harder to find than those relating to officers. Again problems of 'historical visibility' which

---

[2]This was especially true on the Italian front where Norman Stone has noted that 'Czechs, Germans, Slovenes, Croats, were alike enthusiastic to fight Italian pretensions.': Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914-1917* (London: 1975), p. 243.

[3] The conspiracy is detailed in Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basingstoke: 2000), pp. 133-140.

[4] The ongoing operation had been planned in part by Pivko, now helping to disseminate propaganda on behalf of the Allies. See Ibid, pp. 287-299.

[5] Stone, p. 254.

[6] Ivo Banac, 'South Slav POWs in Revolutionary Russia', in Samuel R. Williamson and Peter Pastor (eds.) *War and Society in East Central Europe: vol. 5, Essays on World War One, Origins and POWs,* (New York: 1983), p. 120.

plague the study of Croatian peasants in the 1920s are present during the war, and as Alon Rachamimov has noted, the over-representation of officers in the memoir literature tends to give a distorted view of the experience of captivity in Russia.[7] Nevertheless, the same author has noted the growing discontent amongst prisoners, detailed in letters to the home front recorded by Habsburg censors.[8]

The Bolshevik Revolution erased inequalities between officers and prisoners in captivity in Russia and provided Croatian peasants with an example of a successful popular uprising carried out by people in similar socio-economic conditions to themselves. Even if conscripted peasants from Croatia had an imperfect understanding of the details of Bolshevik revolutionary philosophy,[9] Lenin's demand for 'peace and bread' must have had a great resonance for these soldiers, fatigued as they were by fighting and hunger. The return of these veterans to Croatia from the beginning of 1918 onwards struck another blow to the Monarchy's ability to prosecute the war against the Allies. This ability had already been greatly decreased by its apparent failure to remobilize its soldiers and civilians in favour of imperial war aims, as national sentiment started to take hold throughout the Monarchy.[10]

Authorities in Austria-Hungary, like Yugoslav authorities in the post-war period, were alert to the danger of the Bolshevik 'infection' spreading to their own backyard. Facilities were established to process so-called 'returnees' in an attempt to prepare them to return to the battlefield and neutralize any revolutionary sentiment they might have imbibed in Russia. Soldiers returning from Russia were placed in quarantine for a short period (to ensure they did not influence other soldiers and civilians), following which they were sent back to their families, and were finally returned to the front.[11] That this policy was not a complete success in Croatia and

---

[7] Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: 2002), p. 97. The way in which a small number of pro-Yugoslav officers in Croatia were able to shape contemporary understanding of captivity in Russia has already been noted.

[8] Ibid, p. 200.

[9] Miroslav Krleža's very short story 'Domobrans Gebeš and Bečina speak about Lenin' included as an appendix in *The Croatian God Mars* gives a flavour of the Croatian peasant's understanding of Marxism-Leninism. Gebeš has seen Lenin in action, where he railed at peasant soldiers for shedding blood and using their rifles on behalf of the gentleman. Gebeš is impressed by the revolutionary words, whereas his comrade in the barracks Bečina suspects it is all a Jewish conspiracy, 'Revolt! Peasant rights! War in the streets against the gentlemen! It's all a lot of Jewish stupidity! Shut up!' Their discussions do not become more penetrating than this. Miroslav Krleža, *Hrvatski Bog Mars* (Sarajevo: 1973), pp. 379-383.

[10] See Cornwall, 'Morale and Patriotism in the Austro-Hungarian Army, 1915-1918', in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilzation in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: 1997), pp. 173-191.

[11] Ferdo Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* (Zagreb: 1957), p. 65.

Slavonia can be proven by the growing number and strength of 'green cadres', armed bands comprised of local peasants and 'returnees', as well as armed revolts of Slav sailors at the Bay of Kotor.[12] One Croatian conscript serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army in 1918, Mile Krmpotić, testified to the influence of soldiers returning from Russian captivity on his unit:

> A soldier who returned from Russian captivity explained to us what the situation was in Russia. He told us how the Czar treated the people, how the people put down their weapons, fed up with war and poverty...they told us how revolution had destroyed the old order and how the people had decided that there would be no more war. They told us how the peasants and the workers were now the rulers of Russia, and that there was no more war over there.[13]

The interpretation of the Russian Revolution as an end to war was echoed in various reports from local authorities in the Monarchy's South Slav lands throughout 1918. In Zemun, in July 1918, authorities reported intelligence of an encounter with a returnee who promised that 'of all those returning from Russian captivity, not a single [soldier] will fight on the front, whichever front that may be.'[14] In August, a peasant reported to authorities in Osijek (Slavonia) on a meeting he had had with two armed members of the 'green cadres'. The men told him they were preparing a popular revolution similar to that seen in Russia, and assured him they had the weapons and the numbers to do so.[15]

The increasing lack of order in the Croatian countryside at this time must be seen first and foremost in the context of the increasing inability of Austria-Hungary to assert its authority in the region. The legacy of this period of unrest, however, would continue to be felt in the Yugoslav Kingdom well into the 1920s. It was at this time that many peasants learnt the limits of central authority and the way in which these limits could be tested through rudimentary organization and resistance. The unwillingness of many peasants to return to the army demonstrates the way in which the Croatian countryside saw the Habsburg military and its war aims as alien to their

---

[12] The impact of armed revolts in the Monarchy's army and navy is measured by Richard Georg Plaschka, *Cattaro-Prag, Revolt und Revolution: Kriegsmarine und Heer Österreich-Ungarns im Feuer der Aufstandsbewegungen vom 1. Februar und 28. Oktober 1918* (Graz: 1963).
[13] Ibid, p. 108.
[14] Hrvatski Državni Arhiv (HDA), fond 1363 'Politička situacija', box 3.
[15] Ibid.

own interests. It will be shown that in the 1920s many Croatian peasants saw the Yugoslav army in similar terms, and their success in avoiding the call-up hampered the ability of this institution to serve as a centripetal force in Yugoslavia. More specifically, the imminent possibility of a Bolshevik-style revolution remained a reality in the minds of many peasants throughout Croatia long after the end of the war. This confidence was provoked in part by the public speeches of Stjepan Radić, but his words found a receptive audience amongst Croatian peasants who had witnessed the revolution in Russia and understood it to mean freedom from military service and taxation. The emphasis both during the war and in the post-war period is on resistance to authority (Habsburg/Yugoslav) which was seen as alien or illegitimate by the Croatian peasant.

The explanation for this continued resistance can be found by examining the transition of Croatia from a Habsburg to a Yugoslav region at the end of 1918, and the response of Croatian peasants to this transition. Studying the way in which the experiences of Croatian veterans during the war impacted on their ability to make the transition into the Yugoslav state is vital in order to understand the legacy of the conflict in this region. It has been shown that the small group of Croatian volunteers who fought at Dobruja recognised the national revolution of October 1918 and the subsequent creation of Yugoslavia as a victory, the successful realisation of war aims for which they had mobilized. In contrast, a significant number of high ranking ex-Habsburg officers believed that imperial and Croatian interests were inseparable during the war. For these men, greater Croatian autonomy had been the goal of fighting during the war and it was for this goal that many of them remained at least partially mobilized during the 1920s. The reaction (or perhaps lack of reaction) of Croatian peasants to the events in Zagreb at the end of 1918 illustrate yet another response to the creation of Yugoslavia. This response demonstrates both the urban/rural division in Croatian society at this time and the structural continuities in the Croatian countryside which meant that many peasants equated Yugoslav oppression with Habsburg (Hungarian) oppression.

These structural considerations are important as they show the lack of impact made by the national revolution in Zagreb on the Croatian countryside in comparison to the impact made by returnees, the Russian Revolution and the *de facto* power

vacuum caused by the collapse of the Monarchy.[16] The records of the National Council demonstrate the impossible task facing this short-lived governing body in Zagreb when attempting to direct and bring order to a revolution which was actually taking place in rural areas. Reports were received throughout November about the anarchic situation which had engulfed the countryside in Croatia, with local authorities making numerous requests for military assistance. In Stupnik, an envoy of the National Council complained that villages throughout the area were being terrorized by soldiers returning from the front, and enquiring about the reliability and efficacy of former Austro-Hungarian soldiers now fighting in the National Council's small armed forces.[17] In Djakovo in eastern Slavonia, National Council deputy Ivan Ribar decided to refuse a request to disband unreliable units of the national guard, as to do so would leave the area without any kind of law and order. Ribar made his decision after consulting Slavko Kvaternik, the former Austro-Hungarian lieutenant-colonel who was now acting as head of the National Council's armed forces.[18] Reports from the areas surrounding the capital spoke of an 'anarchic' situation, and requested that the Serbian army be called in.[19] A similar request was made by National Council envoys in Vinkovci (Slavonia), who noted that peace was being maintained in the district by a 'red guard', that the revolution was taking on a 'socialist character' and that 'the sky in the surrounding area is red from arson attacks.'[20]

In this context one can see how detached was the idea of a grass-roots pro-Yugoslav revolution as held by a significant section of the Zagreb intelligentsia actually was. Just one day before Croatia-Slavonia's break with Austria-Hungary, whilst the countryside was convulsed in violence, *Obzor* reported with great optimism on a performance of Ivo Vojnović's dramatic poem *The Death of Mother Jugović,* based on a Serbian folk epic depicting characters and events at the Battle of Kosovo polje, at the Croatian National Theatre. The newspaper asserted that the favourable reception of the performance (Vojnović was present and received a standing ovation)

[16] Mark Biondich notes the 'republican tide' which was sweeping the countryside in Croatia and which a member of the National Council misinterpreted as simply 'plundering'. See Mark Biondich, *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904-1928* (Toronto: 2000); pp. 146-148.
[17] HDA, fond 'Narodno vijeće Slovenaca, Hrvata, Srba, 'Sekcija za organizaciju i agitaciju: opči spisi', box 9
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, box 10.
[20] Ibid.

demonstrated the new pro-Yugoslav mood prevalent throughout the country.[21] In fact the audience at the Croatian National Theatre that evening were representative of just a tiny section of Croatian society. Furthermore, it is clear from the anarchic situation in the countryside that the idea of experiencing revolution through attending a poetry reading would have struck many as absurdly out of joint with reality.[22]

The transition from Habsburg Croatia into Yugoslav Croatia was not as smooth or as poetic in the countryside as it was amongst some members of Zagreb's cultural elite. This transition was further complicated when the handful of National Council deputies met in November and decided that unification with Serbia and Montenegro was not only desirable but also necessary. We have seen in the preceding chapter that, notwithstanding ideological motivations and the dominance of Svetozar Pribićević and the supporters of unitary Yugoslavism within the National Council, the decision for unification was taken due to the multitude of security problems facing the council and its inability to resolve those problems. The weakness and unreliability of the National Council's own armed forces in the face of external and internal threats seemed to be proof of the need for armed assistance from Serbia. Moreover, the need for such assistance was apparently confirmed by envoys throughout Croatia, besieged by looters and arsonists and calling for help from the Serbian army.

The act of unification on 1 December 1918, which allowed for the entry of Serbian soldiers into Croatia, was to become a key date in the Kingdom's foundational narrative for many Serbs and all supporters of unitary Yugoslavism. Members of ORJUNA depicted this day as the culmination of a long struggle for the realisation of South Slav unification, intensified to a struggle for national survival during the war years. Similarly, the subsequent invasion of the Serbian army into Croatia was interpreted by many Serbians, both at the time and in the years after the end of the war, as a continuation of their wartime goals for the 'liberation and unification' of all the South Slav lands. But liberation from what? The sources reveal that the Monarchy's authority had more or less completely disintegrated in Croatia by autumn 1918. Obligations to the Monarchy such as paying taxes or fighting in the army were increasingly seen as non-binding. As one Croatian peasant, explaining why

---

[21] *Obzor,* 28 October 1918.

[22] Similarly, Andrew Wachtel has found that cultural life in Zagreb from 1914-1918 continued largely unaffected by the hardships of the war. See Andrew Wachtel, 'Culture in the South Slavic lands, 1914-1918' in Aviel Rothswald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War* (Cambridge: 2001), pp. 195-203.

he no longer recognised Habsburg authority, put it 'emperor Karl has become a comitadji', suggesting that the armed gangs active in the countryside at this time were just as powerful as the emperor himself.[23]

It is in this context that Serbia's military engagement in Croatia must be understood, with the emphasis on unification rather than liberation of the Habsburg South Slav lands. Whilst this was understood by many Serbians (and a number of non-Serbians) as the successful fulfilment of Serbia's war aims, the response in Croatia appeared to be more ambivalent. There were intellectuals who embraced the unification (there were those that did not), and a number of people throughout Croatia were surely relieved that the Serbian military had arrived to bring security to the countryside.[24] Nevertheless, for many peasants, a revolutionary atmosphere was created by the dissolution of the Monarchy, and buttressed by soldiers returning from Russia with stories of a peasant rule.[25] This is an important contingent for understanding the temper of the Croatian countryside in the period immediately after the war and the tensions between peasant expectations for a new order and the post-war reality of that order. The imposition of the Serbian army on the Croatian countryside restored an order that for many peasants resembled that which had passed away in the autumn of 1918. It is perhaps unsurprising that comparisons between Hungarian and 'Serbian' rule were present at this time.[26]

---

[23] See Ivo Banac, '"Emperor Karl has become a Comitadji": the Croatian Disturbances of Autumn 1918', *The Slavonic and Eastern European Review,* vol.70, no.2 (April 1992), pp. 294-304.

[24] Miroslav Krleža suggested that it was the wealthy land owners, those that had something to lose, that were most concerned about the disorder in the countryside. An incident involving a large estate holder and the murder of several 'green cadre' members in autumn 1918 served as an important plot function in Krleža's *critique* of middle class hypocrisy in interwar Croatia, *Na rubu pametu* (On The Edge of Reason). At a dinner party attended by Krleža's protagonist, a wealthy land owner talks nonchalantly of how he shot and killed looters who were trying to burgle his estate during the unrest in 1918, claiming he did so in defence of law and order. Krleža's protagonist upbraids him for suggesting that such order was possible at the time, and asserts that the real looters were war profiteers and land owners like him, who grew rich whilst the people that he shot were starving. He is rewarded for his candour by being ostracized from polite Zagreb society.

[25] Banac, '"Emperor Karl has become a Comitadji"'..., p. 302.

[26] The first annual report on the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes to be compiled by the British Foreign Office noted that, 'in time, the Serbs appeared merely to have taken the place of the hated Magyar.' National Archives (NA), FO 371/7686 'Annual report for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes'

4.2. Bolshevik Agitation 1918-1921

Over the next two years, official sources in Croatia continued to report on the difficulties of attempting to conscript young men into the new army, and the threat of a Bolshevik-style revolution in the countryside. Often this latter threat, imperfectly understood, was equated with 'republicanism', the system of government which would soon be championed by Stjepan Radić. In Sušak in April 1919 authorities reported a meeting held by workers at which speakers promised a 'great revolution throughout the whole of Europe, and especially in our country, the proletariat will be called upon to take power into its own hands, since until now it has shed its blood for capitalism alone, now it must do so for its own sake...'[27] The idea of a Europe-wide revolution is surely evidence of Bolshevik propaganda in Croatia, and suggests the involvement of soldiers who had fought in Russia. Authorities in Ogulin were more specific about this link in their reports. In June 1919, the gendarmerie chief reported that soldiers returning from Russian captivity were spreading Bolshevism in the district and that in nearby Crkvenici, a similar 'republican spirit' had been observed.[28] In Zdenac, an army recruiter was threatened with physical violence when he tried to list those eligible for military service: 'they want a republic, and not king Peter,' he reported. [29] Agitation against conscription was also reported in Varaždin and Bović. In Vrbanj, leaflets were circulated which read, 'down with king Peter, down with Croatian isolation, down with militarism, long live the republic!', and 'down with king Peter, down with the Serbs, down with isolation!'[30] In Kratečko, a village near Sisak, young men who had been arrested after trying to avoid conscription claimed that they had been instructed by a bishop that, 'they did not need to go into the army, since there was no-one to serve.'[31] Inside the army, short-lived revolts took place in barracks in Maribor (22 July) and Varaždin (23 July 1919). In Varaždin, the rebels issued demands for a republic and for a 'Yugoslav People's Army.'[32] After the rebellion was put down by Serbian soldiers, the town's mayor saluted

[27] HDA, fond 78 'Predsjedništvo zemalske vlade 1869-1921', box 956.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, box 962.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] See Stanislava Koprivica-Ostrić, 'Vojnička pobuna u Varaždinu 23. VII 1919. godine', *Časopis za suvremennu povijest*, vol. 25 (1983), p. 85.

> the former Serbian Army [which was now] a single army in a single nation, a single state, which no longer recognises religious or tribal differences...every soldier, Serb, Croat, or Slovene, whilst in the army, fights for our state and our fatherland.[33]

There were reports of a similar attempt at 'Bolshevik insurrection' in Osijek, which appeared to have support from Bela Kun's Hungary. According to authorities, it was a belief in the arrival of 'Red Guards' from Hungary which had provoked the uprising, rather than dissatisfaction with pay or living standards amongst soldiers, nor did it have anything to do with antagonism towards the Serbian army.[34]

Like the National Council at the end of 1918 authorities in Croatia had an imperfect understanding of the nature of the security threats they faced at this time. The sources cited show that terms like 'republicanism', 'republican spirit', and 'Bolshevism' were used interchangeably. In addition to this, peasants themselves were often unsure whether they were supporting the Bolshevik or the republican cause. In fact, these were two separate attempts to capitalize on the revolutionary potential of the Croatian peasant in the aftermath of the war and to establish a popular base in the Croatian countryside.

Properly understood, Bolshevism in the Yugoslav kingdom at this time was imported from Russia by South Slav soldiers, formerly of the Austro-Hungarian Army and mainly POWs, trickling back from Russia at the end of 1918, beginning of 1919. A small but well-organised vanguard comprised of ex-soldiers (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) worked energetically in the period after the war to establish a Bolshevik party and network for the purpose of socialist revolution, and their activities have been well-documented in the historiography.[35] For a brief period the post-war moment seemed to favour a socialist revolution in the South Slav lands.[36] Ex-soldiers found allies and financial backers in Bela Kun's short-lived Hungarian Soviet in 1919, and

---

[33] Ibid, p. 87. See also *Obzor,* 27 July 1919.
[34] HAD, fond 78 'Predsjedništvo zemalske vlade 1869-1921', box 960.
[35] Amongst the Bolshevik returnees were Vladmir Čopić, Nikola Kovačević, and Nikola Grulović. The first two men returned to Zagreb, circuitously, at the end of 1918, Grulović attended an early meeting of the Communist Party in February 1919. See Ivan Očak, 'Povratnici iz sovjetske Rusije u borbi za stvaranje ilegalnih komunističkih organizacija uoči prvog kongresa SRPJ (k)', *Historijski zbornik*, year XXVII (1974-1975), pp. 1-26. Also Banac, 'The Communist Party of Yugoslavia During the Period of Legality 1919-1921', in Bela K. Kiraly (ed.), *War and Society in East Central Europe, Vol. XIII The Effects of the World War One: The Rise of Communist Parties*, pp. 188-212.
[36] Throughout central Europe, Russian returnees were coalescing with native socialists to bring about a revolution. See F.L. Carsten *Revolution in Central Europe* (London: 1972), *passim.*

communists across the country were successful in organizing a national strike, also in 1919 (June). Communism emerged as a movement with countrywide support in the elections to the constitutional assembly in November 1920 (the only party with significant support amongst more than one national group) having already received a majority in municipal elections in Zagreb and in Belgrade, the two most important cities in Yugoslavia.[37]

In the Croatian countryside, South Slav Bolsheviks could count on their message resonating at this time with many of the tens of thousands of ex-conscripts who had experienced a peasant-led revolution during their time in Russian captivity. For these men, the social unrest and disobedience of autumn 1918 had established a precedent in their relations with the state and with the army. The new state's military and political leaders had to reckon on this continued reluctance amongst many Croatian peasants to serve in an army which was often viewed as a foreign or occupying force, and on the determination of the Bolsheviks to exploit this fact. The sources cited above appear to be evidence of both the unwillingness of many Croatian peasants to serve in the army, and, in the case of the Osijek plot, Bolshevik attempts to capitalize on this. The conspirators behind the much publicised 'Diamenstein Affair' appear to have operated under the same logic. In this instance, ex-POWs such as Vladimir Čopić worked with former Austro-Hungarian officers such as Josip Metzger to realise a full-scale military *coup d'etat* in Yugoslavia. Exactly what this putsch would have been a precursor to is unclear. Whilst Čopić hoped to replace the existing rule with a proletarian dictatorship, Metzger was a 'typical Austrian officer' who went on to join Pavelić and the Ustasha after serving as commanding officer in the Croatian Legion. In ideological terms these men were poles apart, but they both counted on the support of dissatisfied Croatian soldiers serving in Zagreb for the plot to succeed.[38] In Karlovac, also in summer 1919, a commanding officer reported on similar conditions in his battalion. A group of ex-POWs were agitating amongst conscripts in order to spread Bolshevism. This was aggravating the problem of military deserters from his battalion, a problem which was identified as separate yet related to the Bolshevik agitators. He believed that conscripts would take heed of Bolshevik propaganda merely to escape from their military duties. It was because of

[37] Results of the elections for the constituent assembly are given in Banac, *National Question,* pp. 388-389.

[38] For full details of the plot, see Ivan Ramljak, 'Afera Diamenstein', in Zdravko Dražina (ed.) *Zagreb jučer, danas, sutra* (Zagreb: 1965), pp. 207-218.

this unwillingness to serve in the army, he felt, rather than ideological reasons that Bolshevism presented a threat.[39]

As with sources pertaining to ex-officers and Frankists, there is a possibility that government and military authorities exaggerated the security threat posed by Bolshevik agitation in the Croatian countryside at this time. If so, it must be remembered that analysis was informed by contemporary events and those of the recent past: in other words, the success of Bela Kun's revolution in Hungary, its possible implications for the region, and the breakdown of law and order in Croatia and Slavonia in the last days of the war. As a corollary to this problem, Marxist historiography from the Tito era has tended to overstate the popular appeal of Bolshevism at this time and to interpret movements such as the 'green cadres' as an expression of solidarity with this ideology.[40]

Instead, the sources support the interpretation that a distinction exists between a small group of political activists, mainly ex-POWs from Russia, who sought to effect a Bolshevik revolution, and a more widespread reluctance amongst Croatian peasants to serve in the army, as well as a willingness to defy authorities as a result of their experiences in 1918. The year 1919 represented both the best chance Bolshevik returnees had of harvesting this popular sentiment for their own political ends *and* the period of greatest anxiety on the part of the authorities concerning the possibility of a socialist revolution.

After this 'high-water mark' the counter-revolution in Hungary served as a blow to the morale of South Slav Bolsheviks and soothed the concerns of Yugoslav authorities that a revolution in their own country was imminent. Ironically, the 'white-violence' across the border allowed for a new group of South Slav veterans to form the 'Croatian Committee' and plot against the Yugoslav kingdom with very different intentions. At home, the Bolsheviks were marginalised and then driven underground first by the *Obznana*, which restricted their movements and participation in the country's politics, and then by the ZZD (*Zakon zaštite države,* 'The Law for the Protection of the State') which outlawed the party altogether.[41] This last piece of legislation was introduced in 1921 following the successful assassination by the

---

[39] HDA, fond 78 'Predsjedništvo zemalske vlade 1869-1921', box 960.
[40] See especially, Ferdo Čulinović, *Odjeci oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* (Zagreb: 1957), *passim.*
[41] Membership of the party went from 80,000 in December 1920 to 688 in December 1923, and never went above 3,500 for the rest of the decade. See Ivan Avakumović *History of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (Aberdeen: 1964), p. 185.

young Bosnian communist Alija Alijagić of the former interior minister Milorad Drašković, author of the *Obznana.* Post-1921, communism lost its popular appeal and became the preserve of a small cadre of politically active men and women who operated outside the mainstream of political and civil society in the Yugoslav kingdom. Its return to popularity was eventually realised in the heat of a new war, and guided by the most famous ex-POW of all, Josip Broz 'Tito'. In the 1920s however, the party came to resemble post-war societies such as ORJUNA and *Hrvatski sokol*, relying, like them, on rallies and public rituals of violence to maintain its cohesion in the 1920s.

Obviously the lessons that these South Slav veterans took from their experiences in Russia were very different from the handful of ex-officers who were working to establish a volunteer-veterans' society and who had also been in Russian captivity. Nikola Kovačević, a *prečani* Serb and veteran of the Austro-Hungarian Army who had fought in the volunteer corps during the war (but who was now a Bolshevik) derided the war-time volunteer movement when asked about it during the trial of Alijagić, speaking of how the division was, 'thrown into Dobruja, where five thousand Vojvodjanins were killed so that colonel Hadžić could obtain the rank of general.'[42] The volunteer veterans' movement in Croatia was very sensitive to remarks such as these. The society had already complained of being treated with suspicion by the authorities on account of their time in revolutionary Russia. Pro-Yugoslav volunteers believed that they had fought successfully to liberate the South Slav peoples during the war, but Bolsheviks challenged this interpretation by claiming that true liberation could only be achieved through socialist revolution, as in Russia.

In this sense, the Bolsheviks interpreted the war as a qualified success, a significant advancement in the struggle against capitalism but by no means the final victory. Their war had not ended in 1918, and it is unsurprising that their most celebrated martyr was a man who died in the post-war period, Alija Alijagić, hanged in August 1922 for his part in the Drašković assassination and buried at Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb. *Borba,* the Bolshevik newspaper founded by ex-POW veterans and edited by Vladimir Čopić noted that

[42] *Borba*, 5 March 1922. His reference to 'Vojvodjanins' is a reminder that the majority of volunteers who fought in the Serbian army during the war were from that region of the Monarchy (i.e., Serbs).

> The hanging will remain in our history as an inerasable symbol of this shameful regime. The death of our Alija will remain with us as an example of the nobility of a proletarian victim of this regime...[this is] not a cult of Alija Alijagić as an assassin, but a cult of Alija Alijagić as a victim of a criminal regime and as a hero and martyr of the working class.[43]

On All Saints' Day in 1923 and 1924, Communists throughout the country set aside their atheism to pay their respects to Alijagić on the Catholic feast day, and to show that support for their cause was still strong. In 1923, *Hrvat* contrasted the huge number of wreathes which covered Alijagić's grave on All Souls' Day to the bareness of the 3,800 graves of those killed from Zagreb regiments during the war.[44] In 1924, the feast day was marked by fighting at Mirogoj and in central Zagreb, as Communists clashed first with the police, and then with members of ORJUNA. After fighting had broken out the previous year, a ten man police guard was placed at Alijagić's grave in 1924 with instructions to prevent any Communists making speeches at the graveside of their fallen comrade. When assembled Communists started to do exactly this, police intervened and in the ensuing mêlée, seventy additional officers were called in to restore order, critically injuring one Communist in the process.[45] In a different part of Mirogoj, a gathering of Frankists who had come to pay respects to their recently departed colleagues Antun Lipošćak and Milan Ogrižović were disturbed in their observances by the Communist brawl. The Frankist newspaper *Hrvatsko pravo*, reflecting on the violence, feared that Zagreb was becoming 'Balkanized.'[46]

The violence, however, did not end at Mirogoj. In the afternoon, the Communists attacked the *Narodna kavana* on Jelačić Square, a café frequented by members of ORJUNA.[47] ORJUNA, in contrast to the Communists, were satisfied with the outcome of the war, since it had let to the 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs. Their only concern in the post-war period, and their movement's *raison d'etre,* was that the war-time achievements of the Serbian army and the volunteer movement could be rolled back by enemies of unitary Yugoslavism, 'defeatists' such as the Communists. The ongoing conflict between these two groups had reached new levels

[43] *Borba,* 16 March 1922.
[44] *Hrvat,* 2 November 1923.
[45] *Obzor* 3 November 1924.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

of intensity in summer 1924, when members of both groups had been killed after a clash in the Slovenian mining village of Trbovlje.

After the violence of 1924, the Zagreb authorities realised the symbolic value of the grave as a memory site for the country's Communists and actually disinterred Alijagić's remains, removing them from Mirogoj and reburying them in a small village outside Bihać, in Bosnia.[48] Authorities presumably felt that moving the body away from one of the country's largest cities would decrease the number of visitors on All Saints' Day and therefore the potential for violence. The decision seems to have paid off, since there was markedly less violence at Alijagić's grave in the years to come. The Communists, reporting on the move, reckoned that Alijagić was more dangerous to the authorities in death than he had been during his lifetime.[49]

By this stage, however, small gatherings and rituals of violence such as those at Mirogoj were all the Communists could muster. State power had been successful in scattering the once powerful movement, and party members spent the 1920s locked in bitter recrimination about their failure to realise a socialist revolution, as well as divisive arguments concerning doctrine.[50] Particularly fierce criticism was levelled at Sima Marković, the Serbian Communist leader. It was felt that Marković, suffering from 'social democratic illusions' (i.e., a willingness to work within the country's parliamentary system), had failed to take advantage of the revolutionary situation 1918-1920, allowing the bourgeois state to consolidate its power and to crush the Communist movement.[51] In fact, the Communists failed to achieve a popular revolution in Croatia at this time principally because the post-war temper of the Croatian peasantry was harnessed by a completely different political force, to which we now turn.

4.3. Stjepan Radic and the War

Like the Frankists, the Croatian People's Peasant Party earned the distrust of many of the country's new leaders at the time of the 'national revolution' in Croatia. This distrust derived from the Peasant Party's war-time support for the Monarchy and, critically, their opposition to unification with Serbia. Whilst these outward similarities

[48] *Borba*, 5 November 1925.
[49] Ibid, 23 October 1925.
[50] Avakumović, *History of the Communist Party*, p. 60.
[51] Ibid, p 57.

led to tactical partnerships between the Frankists and the Peasant Party and encouraged post-war authorities to view them in similar terms (as anti-Yugoslav elements), there was in fact much difference between them. Whilst Josip Frank was politically active at the turn of the century, Stjepan Radić rejected his rival's anti-Serbianism and that of his party as demagogy, and whilst he supported the Monarchy in Croatia's war-time *Sabor*, Radić refrained from the violent anti-Serb rhetoric that characterized the speeches of Frankist deputies.[52] In fact, Radić's support of the Monarchy, for the most part tacit, was based on the same premise that would inform much of his post-war policy in the Yugoslav kingdom: that a violent revolution in the Croatian countryside would only harm the peasant constituency. When asked in 1916 why he was not speaking or writing critically of Austria, Radić replied that

> If I were to say or write something [against Austria] now in public, if we Croats were to adopt that kind of policy, the German Command would quite simply decree that the Soča [Isonzo] Front be transferred to Zagreb, or maybe even to the Drava. Before the war was over Croatia would be devastated, ravaged, destroyed, and not free, and I would be cursed by the people for a thousand years.[53]

In line with this logic, Radić's disengagement from the Monarchy was closely related to the circumstances of the war. As Austria-Hungary (and Germany) looked weaker and weaker in the final year of the war, so Radić distanced himself from its war effort. The increasingly radical position of the Monarchy's Czechs at this time offered Radić a solution to the Croat question which lay outside the boundaries of Austria-Hungary, whatever form she might take in the post-war period. In this respect his strategy differed from the Frankists, his allies in the war-time *Sabor*, who still hoped for a re-organization of the Monarchy and still believed that Serbia and Serbian nationalism was the greatest threat to Croatian interests.[54]

---

[52] See Mark Biondich *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party and the Politics of Mass Mobilzation* (Toronto: 2000), p. 44. Andrej Mitrović has also commented on the marginality of Frankist anti-Serb policy at the beginning of the war. Discussing anti-Serb demonstrations in Croatia following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Mitrović notes that, 'Two facts stand out clearly; first, the demonstrations were supported, organised and led by extremely weak forces on the far right, secondly, other political forces not only refrained from participating in them, but actively condemned them.' Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War 1914-1918* (London: 2007), p. 19.

[53] Ivan Mužić, *Stjepan Radić u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca* (Zagreb: 1987), p. 25. Mužić instances a private conversation between Radić and Mijo Pavlek, as reported by Pavlek.

[54] See Biondich, pp. 132-133.

Radić also sensed (more keenly than most Croatian politicians) that the experience of war had altered the social and political landscape in Croatia, especially affecting the men who had fought in the Monarchy's army. In order successfully to lead the peasantry in the post-war period Radić knew that his party would need to acknowledge this alteration. At the time of the peasant unrest in 1918, Radić remained firm in his opposition to violent revolution. Radić and his deputies spoke out against the anarchy in the countryside as a threat to all, 'What is in store for us,' he asked the *Sabor*, 'if our army robs and loots?'[55] Despite these protestations, Radić would soon demonstrate that he and his party had learnt what they believed to be important lessons from the war and the unrest in the countryside.

The country's new leaders were also learning similar lessons from this unsettled period. The inclination of the 'green cadres' to attack large landholdings convinced authorities that a radical agrarian reform would need to be carried out as rapidly as possible, in order to reconcile the peasant population to the new state.[56] This accounts for the relatively efficient manner in which this legislation was passed, in contrast with other post-war reforms relating to currency, pensions, a unified invalid law, etc. With the spectre of Communism threatening the new state, the authorities also granted the nation universal manhood suffrage, hoping to avoid the same fate as constitutionalists in Russia. Perhaps a euphemism, one of the reasons given for this decision was that 'the people have, during the war, demonstrated their higher conscience and devotion.'[57] The Peasant Party (and the Communists) were in favour of extending the franchise to women and, significantly, to soldiers, although ultimately both these groups remained disenfranchised in the interwar period.[58]

These last two pieces of legislation did more to transform the nature of Croatian civil and political society than anything else in the 1920s. Universal manhood suffrage introduced a completely new voice into Croatian politics, that of the peasant. In 1913, the year of the most recent post-war elections, less that 5% of

---

[55] Čulinović, *Odjeci oktobra,,* p. 94.
[56] Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Oxford: 1955), p. 231.
[57] Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji 1919-1929* (Belgrade: 1979), p. 68.
[58] Ibid. It appears that the National Radical Party of Serbia were the driving force behind these two important restrictions to the electoral franchise. The party, socially conservative in this matter, was concerned that giving the vote to women would disrupt traditional family values and have a deleterious effect on societal relations, which needed to be reconstructed after the trauma of the war years. Soldiers were disenfranchised in an attempt to de-politicize the army: the government did not want to see the same sort of soldiers' councils which had sprung up in the Czarist army.

the population (approximately 190,000 people) had been eligible to vote in Croatia and Slavonia.[59] In elections to the constitutional assembly held in November 1920, 438, 799 men in Croatia and Slavonia voted, 230, 590 of them for the Peasant Party.[60] In Yugoslavia's first parliamentary elections in March 1923, the Peasant Party canvassed for the first time in Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, increasing its vote to 473, 333, or 21.8% of the total votes cast throughout the country, making it the kingdom's second most popular party.[61] Croatian politics had by this time entered a completely new phase, and one which few had anticipated at the end of the war. As Josip Horvat noted,

> Throughout 1918 political life was restricted to a layer of the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, representatives of which called the shots, politically, on behalf of all layers, in the name of everyone. The people, however, had for four years paid an unimaginable tribute in blood and money. By 1918, the Croatian lands had sent over half a million soldiers to bleed on battlefields from Champagne to the Urals; around one hundred thousand of the healthiest men had died over there [...] And under the influence of returnees from Russia and from the battlefield, and beneath the clamour of political discussions from the city, a new seed began to spring from aspirations which were centuries old: hunger for land, aspirations for a new movement and a new direction, aversion to any kind of state power[...] This development went unnoticed, since all political parties without exception had little or no contact with the widest sections of the nation.[62]

There was, however, a very important exception, that of Stjepan Radić and the Croatian People's Peasant Party. Radić's interpretation of the impact of the war was perhaps the most original of any figure in Croatian public life in the 1920s, and is certainly the most complex (although arguably not the most sophisticated) of any group examined in this thesis. As with so much of his party's ideology, his understanding of what the war meant was drawn from an eclectic range of sources, many of which most would have considered mutually exclusive. At all times Radić was conscious of communicating his interpretation of Croatia's war in a manner which would be comprehensible to his peasant followers, who in turn communicated

---

[59] Ibid, pp. 11-12.
[60] Banac, *National Question,* pp. 388-389.
[61] Gligorijević, pp. 145-149.
[62] Josip Horvat, *Politička povijest Hrvatske* (Zagreb: 1990), pp. 28-29.

to him and his party their sense of sacrifice and suffering and what they hoped to gain as a result. This need to communicate his message to the broadest section of Croatian society should be kept in mind by the historian who adheres to the notion that Radić and the Peasant Party had little or no ideological substance. It must also be noted that Radić was formulating his ideas about the war at a time of great tumult and uncertainty in the region, with a multitude of potential political and revolutionary influences (Wilsonian self-determination, Leninist socialism, Serbian 'liberation and unification') vying for control in the post-Habsburg vacuum. The lack of a clear sense of why and for what Croats had fought during the war (an important contrast with Serbia), an uncertainty as to what the nation had lost or gained and a blurring of the distinctions between 'victim' and 'victor' also need to be considered as circumstances specific to the Croatian context.

First and foremost, Radić was impressed by the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution within the context of the European war. It appeared to be the culmination of a long tradition of Russian populism, a tradition which had been central to the formulation of his own party's political platform. In Russia, the revolution had both empowered the peasant, the true possessor of the national spirit, and crushed the militarism of the Russian Empire. This second point was a corollary of the first, since the war had not been waged on behalf of the Russian peasant, but by him on behalf of his rulers, and Russia's immediate withdrawal from the war was evidence of this. Despite these major advancements, the violence of the Russian civil war cemented Radić's aversion to violent revolution *per se*. So while the spirit that guided the Bolshevik Revolution was to be saluted, its methods were not to be emulated in Croatia, since it would mean further suffering on the part of the peasant. Radić claimed that much of the Croatian peasantry knew this to be true as well, on account of the large number of veterans, former-conscripts, who had fought in Russia during the war:

> There were more than 100,000 of our people in Russia, and they saw what the greatest world revolution really was. They understood its spirit, namely, that a free peasantry be created. They supported this spirit of freedom, but they condemned the methods.[63]

[63] Cited in Biondich, p. 160.

Nevertheless, the revolutions in Russia had contributed to the end of the epoch of great empires oppressing Europe's peasant masses, and the Croatian returnees who had witnessed this would never tolerate a return to such oppression.

If this was true for those men who had fought in Russia, then almost every single Croatian peasant, man, woman, and child, had direct experience of the trauma of suffering on behalf of a foreign power during the Great War. Four years of such suffering meant that the Croatian peasant was now a dyed-in-the-wool pacifist, and 'militarism' of any kind was his greatest enemy. The peasant had paid the highest price of any social class during the war and had learnt that war would never serve his own interests. As Radić said,

> The world war had a powerful impact on all of us and on that basis has changed our political attitude. The war had the greatest impact on the peasants and the workers, since this was really a peasant and workers' war, in so far as all of its suffering and horrors were most acutely and most terribly felt by the poor peasants and workers.[64]

It was partly on this conception of anti-militarism and the example of the peasant revolution in Russia that Radić based his opposition to the new state and to Serbia's role within it. Radić interpreted the occupation of Croatia and Slavonia by the Serbian army at the end of 1918 as a return to the kind of militarism which had been thoroughly discredited in the violence unleashed by the war.[65] His comparison of Serbia's goal of 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs with the oppression of Austria-Hungary was highly provocative to Serbia's political class, not to mention characteristic of Radić's lack of tact. It did, however, resonate with much of the Croatian peasantry, who, as has been shown, had become habituated to resisting an army which it identified as alien to its interests. Opposed to a violent revolution and acutely aware of Croatia's lack of strength, Radić, like so many at the time, looked to the American president Woodrow Wilson to support his cause. Radić felt that Wilsonian principles of self-determination offered the Croatian peasantry exactly the kind of humanitarian example that was lacking from the Bolshevik revolution.[66] In this way, Radić proposed a novel synthesis of Wilsonian national and Leninist

---

[64] Stjepan Radić, 'Seljačka stranka na ćelu hrvatskog naroda', in *Stjepan Radić: politički spisi, autobiografija, članci, govori, rasprave* (Zvonimir Kulundžić ed.), p. 336.
[65] Mužić, p. 39.
[66] See Radić, 'Hočemo u jugoslavenskim jedinstvu svoju hrvatsku državu', in Kulindžić, p. 321.

socialist revolutions, considered to be competing ideologies by most historians of the post-war period. In February 1919, Radić was arrested and imprisoned by the Belgrade government for trying to pass these proposals for a 'Neutral Peasant Republic' in Croatia and a petition supporting such a republic to president Wilson, via the French military mission in Zagreb.[67]

It is clear from a study of Radić's correspondence from prison over 1919 that he continued to think in these terms about Croatia and the war, and that he worked energetically alongside his party activists to communicate his message to as many people as possible, both at home and abroad. In March 1919, Radić despatched his party's leading ideologue and head of *Seljačka sloga*, Rudolf Herceg, to give two lectures on Croatia and the war. Herceg spoke of the war as a 'great school' from which lessons should be learnt as a matter of urgency.[68] The Croatian peasant-soldier, through the influence of the Russian revolution and Woodrow Wilson, revolted against the war as an affront to humanitarian principles, and it was this revolt that led to the disorder of autumn 1918.[69] In an obtuse dismissal of the sacrifices and trauma that many Serbians had faced during the war, Herceg accused that nation of being transformed from 'peace-loving Slavs' into 'war-like Spartacists' through centuries of Turkish rule:

> That is why the [Serbian] peasant went happily to his death in 1912 and 1914, his homeland was contaminated by an imported bourgeoisie and bureaucracy. In a year and a half at the censors in Vienna and Feldkirch (Serbian and South Slav division) I did not find a single letter in which a Serbian peasant criticized this war, not even after the retreat across Albania.[70]

Radić himself shows the same enmity towards the Serbian army and the government of Serbian Radical Stojan Protić, asking Peasant Party deputies Dragutin Kovačević and Rudolf Horvat to write articles critical of 'militarism' and the Serbian occupation, as well as the deep roots of peasant democracy in Croatia.[71] In May 1919, expressing his dismay at the presence of the Serbian army in Croatia and his fears of a violent revolution, he suggested in a letter to his wife that the 'Serbian' government

---

[67] Biondich, p. 164.
[68] Rudolf Herceg, *Svjetski rat i problem nove države* (Zagreb: 1919), p. 3.
[69] Ibid, p. 51.
[70] Ibid, pp. 47-48.
[71] Stjepan Radić, *Korespondencija Stjepana Radića,* vol. 2 (Bogdan Krizman, ed.), p. 130, and p. 142.

would not allow its soldiers to return home, since it had been devastated in the war. He believed that, 'at home, *in Serbia,* it will be the same as it was here 1916-1918, but without any kind of national character [*narodnoga obilježja*], a purely negative social movement = Bolshevism.'[72] Those comments were an expression of what Radić thought of the significance of the unrest in Croatia at the end of the war and of his belief in an imminent revolution in Serbia. As already noted, this was not the direction he wanted the Croatian people to take, and in a letter written a month later he complained of Belgrade rule and noted that 'we Croats must use any means necessary – *except revolution* – so that we achieve full autonomy in Croatia as soon as possible.'[Italics added][73] At the end of 1919, still in prison, Radić wrote to his wife of how he, with Vladko Maček, Dragutin Hrvoj, and August Košutić, envisaged the post-war order in light of the Russian Revolution:

> [The resolution] has the title, 'The right of national self-determination, peasant democracy *and world peace*', and it finishes in this way: on the great influence of the Russian peasantry on the fate of the Russian people, because in Russia the main points of peasant rights have been realised, namely the peasant right to full ownership of the land, the division of the land by peasant councils, the abolition of military service, the use of the largest portion of state funds for the sake of peasant education and the abolition of imperial civil service police-gendarme rights.[74]

This is what Radić envisaged, not just in Croatia, but throughout Europe in the aftermath of the war, for peasants who 'were until now powerless, but are now victorious and repulsed by any kind of militarism and any kind of warfare…'[75]

4.4. The Neutral Peasant Republic

Radić's interpretation of the experience of the war years on the Croatian peasant had a two-fold significance on state and society relations in the post-war period. Firstly, it served to distance his Croatian constituency from supporters of unitary Yugoslavism and from many Serbians. His praise, albeit qualified, of the Bolshevik revolution and

---

[72] Ibid, pp. 147-148.
[73] Ibid, p.166.
[74] Ibid., p. 417.
[75] Ibid.

his appeal to Wilsonian self-determination for a solution to Croatia's post-war status outside a centralised Yugoslavia constituted a comprehensive negation of Serbia's popular conception of the war as one of 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs. 'The Neutral Peasant Republic', codified by the Peasant Party in Zagreb in April 1921, was 'neutral' and a 'republic' in that it dismissed two institutions which were central to the experience of the war for many Serbians: the army and the Karadjordjević dynasty.[76] Whilst the image of Alexander Karadjordjević leading his army through the snow in winter 1915 was central to the Serbian narrative of a victorious struggle for national survival, the Peasant Party saw them as vestiges of an order swept away by the experience of war and peasant revolution in Russia. As Dragutin Kovačević put it in a fantastic and extended hyperbole,

> If God were to send an aeroplane with our King Tomislav, Držislav, Krešimir or Petar Svačić, or our most celebrated bans Zrinski and Frankopan and Jelačić, that one of them would be our king, we would say 'Go back to heaven, we neither want nor need a king' [...] And if Jesus himself, the son of God, came from the heavens on a cloud to be our king, we would praise him in this way, 'Christ, son of God, be a king in the heavens, we don't want a king on earth'[77]

The Karadjordjević dynasty had little chance of recognition if these exalted rulers were to be turned away.

Radić and his followers were attempting to construct what the cultural historian T.G. Ashplant has termed a 'sectional war memory', that is, an interpretation of the war that is significantly different from or in conflict with the official hegemonic narrative.[78] In this respect, there are only differences of degree between Radić and the Peasant Party and the other groups we have examined, with the important exception of ex-volunteers. Croatian invalids, ex-officers, Frankists, and Bolshevik 'returnees', like the Peasant Party, challenged the Serbian foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification' and posited their own interpretations of why the war had been fought, and what Croatia had lost and gained as a result. In ideological terms, Frankists and Bolsheviks presented a greater challenge to the post-war order, since, unlike Radić,

---

[76] The text of the republic's proposed constitution is supplied in Kulindžić, pp. 366-393. It was intended as an alternative to the document that would become the Vidovdan Constitution.
[77] 'Seljačka stranka na čelu hrvatskoga naroda' in Kulindžić, p. 337.
[78] T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper (eds), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, p. 20.

they were willing (if not able) to turn to violent revolution in order to realise their goals. Unlike the pacifist Radić, members of these two groups were prepared to continue fighting after 1918, to continue Croatia's war, until they arrived at what they believed was a more favourable conclusion.

Radić's challenge to the post-war state was more significant, however, not because it was extreme, but because it was popular. The Frankists were a negligible presence in Croatia in the 1920s, the Bolsheviks had a significant following and, briefly, foreign allies and backers to help them realise their revolution. After 1921, however, state power was successful in driving the movement underground and, in the process, depriving it of its popular support. The Peasant Party maintained its popular appeal throughout the 1920s, and Radić exercised almost complete control over the party until his 'capitulation' to the Belgrade government in 1925. Until that time, Radić and his party told their supporters throughout Croatia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina that the 'Neutral Peasant Republic' would be the most humane and fair system of government and that, furthermore, it was no less than Croats were entitled to in light of their wartime sacrifice. In so doing, Radić undermined the authority of the Karadjordjević dynasty and the new Yugoslav army, institutions which supporters of unitary Yugoslavism hoped would serve as multinational, integrating factors in the post-war state.

There is ample evidence that Radić's message of anti-militarism and republicanism proved popular amongst the Croatian peasantry in the period lasting from the end of the war until Radić's capitulation in 1925. The need for the Serbian army to restore order in the Croatian countryside immediately after the collapse of Habsburg authority meant that Croatian peasants were quick to draw comparisons between Habsburg and Serbian oppression. As the American observer Leroy King warned in spring 1919, apparently using Radić's own terminology, 'The Serbian army is now scattered throughout Croatia; and there have been many acts of "militarism" which the peasants do not like. Here in Agram [Zagreb] one hears many expressions of dislike for the methods of the Serbian military administration.'[79] The potential for unrest amongst the Croatian peasantry was also noted by authorities. In August 1920, a circular was despatched from Zagreb throughout Croatia and Slavonia warning of the deterioration of public security in Slavonia (especially Srijem) over the last four to

[79] 'Leroy King's Reports from Croatia March-May 1919', *Journal of Croatian Studies,* vol. 1 (1960), p. 85.

five months.[80] The circular advised the recruitment of local leaders, clergy, and school teachers in a bid to impress upon the population of these areas the need for improved security, which was, after all, in the interests of everyone.[81] The issue of recruiting conscripts into the new army was also highlighted, apparently because it was proving a problem, the successful resolution of which would be of benefit to public security. 'It is particularly necessary to show to the people the need for military service as an unconditional and equitable duty, that all must serve in the army, and the serious consequences which will fall unavoidably on every deserter.'[82]

This potential for unrest was realised in autumn 1920, shortly before the Peasant Party's success in the elections to the Yugoslav kingdom's constituent assembly. Attempts by the Serbian army to brand cattle, a practice new to the Croatian countryside, were mis-interpreted by Croatian peasants as potentially injurious to their stock. The fact that many of these animals were subsequently taken away from peasants for two-month military exercises further inflamed the situation and was an unwanted reminder of war-time requisitioning. Whilst sources suggest that both Frankists and Bolsheviks attempted to capitalise on the revolt for their own political ends (and that returnees from Russia were involved), the revolt was directed, in so far as it was directed at all, by members of the Peasant Party.[83]

As the circular sent in August 1920 confirms, the cattle-branding affair did not take the authorities by complete surprise, they were alert to the possibility of serious unrest in the Croatian countryside. Neither did the eventual quelling of the uprising mark the end of hostility to the army in the Croatian countryside. Radić considered his victory in the elections of November 1920, very soon after the cattle-branding affair, as a show of support for his party's proposal for a Neutral Peasant Republic, and he and his party workers travelled throughout the Croatian countryside explaining its terms to the peasantry.

The impact of this agitation on behalf of a 'Neutral Peasant Republic' was felt by authorities throughout Croatia. In December 1921, for example, the commander of

---

[80] HDA, fond 1363, 'Politička situacija', box 6.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Analysis of the revolt can be found in L and M, 'Seljačka buna u Hrvatskoj', *Nova Evropa* vol. 1 (1920), no. 2. and Banac, *National Question*, pp. 248-260. It is important to note here that the Peasant Party did not incite this uprising. To do so would have been contrary to Radić's anti-revolutionary philosophy. Neither did Radić himself provide any leadership or direction. He was back in jail at the time of the unrest, and local authorities in Croatia identified younger, more extreme elements of the Peasant Party as those that joined in with the revolt. See Banac, pp. 255-256.

the Sava Division, located in Zagreb and covering Croatia and Slavonia, reported that 56% of recruits who had been issued with documents for conscription into the army had failed to report to duty. Republican agitation and Radićist calls for 'no more army' were, he felt, the cause of this poor turn out.[84] Authorities often had great difficulty finding military deserters amongst the Croatian peasantry. Dušan Jovanović, a lieutenant-colonel in Sisak, noted that many recruits' parents were expecting 'a revolution' (which undoubtedly brought to mind the anarchy of autumn 1918, both for peasants and the authorities), and would not give any information on the whereabouts of their sons.[85] Some reports suggested it was possible that recruits were slipping across the border in to Hungary to escape the reach of the army and the gendarmes.[86] Often the gendarmes' inability to locate peasants avoiding conscription and their knowledge that extended families and other local kinship groups were assisting the deserters led to reprisals against the local population. These reprisals, of course, further alienated the peasantry from the army.[87]

Radićist agitation received a new impetus at the beginning of 1923 on the eve of the country's first parliamentary elections. Throughout the country, authorities noted that Radić and his party were promising their followers a peasant-led republic in the very near future. At a Party meeting in Zagreb, January 1923, both Vladko Maček and Stjepan Radić talked to supporters of lessons learnt in Russia. Maček talked about how the peasantry in Russia had destroyed Czarism and Radić told the thousands assembled of how Russia carried the spirit of liberation and how one day the whole of Europe would be a republic.[88] The reference to Russia as the true bearer of the spirit of liberation appears to be intended as a thinly-veiled attack on Serbia's claim to have liberated all of the South Slavs. In Djakovo, Radić again drew a comparison between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, claiming that the Croatian peasant was suffering as much now as he had done under the old regime.[89] Nevertheless, Radić remained true to his philosophy of non-revolution and pacifism, telling crowds

---

[84] HDA, fond 137, 'Pokrajinska za uprava Hrvatske i Slavonija u Zagrebu – Predsjedništvo', box 15.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid, box 18.
[87] The historian Bosiljka Janjatović has catalogued the semi-legal and illegal measures taken against the population in her book *Politički teror*, pp. 105-109.
[88] HDA, fond 137, 'Pokrajinska za uprava Hrvatske i Slavonija u Zagrebu – Predsjedništvo', box 27.
[89] Ibid, box 40.

in Vrginmost that, 'it is better to wait for freedom for ten or twenty years in peace than to achieve it with a bloody revolution as the Russian people did.'[90]

Agitation was also extended to within the army, as Peasant Party supporters began to spread rumours of the republic amongst Croatian conscripts serving across the country. In March 1923 the authorities intercepted a letter to a Croatian conscript serving in Valjevo in which a well-wisher lamented the fact that he had to serve in Serbia (i.e., away from home) but assured him that a revolution/republic could be expected any time soon.[91] In June notes were intercepted to Croatian soldiers serving on the Bulgarian border informing them that a republic was about to be formed.[92] The pro-Belgrade British ambassador Sir Alban Young noted the presence of this agitation in several of his annual reports, although he thought that peasant support for Radić in this area was based largely on pragmatism and resentment at the new order: 'It is not surprising then that the Croat peasant should long for a republic, where there would be neither army nor tax-gatherers.'[93]

Despite these sources, and the undeniable concern of authorities in Croatia and Slavonia, it remains difficult to establish the impact of Radićist agitation on the Croatian peasantry and the extent to which it stripped the new army of its legitimacy as a multi-national institution in the 1920s. As has been shown, desertion from the army can be traced back to the last days of the Monarchy and it can even be argued that a link exists between the unwillingness of many Croatian soldiers to return to Habsburg colours and their unwillingness to be conscripted into the Yugoslav army. In this context, Radić was merely telling the peasants what they wanted to hear, that the removal of outside authority, experienced briefly in the Croatian countryside in the autumn of 1918, was a glimpse of a more permanent and forthcoming transformation of society. Radićist agitation encouraged peasants to view the new state as a temporary phenomenon, merely a stage in the transition towards a 'Neutral Peasant Republic', and therefore undermined attempts by military and political leaders to consolidate the new order. This can be considered an important part of the impact of the war in the Croatian countryside.

The continued anti-militarist propaganda of the Peasant Party and Stjepan Radić also caused significant friction with the Belgrade regime. Indeed, it was the

---

[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid, box 43.
[92] Ibid, box 38.
[93] NA, FO 371/7686 , 'Annual Report 1921 for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes'.

reason cited by Stevan Hadžić for his resignation as Minister for the Army and Navy in September 1924.[94] This suggests that the issue was considered of great importance by the country's military and political elite long after the end of the war. Hadžić's resignation can also be interpreted as further evidence of the great gulf that existed between Radić's interpretation of the war and that of a high-ranking Serbian officer, and it can be presumed that this gulf existed at a broader level in Serbian/Croatian relations. Hadžić, who had served as recruiter and commander for the volunteer division in Russia during the war, was apparently unhappy at the way in which Radić was attempting to undermine the monarchy and the army, the bulwarks of the Serbian nation during the war. For his part, Radić and the Peasant Party refused to recognise the legitimacy of Serbia's wars of 'liberation and unification' by insisting that Croats had not been liberated at all, but were in fact still in bondage. Radić, in one article published in *Dom*, even went as far as to claim that it was the influx of Croatian volunteers from the USA at Salonika which restored the fighting spirit of the Serbian army during the war, and that without them the Serbian army would probably have been defeated.[95] Comments such as these were typical of Radić's dismissal of Serbia's war effort in the 1920s, and Hadžić was surely not the only Serbian veteran to be angered by them.

The Belgrade regime was also concerned with Radić's constant praise of the Bolshevik revolution. Politicians such as Nikola Pašić and Svetozar Pribićević were unable, or unwilling, to recognise Radić's pacifist critique of the Bolsheviks and his refusal to countenance a similar revolution in Croatia. The authorities were quick to conflate 'republicanism' with 'Bolshevism' in the post-war period: both were equally threatening to the new order. Radić, either knowingly or unknowingly, provoked the Belgrade authorities in an unprecedented fashion when he visited Moscow in summer 1924, as part of a strategy which involved visiting foreign capitals to raise awareness and support for the Croatian cause. In Moscow, Radić reiterated his pacifism in relation to the internal crisis in Yugoslavia, although he qualified this position by saying his party would use 'only pacifistic means, and that only in an extreme contingency, when pacifism is shown to be unsuccessful, will it resort to

---

[94] See Branislav Gligorijević, 'O pitanju ulaska predstavnika HRSS u davidovićevu vladu 1924 i o krizi i padu te vlade', *Istorija XX veka, Zbornik radova VII* (Belgrade: 1965), p. 376.
[95] *Dom,* 15 August 1923.

revolution.'[96] He also derided Yugoslavia as a legal fiction, claiming 'no such Yugoslavia exists.' Instead, there was 'a militaristic plundering Great Serbia under the formal name of "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes."'[97]

Radić's unpredictable behaviour and seemingly contradictory decisions as a political leader in the 1920s defy a single interpretation. It seems that the decision to visit the Soviet Union was informed by his support for the empowerment of peasants which had taken place there, and his hopes that this empowerment could be realised (without resorting to Bolshevik tactics!) throughout Europe. It can at least be said that his visit to Moscow was consistent with his praise, frequently expressed, for what had been achieved in the Soviet Union as a result of the revolution (i.e., peasant and worker control of the government). Similarly, it is impossible to determine whether the government of Nikola Pašić was acting opportunistically or out of genuine concern when it imprisoned Radić on his return to Yugoslavia, using the *Obznana* legislation.

Finally, whilst Radić expected this revolution and promised his supporters that it would soon be realised (at least until 1925), his unwillingness to initiate an insurgency himself poses an important counter-factual: did the potential for a full-scale revolt exist in the Croatian countryside as a result of the impact of the war (as the Communists believed), and could the Peasant Party have harnessed this potential to realise the 'Neutral Peasant Republic' by force? Radić certainly enjoyed more popular support than the Bolsheviks and far more than the Frankists. The former's attempts to ignite a revolution were grounded, in part, on the same discontent which made the Peasant Party's calls for 'no more army' so effective throughout Croatia. As has been noted, the Bolsheviks failed to achieve their revolution in the period immediately after the Great War, although they believed that conditions had been favourable (they had electoral support in various parts of the country and, importantly, in Zagreb and Belgrade, a Bolshevik revolution had taken place in Hungary, and the dissatisfaction of soldiers in the new army and their revolutionary potential, along with that of the Croatian countryside, was taken for granted). Following this, acts of terrorism and the success of the state in suppressing the party stripped the Communists of their popular support. Suppression of the Peasant Party in the same

[96] Cited in Biondich..p. 197. An account of Radić's trip to Moscow has been published by Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, 'Put Stjepana Radića u Moskvu i pristup Hrvatske republikanske seljačke stranke u Seljačku internacionalnu', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* year III, 1972.
[97] Biondich, p. 197.

way was impossible. The decentralized structure of the movement meant that it could continue functioning even when its leaders were incarcerated. The party was also more effective at mobilizing support throughout the countryside, commensurate with its electoral popularity, and the sources cited reveal that peasants were receptive to Radić's agitation. In addition to this, the disturbances in the Croatian countryside in autumn 1918 and the incipient anti-state character of the revolt against cattle-branding in 1920 suggest that the conditions were present in the post-war period for a more sustained attempt at revolution.

In the final analysis, however, one is inclined to take Radić's words about the unwillingness of the Croatian veteran to return to battle at face value. The failure of the Frankists and the Bolsheviks to organize a popular military revolt in Croatia suggests that whilst Croatian veterans were happy to heed calls to avoid conscription, they were less willing to take up arms once again so soon after the end of the Great War. Radić's 'Neutral Peasant Republic' appealed to Croatian peasants not because it promised to engage them in military duty, but because it promised to relieve them of it. Active participation in political violence, or the willingness to do so, amongst Croatian veterans remained the preserve of a small number of Bolsheviks, ex-officer/Frankists, and (very few) ex-volunteers and members of ORJUNA. In the post-war period Croatian peasants were more likely to be the victims of violence rather than its perpetrators.

If this interpretation is correct, then Radić can be credited with a certain amount of political eloquence for understanding the mood of the Croatian peasant in the post-war period and successfully translating that mood into a party programme. It was perhaps to this ability that Radić owed his popularity in the post-war period, and it was certainly acknowledged across the political spectrum in Croatia. Shortly before Radić's trip to Moscow, Milan Šufflay, the Zagreb historian and supporter of the Frankists, wrote that

> Stjepan Radić is not just the president of the HRSS [Croatian Republican Peasant Party]. He is the acknowledged leader of the Croatian people at home and abroad. But he is much more than that still. He is an embryonic messiah, a reformer of the white race.[98]

[98] Milan Šufflay, 'Radić, Bethlan, i Mussolini', in *Izabrani politicki spisi* (Dubravko Jelčić, ed.) (Zagreb: 2000), p 66.

Ante Trumbić, Radić's political ally until 1925, also saluted the Peasant Party leader's leadership in post-war Croatia:

> With his lightning fast intuition he confronted not just the political, but also the post-war psychological situation in Croatia. He understood well that the Croatian peasant, who had returned home after four years of war-time suffering for foreign interests, full of disappointments, [and] was miserable and furious to find his land under Serbian military occupation, which, under the name of "national unity" was being conducted without any regard [for the population] under the excuse it had "liberated [the people] from Austrian slavery"[99]

Once again, it is difficult to prove that Radić genuinely voiced the thoughts and concerns of the Croatian peasant or of the ex-soldier, at this time. The contemporary sources are insufficient for the historian to rescue the Croatian peasant from what E.P. Thompson famously termed, 'the enormous condescension of posterity.'[100] The official sources at least show that many peasants were, for whatever reason, receptive to Radić's calls for a 'Neutral Peasant Republic.'[101] Radić, in turn, appears to have been responsive to a widespread 'battle-fatigue' felt amongst the Croatian peasantry, an unwillingness to restore those parts of the old order (the army, the monarchy) for which they had been compelled to fight during the war years. This is perhaps as close as a historian can get to providing a valid definition of the 'spiritual connection' which Radić claimed he had over his constituency. There was another leader, however, operating in the cultural rather than the political sphere, who sought to give a voice to the Croatian peasant soldier in the post-war period. His skill and concern shed light on the Croatian experience of war and perhaps lead to a better understanding of the reluctance of so many Croats to re-enlist in the post-war period.

---

[99] Ante Trumbić, 'Elaborat u hrvatskom pitanju' in *Izabrani spisi* (Ivo Petrinović, ed.) (Split: 1986), p. 359.

[100] E.P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: 1963), p. 13.

[101] The British commentator Henry Baerlein, who met Radić, was similarly impressed with the Peasant Party leader's hold on his constituency: '...there is no party in Yugoslavia which is more devoted to its leader. He has taken the place once occupied by the clergy...' See Henry Baerlein *The Birth of Yugoslavia,* vol. 2 (London: 1922), p. 112. He also wrote of how the Croatian peasant appeared to have a rather tenous understanding of republicanism, reporting on a conversation in which peasants wondered whether, in their republic, 'they should choose President King Peter or the Prince-Regent or King Charles.' See Ibid.

4.5. Miroslav Krleža and the Croatian God Mars

If Stjepan Radić gave a voice to the Croatian peasant veteran in the political sphere in the post-war period, then it could be said that Miroslav Krleža introduced that same voice into the literary sphere. His short works of fiction about the war, published together under the title *Hrvatski Bog Mars* ('The Croatian God Mars'), were notable in that they were written by a man who was both one of the country's most highly regarded authors *and* an ex-soldier who had first-hand knowledge of life as a Croatian conscript in the war-time barracks. In addition to these distinctions, Krleža's stories were amongst the very first to address the experience of war in Croatia, and to this day they remain the most celebrated.

Krleža was an unlikely candidate for conscription into the rank and file of the Austro-Hungarian army, and indeed he arrived there by a more circuitous route than most. Krleža entered cadet school in Pecs, southern Hungary, in autumn 1908, at the age of fifteen. Excelling in his studies, Krleža finished as one of the very top pupils, and was awarded an imperial scholarship to study at the Ludoviceum in Budapest. He continued to perform well, at least initially, as a student in the Hungarian capital, where his superiors noted that he was 'diligent, honest, serious' and even, 'ambitious.'[102] Krleža, however, later recalled how, like many young Croats at the time, he became increasingly impressed by the political vigour of Serbia.[103] Indeed, Krleža visited Belgrade in May 1912, shortly before the outbreak of the first Balkan war, and made an unsuccessful attempt to join the Serbian army. Of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, the young cadet, supposedly in training for combat, spoke of his surprise:

> I consciously experienced the Balkan Wars, of which the First World War was the third. I experienced them as a huge moral shock. The fact that wars actually existed. Those three wars were important for me, they moulded my character.[104]

---

[102] Stanko Lasić *Krleža: Kronologija života i rada* (Zagreb: 1982), p. 90.
[103] Ibid, p. 93.
[104] Ibid, p. 97. In his memoir of the civil war in Yugoslavia 1941-1945, Milovan Djilas wrote of the anger and sorrow the Partisans felt when Krleža, a leading figure of the interwar left, failed to join their movement. He reported a conversation held between the poet Vladimir Nazor (who did join the Partisans, and wrote about it in his book *Sa Partizanima 1943-1944*) and Krleža in which Nazor asked the author why he didn't volunteer for the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, to which Krleža replied, 'I have a horror of death, corpses, and stench. I had enough of it in Galicia during World War I.' Djilas wondered if his reasons for not joining the Partisans was due to his 'skepticism with

At the Ludoviceum, Krleža's marks started to fall as he became increasingly drawn to Serbia and to the revolutionary youth movements active amongst the Habsburg South Slavs. During one training exercise, Krleža achieved a level of subversive satire that Jaroslav Hašek himself might have been proud of when he drafted plans for a full scale military assault, the objective of which was not Moscow or Belgrade, but Budapest.[105] In summer 1913, Krleža returned to Belgrade and tried yet again to volunteer for the Serbian army, but was arrested as an Austrian spy and sent back to Zemun. This second attempt cost Krleža his place at the Ludoviceum, although by this stage the young writer was thoroughly opposed to everything Austria-Hungary stood for. His father on the other hand, ashamed at what he considered to be his son's disloyal behaviour, disowned him.[106]

Krleža was a civilian living in Zagreb at the outbreak of the war, and for the first eighteen months of the conflict he remained a civilian. The closest to battle he came was listening to cannon fire from the Isonzo Front, the ominous rumble of which was audible in the Croatian capital.[107] In December 1915, he was mobilized to fight for the Monarchy, although by this stage he had no interest whatsoever in soldiering, at least not for the Habsburgs. For Krleža, fighting for the Monarchy was in complete opposition to the national interest of Croatia. Indeed, it amounted to fighting, dying, and killing so that Croatia remain enslaved. Krleža, in the ironic anger and sheer exasperation which would become characteristic of his fiction in the interwar period, was horrified that Croats were actually participating in this national suicide willingly. He described his barracks training thus:

> A classroom. We are learning. They are teaching us. Who? Sergeant First, captain Gotz and sub-lieutenant Tomasević. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a great map on a rock-face, 1 : 800,000. I am surrounded by idiots [...] Everyone is taking this school seriously, as if it were a real school. A real officers' school.[108]

---

regard to historical changes, his consistency in feeling horror at all violence.' Milovan Djilas, *Wartime* (New York: 1977), p. 303.

[105] Ibid, p. 97.

[106] Ibid, pp. 102-109.

[107] Miroslav Krleža, *Davni dani: Zapisi 1914-1921* (Zagreb: 1954), p. 57.

[108] Ibid, p. 65.

Krleža was in a singular position as a Croatian in so far as he experienced service both as an officer and as a conscripted soldier. But there was absolutely no ambiguity or question of divided loyalties in the young writer's mind, Krleža saw the officer class as a collection of real-life caricatures, ersatz-Austrians who would happily push their countrymen into certain death for the sake of advancing their own careers. Krleža felt that in order to depict Croatia's absurd position in the war, a writer needed to include descriptions of these men. Krleža wrote in his diary of how such a work 'would need to supply portraits of at least thirty individuals in their various stages of development.'[109] From the present conflict, he suggested, *inter alia,* Svetozar Boroević, his commanding officer Tomasević, and Gyula Gömbös, the future Hungarian fascist leader who served in the 42nd Honved Division, dominated by Croatian soldiers, during the war.

The Croatian conscript was another matter entirely. Vegetating in the ranks just as Croatia was vegetating under Austria-Hungary, the peasant-soldier was guilelessly shuffling towards his death on a foreign battlefield, killing and dying for a cause which was antithetical to his own:

> We are fighting like Teutonic cohorts, but in reality we are prisoners of war who are not protected by the terms of the Geneva Conventions, but who make war like great traitors of our own nationality. I don't know what is perverse, if not that.[110]

For Krleža, the ambitious and ruthless officers of Croatian descent and their doomed co-nationals in the rank and file of the Monarchy's army were two sides of the same coin, together they told the story of Croatia's absurd and self-destructive engagement in the Great War. The officers, through vanity and selfish careerism, were ordering their fellow Croatians to their deaths so that Croatia's national slavery could be perpetuated. The soldiers, habituated through the centuries to being exploited by a foreign master, were now too docile and unenlightened to do anything other than obey.

Krleža's short spell as a soldier in the Great War was over by the beginning of 1917. Suffering from influenza and nascent tuberculosis, Krleža was sent back to Zagreb from Galicia via Budapest. During his time as a soldier he had neither fired a

---

[109] Ibid, pp. 89-90.
[110] Ibid, p. 104.

shot in anger nor been under fire. Back in the Croatian capital, Krleža once again became active in the city's literary scene, and was also employed by *Narodna zaštita,* an organization responsible for the care of disabled soldiers, headed by Croatian Peasant Party member Djuro Basariček. He remained employed there until October 1918, caring for maimed Croatian soldiers and observing how Austria-Hungary was losing the war. Despite his hostility towards the Monarchy, Krleža remained fiercely sceptical of Croatia's prospects in the post-war period. Like Radić, Krleža felt that Serbia's war of 'liberation and unification' and its attendant history and myths were irrelevant. For him, the story of the Serbian defeat at the battle of Kosovo polje needed to be reinterpreted in light of the Great War:

> If the Vidovdan cult of defeat and catastrophe is a symbol for the present day, it is of the battle [against war] being led in the hospitals and barracks, the allegories should be given a completely different meaning! New themes must be sought. What will my domobrans [...] do with this Kosovo symbolism? [...] for over four hundred years our people have had no connection with this phantasmagoria.[111]

Similarly, Krleža was unconvinced by pro-Yugoslav intellectuals such as Ivan Meštrović, who believed that a South-Slav cultural synthesis would reconcile the differences between the various nationalities to be included in the future state. Krleža was vocal in his attacks on what he called 'the new lie', and his criticism led to rumours being circulated amongst Zagreb's pro-Yugoslav intelligentsia that he was in fact an Austrian spy.[112] Krleža was also dismissive of Meštrović's art and of his reputation as a messiah of the South Slavs. He felt that there was nothing at all prophetic about Meštrović's 'banal secessionism.'[113] Perhaps Krleža, with his Marxist sympathies, felt that this cultural elite was as detached from the Croatian masses as the imperial rulers whom they sought to replace. He may also have thought that Serbia's glorification of war did not reflect the senselessness of the mass carnage being inflicted on South Slavs on the battlefield. Whatever he believed about these matters, as a writer he was unwilling or unable to use his craft to depict an uplifting but false picture of the present and the recent past: 'I am like Zola,' he declared, 'I am

---

[111] Ibid, p. 130.
[112] Lasić, Krleža, pp. 134-135.
[113] Krleža, *Davni dani,* p. 133.

interested only in the negative side of life.'[114] It was this impulse which informed much of his socially-engaged writing in the interwar period, in novels such as *Banquet at Blitva*, *The Edge of Reason*, *The Return of Philip Latinowitcz,* and of course *The Croatian God Mars*.[115]

To a certain extent, each of those novels was written with a view to exposing what Krleža felt to be the stupidity, senselessness, and hypocrisy of the environment in which he found himself. In *The Croatian God Mars*, Krleža sought to recreate the frustration and anger he had felt about the death of his fellow soldiers for no discernable cause, or at least not one identifiable with their own. It was a very different monument to the small cycle of novels, memoirs, and commemorative editions published by ex-volunteers in the interwar period. In those works, battle was depicted as a great struggle, and even a necessary one by some members of ORJUNA. The names of the men who fought and were killed were preserved as a reminder of the sacrifices soldiers had made for the realisation of South Slav liberation and unification. In contrast, Krleža believed the memory of the deceased needed to be preserved so that his readers would understand the meaninglessness of their deaths.

This protest against the human cost of war meant that Krleža was closer to writers such as Henri Barbusse and Erich Maria Remarque, ex-soldiers whom Jay Winter has called 'moral witnesses' of the Great War.[116] But Krleža's war prose was different even from *Le Feu* or *Im Westen Nichts Neues*. He was from the very beginning open about the fact that he had never experienced battle for himself. Writing in 1923, still in the process of publishing the *The Croatian God Mars*, Krleža remarked, 'I personally never felt any of the horrors of war, and it was never so terrible for me that I would become an anti-militaristic writer through personal revolt.'[117] It is perhaps because of his lack of combat experience that Krleža's stories are completely lacking in the vivid descriptions of death and the violence of the front-line that characterise Barbusse's novel, or the macabre horror of the graveyard bombardment in Remarque's story. Nevertheless, Krleža was motivated to write his stories by the same sense of urgency as Barbusse. He started his novel in 1916, the

---

[114] Ibid, p. 135.
[115] This aspect of Krleža's writing is also analysed in an important English language monograph by Ralph Bogert, entitled *The Writer as Naysayer: Miroslav Krleža and the Aesthetic of Interwar Central Europe* (Ohio: 1991).
[116] Jay Winter, 'Introduction: Henri Barbusse and the Birth of the Moral Witness' in Henri Barbusse *Under Fire* (Robin Buss, trans.) (London: 2003), pp. vii-viii.
[117] Lasić, *Krleža,* p. 128.

year *Le Feu* was published, and bitterly regretted that by the time it was published, many more had died:

> Nineteen-hundred and sixteen, when I began writing this unhappy novel, which even today [1923] is still not published, I knew that the masses of young men (my colleagues at the Ludoviceum) had fallen dead, and that from then until now that number has eerily risen.[118]

The stories that comprise *The Croatian God Mars* bear the impression of Krleža's own experiences in the war-time barracks, his hostility to the officer corps, his frustration at the alleged stifling of Croatian national life under Austro-Hungarian rule, and above all, his anger at the human cost of the war.

In *The Battle by Bistrica Lesna,* Krleža tells the story of six domobrans, peasants, recruited into the Monarchy's army from the Zagorje region of Croatia. These heroes, writes Krleža, lived in the 'thick fog' of feudal times, just like their ancestors before them.[119] Satisfied with their melancholy lot, conscription into the 'Habsburg war' is accepted with indifference since, 'it was not the first nor the last misfortune to befall these people.'[120] In this story Krleža used the war as a metaphor for the centuries-long subjugation of the Croatian peasant under Austria-Hungary, but his real fire-power as a writer is reserved for the officer, of Croatian descent, who 'decided the fate of our heroes in the battle by Bistrica Lesna.'[121] The comically named Rikard Weiserhemb Ritter von Reichlin-Meldegg und Hochenthurm, irritated that his Russian counterpart has had the insolence to move grenadiers close to his lines, moves red markers into Bistrica Lesna 'as if he was playing chess.' Imagining that he has orchestrated a *coup de main,* the inept commander has merely sent many soldiers into certain death, including the six domobrans.[122] Its easy to see how, in depicted this conceited and lethally incompetent officer, Krleža translated his attitudes towards his own commanding officers into his war prose. The novel ends with a coroner attempting to update a seemingly endless list of the war dead, included the six

---

[118] Ibid.
[119] Krleza, *Hrvatski Bog Mars* (Sarajevo: 1973), p. 9.
[120] Ibid, p. 11.
[121] Ibid, p. 25.
[122] Ibid, p. 26.

domobrans who, he thinks to himself, 'arose from one grave [...] to go quietly two abreast into another cave, from which there is no return.'[123]

The moral idiocy of the army's officer class is also depicted in *A Royal Hungarian Domobran Novella*, in which a drill sergeant obsessively trains his soldiers on the parade ground, desperate to improve the discipline in their ranks merely to further his own career. Krleža depicts the sergeant as a man who, through his years of military training, has been completely drained of his humanity and whose 'brain knew nothing but drilling patterns.'[124] Saturated with regimental history and a completely specious view of war based on romantic notions of Marshall Radetsky and past glories, the sergeant leads his men into certain death little suspecting that 'the Empire of the Habsburgs was standing in a deadly battle between life and death.'[125] He is also unaware of the complete disregard the two hundred soldiers in his charge have for the Monarchy's war effort, and how they longed for the fall of their commanding officer much more than that of 'perfidious Albion' or 'degenerate France.'[126] The dehumanising influence of the military is also the subject of the story *Three Domobrans* in which a soldier, on the eve of his mobilization to the front, recognises his commanding officer as a colleague from cadet school. In the interim, his old friend has embraced Habsburg military values and is now determined to fight the Monarchy's war. Appeals to reason are dismissed outright as 'socialism', and so he sleeps peacefully, unaware of the great catastrophe into which he is heading.[127]

In each of these stories, Krleža includes details which he feels illustrate the essence of Croatia's involvement in the war. Each story shows the manner in which the military divides Croats against one another, as officers essentially slaughter their co-nationals in the rank and file in order to advance their own careers. But the officers themselves are just as misguided as the soldiers, since they are fighting for ideals which are long extinct and their chances of advancement are illusory. It seems that Krleža is critiquing those Croats, especially in the army but in middle-class society in general, who believed that supporting the Monarchy, especially during the war, would result in concessions towards Croatian national autonomy. For Krleža, this was really nothing more than masochism, and is depicted in the blinkered way loyal officers

---

[123] Ibid, p. 37.
[124] Ibid, p. 57.
[125] Ibid, p. 142.
[126] Ibid, p. 111.
[127] Ibid, p. 217.

march scores of Croats to their deaths on the battlefield. But the peasant soldiers are blinkered too, albeit in a different fashion. Their centuries' long slavery means that they have sunk into a morass of unenlightened servility, completely passive to their exploitation at the hands of foreign masters. Like their commanding officers, they also march without real protest (aside from impotent grumbling) to their deaths. In both cases, Krleža is concerned with the stagnation of Croatian national life under the Habsburgs and the absurdity of actually fighting to preserve this stagnation during the war.

Krleža's *coup de grace* was *Croatian Rhapsody*, the first of the collection to be published. The story is a sweeping phantasmagoria set inside a third-class railway carriage moving through the hinterland in Croatia during the war. Desperate characters shift in and out of the narrative *milieu,* arguing and fighting, unable to control or to predict Croatia's future as a result of the war. Andrew Wachtel writes of how, '...the whole nightmarish kaleidoscope is constantly filtered by an overarching narrative consciousness, whose commentary evokes the full horror of the war years.'[128] Krleža's achievement was recognised within his own time. His fellow Zagreb writer and war veteran Josip Horvat considered *Croatian Rhapsody* to be the only attempt to confront post-war realities. It was an accurate insight, since shearing reality of its embellishments and of society's hypocrisy was exactly Krleža's intention. Horvat also appreciated Krleža's story *Baron Conrad,* a satire subtle enough to slip by the war-time censors.[129]

The pro-Yugoslav journal *Nova Evropa* also admired Krleža, publishing one of his stories (*Barracks Five Be*) and saluting Krleža as 'A New Prophet.'[130] The article's title would have infuriated Krleža, who despised the appellation when attached to Ivan Meštrović and was ideologically at odds with the unitary Yugoslavists associated with the journal. The author of the article, whilst acknowledging Krleža's talent as a writer and applauding his concern for the 'masses' concluded by chastising Krleža's pessimism. 'Impatient and quick,' he wrote, 'he does not wait for all layers of Yugoslavia and all areas of Yugoslavia to experience the same national-cultural feeling. However, our sons and grandsons will certainly

---

[128] Wachtel, 'Culture in the South Slavic Lands' in *European Culture in the Great War*, p 202.
[129] Josip Horvat, *Živjeti u Zagrebu 1900-1941: Zapisci iz nepovrata* (Zagreb: 1984), pp 126-128.
[130] *Barracks Five Be* was printed in *Nova Evropa*, June 1921 (no. 9). The article hailing Krleža as a prophet, written by Veselin M. Vukičević, appeared in July 1921 *Nova Evropa*, (no. 13).

experience this.'[131] It was exactly this kind of confidence that Krleža was opposed to, and the article is a perfect example of the difference in attitudes between the writer and Zagreb's pro-Yugoslav intelligentsia. For the latter, the negative aspects of the war were the responsibility of the old order, and the article cited Krleža's story as evidence of the vastly improved state of society now that Yugoslavia had been created.

Savremenik, the Zagreb-based literary journal, offered a less instrumentalized interpretation of Krleža's prose. In January 1921, the journal printed a comparative article reviewing both Krleža's stories and Milos Crnjanski's *Diary of Čarnojevic.* The article recognised Krleža's attempt to depict the untold story of the Croatian peasant soldier, but also recommended the stories on account of their *expose* of war's lack of humanity. It was this latter point that signified the true merit of *The Croatian God Mars*, and the article reckoned that, 'Krleža has created a master work, and in this way absolutely no one will be able to say anything greater or more perfect [about the war].'[132] The article proved to be remarkably prescient. No author in the interwar period came as close to Krleža in expressing the war experience of the vast majority of unfortunate and unwilling Croatian peasant conscripts. In contrast, the war memoirs and fictional accounts of Ante Kovać and Lujo Lovrić remained the preserve of a handful of pro-Yugoslav Croats and their supporters. Those tales of heroism were not the reality of combat for the majority of Croatian veterans. The portrait of war-time/post-war life in Zagreb in Milan Begović's *Giga Barićeva* was perhaps more representative. That novel depicted only a narrow section of the capital's *petit-bourgeois* population, however, and Begović's interpretation of the function of society was often reduced to questions of sexual politics. Pavičić's stories of invalid life in the 1920s may have come closer to depicting a forgotten portion of Croatia's war veterans, but not all or even most soldiers returned from the front permanently maimed. By all accounts, it was Krleža's *The Croatian God Mars* that remained the enduring literary monument to the Croatian veteran in the interwar period.

---

[131] 'Jedan novi prorok', *Nova Evropa*, July 1921 (no.13) pp. 438-443.
[132] 'Dva Čoveka', *Savremenik*, January 1921, pp. 122-123.

4.6. Conclusion

The study of the experience and impact of the Great War in the Croatian countryside is doubly frustrating to the historian. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, whilst the peasantry is the keystone of Croatian history in the post-war period, there are for so large a group too few sources available to make a definitive analysis. With specific reference to the impact of the Great War, the remarkable lack of conventional commemorative activity adds to the obscurity. In this respect, a useful contrast can be made to the hundreds of thousands of Serbian veterans, also peasants, who have celebrated their war-time sacrifice and triumph in numerous monuments and plaques throughout the country.[133]

Indeed, the differences between the Serbian and Croatian experience of war may be a useful way of understanding the impact of the conflict in Croatia in the post-war period. This chapter has shown that the experience of Russian captivity appears to have had a lasting impact on many men in the post-war period. This is an experience that no soldier from the Serbian army underwent (although a considerable number of *prečani* Serbs fought and were captured in Russia). This impact extends further than the South Slav returnees who formed the nucleus of the Yugoslav Communist Party immediately after the war. Thousands of South Slav soldiers witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of fellow peasants and workers overthrowing an unrepresentative government. The social unrest and disobedience in the post-war period, against both Habsburg and Yugoslav authorities, is at least in part a result of this.

Of course, a certain portion of this unrest was directed by Bolsheviks, and this chapter has shown, unsurprisingly, that these veterans did not recognise 1918 as the end of the war, but instead continued to fight for the realisation of their aims. Of all the figures mentioned in this chapter, Alija Alijagić comes the closest to a conventional war hero, a man who made the ultimate sacrifice for his cause and who

---

[133] And this field too, is under researched, although the work of Melissa Bokovoy has started to address this shortfall. See Melissa Bokovoy 'Whose Hero? Re)Defining War Dead in the Interwar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes' conference paper delivered at *Sacrifice and Regeneration: the Legacy of the Great War in Interwar Eastern Europe,* international conference at the University of Southampton, September 2007.

provided an example which his fellow Communists considered worthy of remembrance and emulation in the post-war period.

For the vast majority of peasants who did not return from the war committed to revolutionary Communism, the real hero of the post-war period was Stjepan Radić, their *de facto* spokesman in Yugoslavia.[134] It is impossible to determine outright whether his pacifism caused an unwillingness amongst Croatian peasants to serve in the army, or if Radić was merely responding to the desire of his peasant constituency not to take up arms once again. We have argued that many Croatian peasants learnt that conscription could successfully be avoided during the war, and were encouraged by Radić to put what they had learnt into use in the post-war period. It is also impossible to determine whether or not Radić's non-revolutionary political programme averted a full-scale national uprising in the Croatian countryside. Once again, the Serbian/Croatian comparison may help to illuminate this area. The Serbian army used a considerable level of violence and coercion to secure the new state's borders in the post-war period. This was justified by the rhetoric of Serbia's war of 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs, and many Serbian soldiers were prepared to go on fighting to ensure that this aim was achieved. The experience of war and mobilization in the Monarchy had been very different for the majority of Croats. Having paid 'an unimaginable tribute in blood and money' (as Josip Horvat put it) for a foreign cause and to absolutely no gain, most Croats were now ready to embrace Radić's non-militarism and pacifism over violent revolution.[135] Without wishing to press the parallels too far, one can also compare the figure of King Alexander, the war hero who had stood at the front of his troops during the war, with Radić, the republican who promised never to let his peasant supporters suffer the senseless carnage of war again. The former became a symbol of Serbia's wartime sacrifice, the other of Croatia's, the two men represented vastly different interpretations of the meaning of the Great War.

Finally, how far does Miroslav Krleža's war prose provide an accurate depiction of the experience of the war for the Croatian peasant? Again, scant sources restrict the historian from giving a definitive answer. Krleža certainly intended to give a realistic and honest account of the Croatian peasants' war. Unfortunately, literature

---

[134] And who, like Alijagić, would become a martyr to his supporters.

[135] This may also be a contingent of the Communists' failure to ignite revolution in the post-war period, when conditions were otherwise favourable.

remained the preserve of a small section of the educated elite, and it was in these circles that Krleža's stories were discussed and reviewed, as has been shown. In Croatia, it is impossible to emulate Paul Fussell's achievement in *The Great War and Modern Memory*. In that book, the author was able to use the numerous war diaries and memoirs of British soldiers on the Western front to show that the accounts of more celebrated writers such as Robert Graves, Edmund Blunden and Siegfried Sassoon were largely representative of the trench experience. Such records do not exist for the Croatian peasant.

Krleža's interpretation of war does have a number of parallels with that of Stjepan Radić. When addressing the war, both men were committed to restoring the primacy of the Croatian peasant in the 'hierarchy of suffering.' For Radić, this was linked to his political programme, which was also committed to giving the Croatian peasant primacy in the new state. Radić, however, believed that lessons had been learnt from the experience of the war, and although these lessons were not commensurate with the level of war-time suffering, they could still contribute to improving peasant life in Yugoslavia. Krleža, on the other hand, saw nothing redeemable in the experience of war, and wrote about it simply with a desire to chronicle the stupidity and senseless loss which characterized Croatia's involvement in the Great War. For both men, there was nothing glorious or triumphant about Croatia's war, and in this sense it was a far cry from the positive meaning of the war derived by many Serbians and unitary Yugoslavists.

We have also raised the issue of the extent of Habsburg loyalties in Croatia and the way in which these loyalties were transferred (or not transferred) to Yugoslavia, a question which has concerned us throughout the thesis. This is a matter of great importance for all the successor states of the Habsburg empire, but in Yugoslavia the question of Habsburg loyalty was complicated by the legacy of Serbia's notion of a victorious struggle for the 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs. In this respect, Stjepan Radić's connection to the Habsburg Monarchy during the war enabled his opponents to characterize him as an enemy of the new state, and this is a tendency which extends to Croatian soldiers who fought in the Habsburg army. The position of the Croatian peasantry under Austria-Hungary (or rather merely Hungary), however, comparable to that of an imperial 'subaltern class', defies such characterization. Both Radić and Krleža depict the war as a great imposition on the Croatian peasant, but more than other groups examined in this thesis, they argue not

just against the Great War, but against war *in principle.* Rather than an act of expediency aimed at reconciling Croatia with Serbia, this appears to be a reflection of their belief that the cost of any kind of war will always be felt most keenly by those people on society's lowest rung. The criticism is applicable both to the Habsburgs and to Serbia and unitary Yugoslavists, since the latter have not learnt the right lessons from the Great War, the Croatian peasant is fated to remain a subaltern in the new state. The revolt in Croatia in 1920 and the continued problems the army had with conscripting Croatian peasants must be seen as part of the same process which began with the unrest in the countryside of autumn 1918, and was induced by the Great War. Here, we see the Croatian countryside, encouraged by Bolshevik returnees and the Peasant Party, resisting the structure of authority which, it is believed, will keep the Croatian peasant in a subordinate position. This is the correct way to interpret the impact of the Great War in the Croatian countryside.

Conclusion

> 'I would not have you think that the Croats are not good people. All Slavs are good people. They were the best soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. All, all said so, on all the fronts.'
>
> ('Constantine' Serbian representative of the Yugoslav Government, speaking in 1937. From Rebecca West *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon,* p. 89.)

It is a truism of historical writing on the Balkans to describe the region as a civilizational fault line, a meeting point of great empires and religions and, because of this, a constant source of turmoil and unrest.[1] That designation may be too inflexible to withstand the vagaries of history; it is certainly untrue that the inhabitants of the Balkans have lived in a state of simmering and mutual antipathy for centuries.[2] Nevertheless, the Yugoslav kingdom was formed in the aftermath of Europe's bloodiest war (at that time) and comprised of peoples who had fought on opposing sides of that conflict. The different levels of engagement which Croatian soldiers had in the Austro-Hungarian war effort have been addressed in the various chapters of this thesis. The disparate fates of men such as Josip Pavičić, Lujo Lovrić, Stjepan Sarkotić, and Miroslav Krleža are a reflection of the heterogeneity of the experience of the male wartime generation in Croatia. It seems certain that this heterogeneity was not duplicated in Serbia, where a hegemonic and triumphant interpretation of the war pushed alternative voices to the margins. To a great extent, Croatian veterans were victims of this process of marginalization. Often it was not only the case that their sacrifice was further down in the Yugoslav hierarchy than that of the Serbian veterans, it actually went against the grain of the Serbian foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification'. Croatian veterans were forced to acknowledge the overwhelming currency of Serbia's war and to relate their own experiences to it. The admission of this is not to reduce the impact of the war (on the male wartime generation in Croatia) to an appendix of the (greater) impact of the war in Serbia. It is rather an acknowledgement that the Yugoslav kingdom had only one officially-sanctioned version of wartime events, that of the liberation and unification of all South Slavs by Serbia.

---

[1] The concept is examined critically in Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: 1997).
[2] The stereotype is considered by Mark Mazower in *The Balkans* (Phoenix: 2002).

The primacy of that narrative is evident in the chapter on invalids, some of whom were perhaps most self-consciously 'veterans' in the interwar period, in so far as the permanence of their physical condition gave permanence to their identity as former soldiers. The most severely wounded amongst these men were forced to confront a state bureaucracy, Serbian dominated, which did not recognise the validity of their wartime sacrifice. This tendency in the Yugoslav kingdom to value the Serbian sacrifice above all others meant that relations with invalids of the Serbian army were also at times difficult. Here there was a tension between the desire of all invalids to win material and financial concessions from the state, and the separate approaches Serbian and non-Serbian veterans made to gain these concessions. Serbian invalids were able to relate their sacrifice to the state's foundational narrative of 'liberation' and 'unification', but to do so was to exclude non-Serbian veterans. It is revealing that the Society of War Invalids in Croatia eventually subsumed the independent character of their organization to the larger Serbian society based in Belgrade. In this way they acknowledged that the 'invalid question' in Croatia was too peripheral to be considered on its own terms and that their best chance of success was an alliance with the Serbian invalids.

The importance of Croatian invalids for the issue of the male wartime generation in Croatia lies in the way they expose, in the starkest terms, the marginal nature of the sacrifice of the Croatian veteran in the Yugoslav kingdom. The archetypal image of this veteran is the protagonist of Josip Pavičić's short stories, the reduced and solitary male limping through a post-war environment which is at best indifferent and often hostile. His tragedy is primarily personal and secondarily national. It is personal because the veteran invalid faces the post-war world on his own; his fellow invalids offer no solidarity, instead they compound his melancholy and accelerate the process of 'silent liquidation'. It is also national because the Croatian invalid fought for an army which is depicted as a defeated enemy by the new state's authorities. It is revealing to note that after the formation by the Ustasha of the Independent State of Croatia in 1941, a majority of Croatian invalids who had been denied money under King Alexander's revised invalid law of 1929 were now found

deserving of payment.[3] In this way, the Ustasha 'undid' the work of their great enemy and conferred legitimacy on the sacrifice of the Croatian soldier.

The relationship between those two categories, the personal and the national, was very different for Croatian volunteer veterans. For these men, their individual sacrifice was inextricably linked to the creation of the new state, and the need to protect that state from actual and potential threats. There are a number of useful comparisons and contrasts between Josip Pavičić and Lujo Lovrić; both men were to a certain extent representive of a Croatian veteran identity. Lovrić, like Pavičić, saw the war as a pivotal point in his life and in the life of the nation, and after 1918 both situated their experiences as soldiers during the war in the centre of their own biographies. Until 1929, both men would have been considered by the state as war invalids, although it is on this matter that the two veterans, and by extension the two groups they represent, diverged. Lovrić was able to take a positive message from his experiences in war, including his invalidity. He celebrated his sacrifice for the South Slav cause and derived from it an important role for himself in the Yugoslav kingdom. Pavičić was unable to do either of these things. Whilst the differences between these two men may have been to some extent psychological or temperamental, they are also revealing of the relative positions of invalids and ex-volunteers in the Yugoslav kingdom. Volunteers such as Lovrić were a part of the foundational narrative of 'liberation and unification' of all South Slavs, and so an official sanction was conferred upon their wartime sacrifice: the personal and the national were more easily reconciled.

The image of the veteran created by volunteer societies and publications was attractive to many groups in Croatia. In pro-Yugoslav publications such as *Nova Evropa,* the volunteer associated Croatia with the Allied war effort and, perhaps more importantly, disassociated it from that of Austria-Hungary. Both volunteers and the editors of *Nova Evropa* glossed over the realities of wartime volunteering, such as the overwhelming predominance of Serbs in the ranks, and the apparently brutal way in which Serbian officers imposed discipline on non-Serbian volunteers. Instead, they re-imagined a volunteer corps that was broadly representative of all the South Slav nationalities, a fiction which both suited their own ideology and reconciled Croatia's

[3] If the files of the invalid commissions in Split are taken as representative of Ustasha policy in the Independent State of Croatia. See Državni arhiv Split, fond 149, 'Invalidski sud', boxes 1-2.

wartime efforts to those of Serbia. Again, this amounts to an acknowledgement of the primacy of Serbia's foundational narrative in the new state.

The volunteer was also an immensely attractive figure to ORJUNA, the expanded Yugoslav nationalist group which used violence as both a means and an end in the Yugoslav kingdom. That group's relations with the volunteer veterans seem to be evidence of the male wartime generation's transaction with the 'post-war' generation, the men who were too young to fight in the war but were, nevertheless, also affected by it. The exact nature of these relations would tell the historian much about the generational issue in the interwar kingdom, of the continuity (or lack of continuity) between the pre-war and post-war youth movements in Croatia, and the role of violence in ideologies of (South Slav) national integration in the years immediately after the war. ORJUNA, the Union of Volunteers, The Society of *Četniks* (former Serbian irregulars), and other like-minded groups were part of an aggregation of pro-Yugoslav forces which countenanced violence to consolidate 'liberation and unification' in the Yugoslav kingdom.[4] This violence was to a certain extent state-sanctioned (through the policy of colonization) and conducted with especial virulence in areas such as Kosovo and Macedonia, where veterans and volunteers were given plots of land and contested their new homesteads with Albanian guerrillas and the Macedonian IMRO.[5]

Violence and the issue of nationality are, however, reflected in a very different fashion amongst the ex-officers of the Habsburg army. Like Croatian invalids, many of these men were victims of prejudices which operated against non-Serbian veterans in the post-war period. Yet in their links with the tiny Frankist faction in Zagreb they represented a group which decisively rejected the history, mythology, and the symbols woven into the fabric of the new state. Moreover, they rejected the agrarian populism of Stjepan Radić and the Croatian Peasant Party in favour of a programme based on pre-war aristocratic historical and political traditions of which they were the heirs, but which had been rendered largely obsolete at the end of the war. These veterans were able to offset the marginality and atavism of these traditions after 1918 by linking their post-war fate to those of other 'defeated' and revisionist groups throughout Central Europe such as the *Heimwehr* in Austria and the Szeged counter-

---

[4] See Branislav Gligorijević, 'Organizacija jugoslovenski nacionalista (ORJUNA)', *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova,* vol. 5, 1963.
[5] See Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: 1998), pp. 278-288.

revolutionaries. These associations, both strategic and ideological, linked these disgruntled men to a larger, more substantial network of revisionist forces throughout Europe who challenged the moral authority and rectitude of the post-1918 European order. It is no coincidence that many of them graduated to the ranks of the Ustasha when that movement was formed after the promulgation of King Alexander's dictatorship. In the Independent State of Croatia, Ustasha veterans of the Great War would give primacy to the memory of their sacrifice, and it became, briefly, part of the foundational narrative of that state.

This last point is linked to the important study of fascist uses of culture and more specifically the way in which the memory of the Great War was invoked by fascists to secure their own authority. This was of vital importance for the Ustasha, since they came to power through historical accident and lacked a substantial base of popular support, just as the Frankists had lacked such a base in the interwar period. The study of ex-Hasbsburg officers and Frankists has also enabled us to trace the geneology of the Croatian radical right back to the period immediately after the Great War. By doing so, it has been possible to compare the movement synchronically with other radical right groups which emerged during the same period. We are now able to see how the Ustasha did not simply materialize after the promulgation of King Alexander's dictatorship, but instead how men such as Ante Pavelić and Gustav Perčec formed the movement from existing networks and veterans' groups. It is also possible to see how the Ustasha shared a hostility to the post-war order and supported a programme of revisionism which meant they had an affinity with other important members of the interwar European right. Again, the study of these veterans at the European level, the 'top storey' described in the introduction, has helped us to understand their impact at the national level.

Finally, this thesis has looked at peasant veterans, and it was in many ways amongst the Croatian peasantry that the Great War had the most impact. Their spokesman until his death in 1928 was Stjepan Radić, and his interpretation of the meaning of the war and of its impact on the male wartime generation in Croatia was vastly different to that which dominated public discourse in Serbia. Radić understood that his own rise was intimately connected to Europe's recent revolutionary history, and especially to the Great War. A new leader for a new epoch, he sought to ensure that the right lessons were learnt from the Great War, a war which had rendered despotic monarchies and destructive militarism vestiges of an old order. In his

characteristically tactless fashion, Radić denigrated the recent conflict and all those who had fought in it willingly; in so doing he acted with complete insensitivity to the huge suffering and undoubted heroism of millions of Serbians during the Great War. By way of consolation to supporters of Serbia and unitary Yugoslavism, Radić's rejection of violent revolution, part and parcel of his ideology of anti-militarism and pacifism, may well have prevented a more sustained period of social revolution in the Croatian countryside after 1918. How different the impact of the Great War in Croatia could have been if a 'returnee' such as Bela Kun had risen to prominence.

Radić's influence then, was to re-direct the revolutionary temper caused by the Bolshevik revolution and the disintegration of the Monarchy into a programme of non-violent resistance based on Croatia's right to self-determination, a programme which was itself based on the new post-war order in Europe. It has been argued that the popularity of this non-violent programme contributed to the failure of socialist revolution in Croatia. We have seen how Yugoslav Communists competed and ultimately lost out to Radić for the hearts and minds of peasant veterans. We have also seen that Radić's anti-militarism restricted the legitimacy of the Yugoslav army by encouraging Croatian peasants to resist conscription. This was the flip side of pacifism, which may have spared Yugoslavia the same fate of revolution and counter-revolution seen in Soviet Hungary and in parts of Germany, but also went against the grain of South Slav national integration by undermining the army. The matter of Croatian resistance to conscription, considered alongside the problems of integrating the officer corps, gives us a picture of an army whose multinational character was seriously compromised. It is a problem which we have seen throughout this study: the closer one scrutinizes the impact of the Great War in the Yugoslav kingdom, the more one sees how it served to inhibit South Slav national integration.

It is difficult to overstate Radić's influence on politics and society in Croatia in the interwar period, even after his death. It seemed to many at the time of his murder by a Montenegrin parliamentary deputy that Radić had been a victim of Serbian or Balkan barbarism.[6] That his death coincided with the decennial celebrations of the end of the Great War prompted even greater and darker reflection in Croatia. This was a critical turning point in interwar Yugoslavia and this thesis has shown the way that Croatian veterans were also transformed by the new mood

[6] Notably, Radić's assassin, Puniša Račić, was a leader of the Serbian *Četnik* war veterans' organization.

throughout the country. This new mood also had an impact on the Croatian Peasant Party. It is significant that the party's new leader, Vladko Maček, allowed for paramilitary units comprised chiefly of ex-Habsburg officers of Croatian descent to escort the party at public meetings across the country. In 1941, around 800 soldiers from these militias would be put at the disposal of the newly-formed armed forces of the Independent State of Croatia by Milan Pribanić, a former officer from the Habsburg army.[7] Here we are able to trace a thread which takes Croatian veterans from one war to the next, through pacifism to paramilitarism and finally full-scale remobilization. This was not the path taken by all ex-soldiers, but nevertheless, the presence of veterans from Croatia in the Ustasha and Domobran armies and former POWs from Russia amongst the Partisans (including, of course, Josip Broz 'Tito') demonstrates the link between the impact of the Great War and the nature of violence and ideology during the civil war in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945.

We can, in the final analysis, return to the three-storey structure proposed in the introduction in order to make some conclusions which draw these four veteran groups together and help us understand the nature of the impact of the war on the male wartime generation in Croatia.

At the regional level, we have seen that, as soldiers of the former Austro-Hungarian army, Croatian veterans had a complicated and often ambivalent relationship with the defunct Monarchy. The stereotype of Croatian soldiers as the Monarchy's best fighters, asserted by Rebecca West's Serbian guide and cited at the beginning of this conclusion, is just as false as its counterpart, that Croats had been reluctant soldiers and had deserted at the first opportunity. Nevertheless, this study has shown an almost complete absence of commemoration of the Monarchy in Croatia after the Great War. It was as if, on 29 October 1918, centuries of history were erased in one fell swoop. Croatia's link with Austria-Hungary was not kept alive in veterans' societies throughout Croatia or in the form of monuments to the emperor during the 1920s. Instead, it was more likely to be maintained in the prejudices and hostility of Serbian bureaucrats and politicians, such as the interior minister Milorad Vujičić, who insisted that the Retired Officers' Society be disbanded for the reason

[7] See Milan Pribanic in Darko Stuparić (ed.) *Tko je Tko u NDH* (Zagreb: 1997). These paramilitary units were known as the Croatian Peasant Defence (HSZ) and the Croatian Civil Defence (HGZ). New research into both of these groups has been published by Sabrina P. Ramet. See, 'Vladko Macek and the Croatian Peasant Defence in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia', *Contemporary European History,* vol. 16, no. 2 (2007).

that it gathered together soldiers 'who fought against our [Serbian] liberation'. Miroslav Krleža's war fiction suggests that the vast majority of Croatian soldiers were utterly indifferent to the fate of the Monarchy. Soldiering was just another onerous duty the Monarchy required of them. Peasant conscripts fought reluctantly just as they had previously paid taxes reluctantly. Even Habsburg officers of Croatian descent seem to have been able swiftly to shed their imperial for a Croatian national loyalty at the end of the Great War.

This brings us to the next level down, the transition of Croatian men from a Habsburg to a Yugoslav framework and the process of 'disengagement' from the former. In fact, the critical point is not the extent to which loyalty to the Monarchy lingered on in Croatia after the Great War, but rather what the position of Croatian national life would be in the Yugoslav kingdom. In this sense, there is a continuity with the pre-war period, for as nationally-minded Croats had negotiated for greater autonomy under the Habsburgs, they continued to do so within Yugoslavia. After the Great War, political influences from beyond Yugoslavia's borders encouraged men to seek radical solutions to this issue. For the Frankists, this meant co-operating with paramilitary groups in Central Europe in preparation for an uprising at home. For Bolshevik returnees, it meant trying to politicize the army and the peasantry in order to carry out a full-scale socialist revolution. And for Stjepan Radić, it meant synthesizing both Wilsonian and Leninist ideologies in a frantic diplomatic effort to gain Croatian autonomy. The diversity of national sentiment in Croatia at this time is reflected in the diversity of the veterans in this study. There was still space within Croatia to contest national identity in this way. Sometimes, 'contest' took on a literal meaning, as members of ORJUNA, Communists, and Croatian nationalist youth battled on the streets for their vision of Croatia's future. Veterans played an important role in each one of these groups, often transmitting their own values to a new generation. Whilst this 'post-war' generation had been too young to fight in the Great War, they would nevertheless make their presence felt in the 1930s.

Finally, we return to the 'ground floor' and the question of whether and to what extent a Croatian 'veteran identity' can be analysed in the Yugoslav kingdom. This study has established that such an identity can be spoken of with some confidence. The primacy of Serbia's wars of 'liberation and unification', may have overshadowed this identity, but nevertheless, in veterans' societies throughout the country, in novels and memoirs, we have seen how men struggled simultaneously to

come to terms with their wartime experiences and with their new position in the new Yugoslav kingdom. Nor was the impact of these men on society in Yugoslavia restricted to the period under study. The study of Croatian veterans has led to a better understanding of a number of movements of various ideological persuasion, including the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Partisans, The Croatian Sokol and the Ustasha, and the Croatian Peasant Party (both under Radić and Maček). These groups would contribute to the direction of Yugoslavia in the 1930s, 1940s, and beyond. The study of Croatian veterans has allowed us to understand better their origins and development.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Croatia

Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb

Fond 78 'Predsjedništvo Zemalske vlade 1869-1921'.

Fond 124 'Narodno viječe SHS: Sekcija za organizaciju i agitaciju, opči spisi'.

Fond 127 'Agrarna direkcija/Ministarstva za agrarnu reformu kraljevine SHS'.

Fond 137 'Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju: Odjeljenje za socialnu politiku'.

Fond 1363 'Politička situacija'

Fond 'Pravila društava' Zagreb 4684, 'Udruženje ratnih invalida na području Hrvatske, Slavonije, Istre, Međumurja', Zagreb 4998, 'Udruga umirovljenih oficira i vojnih činovinika u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji', Zagreb 4502, 'Hrvatska žena'

Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb

Fond 6.2/865 'Dobrovoljacki korpus u odesi (Disidentski pokret)'

Državni arhiv, Split

Fond 149 'Invalidski sud'

Serbia

Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Belgrade

Fond 39 'Ministarstvo socialna politika i narodno zdravlje 1919-1941'.

Vojnoistorijski institut Beograd

Dosije oficira Vojske Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca.

Great Britain

National Archive

Foreign Office Class 371.

Published Primary Sources and Memoirs

Banić, Milan, *Raspeti na raskršću* (Zagreb: 1934).

Banić, Milan, *Ecco Homo: lik heroja i mučenika* (Belgrade: 1935).

Bartulović, Niko, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune: istorijat jugoslavenskog omladinskog pokreta* (Split 1925).

Diklić, Slavko, *Putničke bliješke jugoslovenskog ratnog dobrovoljca: od Dobruže do Soluna preko dalekog Istoka* (Osijek: 1932).

Diklić, Slavko, *Pesme* (Osijek: 1935).

Grulović, Nikola, *Jugosloveni u ratu i Oktobarskoj revoluciji* (Belgrade: 1962).

Horvat, Josip, *Hrvatski panoptikum* (Zagreb: 1965).

Horvat, Rudolf, *Hrvatsko pitanje* (Zagreb: 1923).

Hranilović, Dane, *Iz zapiska jugoslavenskog dobrovoljaca* (Zagreb: 1922).

Jovanović, Dragoljub, *Ljudi, Ljudi...: medaljoni 94 političkih, javnih, naučnih, i drugih savremenika* (Belgrade: 2005).

Krleža, Miroslav, *Davni dani: zapisi 1914-1921* (Zagreb: 1956).

Krleža, Miroslav, *Deset krvavih godina i drugi politički eseji* (Belgrade: 1977).

Kvaternik, Eugen Dido, *Sječanja i zapažanje: 1925-1945: prilozi za hrvatsku povijest* (ed. Jare Jareb) (Zagreb: 1995).

Lovrić, Lujo, *Kroz snijegove i magle* (Zagreb: 1923).

Maček, Vladko, *In the Struggle for Freedom* (Gazi, Elizabeth and Stjepan, trans.) (Pennsylvania: 1968).

Maksimović, Vojin, *Spomenica prve srpske dobrovoljačke divizije 1916-1926* (Belgrade: 1926).

Meštrović, Ivan, *Uspomena političke ljude i događaje* (Zagreb: 1993).

Milečević, Vladeta, *Der Konigsmord von Marsielle: das Verbrechen und seine Hintergrunde* (Bad Godesberg: 1959).

Pavelić, Ante, *Poglavnikovi govori 1922-1929: putem hrvatskog državnog prava* (Zagreb: 1942).

Pavelić, Ante, *Aus dem Kampfe um den Selbstandigen Staat Kroatien (einige Dokumente und Bilder)* (Vienna: 1931).

Perčec, Gustav, *Durch Lug und Trug; durch Gewalt; durch Morde zur Unterjochung Kroatiens und neuerlichen Welkrieg* (Vienna: 1931).

Radić, Stjepan, *Stjepan Radic: politički spisi, autobiografija, članci, govori, rasprave* (Zvonimir Kulundžić ed.) (Zagreb: 1995).

Radić, Stjepan, *Korespondencija Stjepana Radica,* 2 vols. (Bogdan Krizman, ed.), (Zagreb: 1973).

Sarkotić, Stjepan, *Radićevo izdajstvo* (Vienna: 1925).

Supilo, Frano, *Politički spisi: članci, govori, pisma, memorandumi* (Dragovan Šepič, introduction) (Zagreb: 1970).

Šufflay, Milan, *Izabrani politički spisi* (Dubravko Jelić, ed.) (Zagreb: 2000).

Trumbić, Ante, *Izabrani spisi* (Ivo Petrinović, ed.) (Split: 1986).

Memorandum Saveza dobrovoljaca Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca (Belgrade: 1923).

Novels

Diklić, Slavko, *Pred olujom: roman jugoslovenskih ratnih dobrovoljaca u Rusiji* (Osijek: 1932).

Hašek, Jaroslav, *The Good Soldier Švejk* (London: 2000).

Junger, Ernst, *Storm of Steel* (London: 2004).

Krleža, Miroslav, *Hrvatski Bog Mars* (Sarajevo: 1973).

Krleža, Miroslav, *On The Edge of Reason* (London: 1987).

Kovać, Ante, *Impresije iz jedne epohe* (Zagreb: 1923).

Kovać, Ante, *Sentimentalna putovanja boga Marsa: novele* (Zagreb: 1928).

Leontić, Lujo, *Izmedju dva rata* (Zagreb: 1965).

Lovrić, Lujo, *Suzna jesen* (Zagreb: 1922).

Musil, Robert, *The Man without Qualities* (New York: 1995).

Pavičić, Josip, *Memento* (Zagreb: 1936).

Pavičić, Josip, *Crvenim slovima* (Zagreb: 1946).

Remarque, Erich Maria, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (London: 1993).

Ribarić, M.N, *Aleksandra Andrejevna: novela iz suvremenog ruskog života* (Zagreb: 1922).

Ribarić, M.N, *Ptica sjevera* (Zagreb: 1924).

Roth, Joseph, *The Radetzky March* (London: 2002).

Zweig, Stefan, *The World of Yesterday* (London: 1943).

Newpapers and Journals

Borba.

Dobrovoljački glasnik.

Dom.

Hrvat.

Hrvatski domobran - omladinski list.

Hrvatski misao.

Hrvatsko pravo.

Invalidsko pravo.

Jutarnji list.

Obzor.

Novo Doba.

Ratni Invalid (Belgrade).

Ratni Invalid (Zagreb).

Savremenik.

Slobodni dom.

Službene novine.

Vojni Invalid.

Vidovdan.

Zagrebačke novine.

Secondary Literature

Adam, Magda, *The Little Entente and Europe 1920-1929* (Budapest; 1993).

Allcock, John B. *Explaining Yugoslavia* (New York: 2000).

Almanah Kraljevine Jugoslavije (Zagreb: 1932).

Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper (eds), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: 2000).

Avakumović, Ivan, *History of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (Aberdeen: 1964).

Baerlein, Henry, *The Birth of Yugoslavia*, 2 vols. (London: 1922).

Banac, Ivo, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: 1988).

Banac, Ivo, *With Stalin Against Tito : Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Ithaca, London: 1988).

Bauer, Ernest, *Die Lowe von Isonzo: Feldmarschall Svetozar Boroević von Bojna* (Graz: 1985).

Beard, Charles A, *The Balkan Pivot, Yugoslavia; A Study in Government and Administration* (New York: 1929).

Becker, Jean-Jacques, *The Great War and the French People* (Leamington Spa: 1985).

Benson, Leslie, *Yugoslavia: a Concise History* (Basingstoke, New York: 2004).

Bessel, Richard, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: 1993).

Bičanić, Rudolf, *Ekonomska podloga hrvatskog pitanja* (Zagreb: 1937).

Bilandžić, Dušan, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: 1999).

Biondich, Mark, *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party and the Politics of Mass Mobilzation* (Toronto: 2000).

Bjelajac, Mile, *Vojska kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca 1918-1921* (Belgrade: 1988).

Bjelajac, Mile, *Vojska kraljevine Srba, Hrvata, Slovenaca 1922-1935* (Belgrade: 1994).

Bjelajac, Mile, *Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multietničkom armijom 1918—1991* (Belgrade: 1999).

Bjelajac, Mile, *Generali i admirali Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918-1941: studija o vojnoj eliti i biografski leksikon* (Belgrade: 2004).

Blažina, Zdravko (ed.), *Zagreb: jučer, danas, i sutra* (Zagreb: 1965).

Bogert, Ralph, *The Writer as Naysayer: Miroslav Krleža and the Aesthetic of Interwar Central Europe* (Ohio: 1991).

Bošković, Milo, *Antijugoslovenska fašistička emigracija* (Belgrade/Novi Sad: 1980).

Bourke, Joanna, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: 1996).

Bourke, Joanna, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: 1999).

Broszat, Martin and Hory, Ladislav, *Der kroatische Ustascha-staat 1941-1945* (Stuttgart: 1964).

Carsten, F.L, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919* (London: 1972).

Cornwall, Mark, *The Undermining of Austria Hungary: the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basiingstoke: 2000).

Cornwall, Mark, Evans, R.J.W. (eds) *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalist and Fascist Europe* (with Robert Evans, eds.) (Oxford: 2007).

Čulinović, Ferdo, *Odjeci Oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* (Zagreb: 1957).

Čulinović, Ferdo, *Jugoslavija izmedju dva rata,* 2 vols. (Zagreb: 1961).

Deak, Istvan, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York, Oxford: 1990).

Dedijer, Vladimir, *The Road to Sarajevo* (London: 1966).

Dedijer, Vladimir, *Sarajevo 1914* (Belgrade: 1966).

Despalatović, Elanor Murray, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (New York: 1975).

Deželić, Velimir, *Socijalno pitanje* (Zagreb: 1926).

Djodjević, Dimitrije (ed.), *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918* (Santa Barbara, Oxford: 1980).

Djokić, Dejan, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (London: 2007).

Djokić, Dejan, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992* (ed.) (London: 2003).

Djilas, Aleksa, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution* (Cambridge MA: 1991)

Djilas, Milovan, *Wartime* (New York: 1977).

Dragnich, Alex, *The First Yugoslavia: Search for a Viable Political System* (Stanford: 1983).

Drinković, Mate, *Hrvatska i državna politika* (Zagreb: 1928).

Edmundson, Clifton Earl, *The Hiemwehr and Austrian Politics 1918-1936* (Athens: 1986).

Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (London: 1989).

Evans, Martin, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (with Kevin Lunn, eds.), (Oxford: 1997).

Field, Frank, *British and French Writers of the First World War: Comparative Studies in Cultural History* (Cambridge: 1991).

Freidenreich, Harriet Pass, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: a Quest for a Community* (Philadelphia: 1979).

Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: 2000).

Gagliardi, Immanuel, *Istina o hrvatskom emigrantskom revolucionarnom komitetu 1919-1921* (n.p. : 1922).

Generacija pred stvaranjem: Almanah jedne grupe (Belgrade: 1925).

Gillis, John R (ed.) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: 1994).

Gligorijević, Branislav, *Demokratska stranka i politički odnosi u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca* (Belgrade: 1970).

Gligorijević, Branislav, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji 1919-1929* (Belgrade: 1979).

Goldstein, Ivo, *Croatia: A History* (London: 2001).

Goldstein, Ivo, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918-1941* (Zagreb: 2004).

Grbin, Boris, *Potret Luje Lovrića* (Zagreb 1985).

Gregory, Adrian, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: 1994).

Gross, Mirjana, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* (Zagreb: 1981).

Healy, Maureen, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War One* (Cambridge: 2004).

Herceg, Rudolf, *Svjetski rat i problem nove države* (Zagreb: 1919).

Herwig, Holger H, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914-1918* (London: 1997).

Higonnet, Margaret R. (ed.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, (New Haven: 1987).

Hrabak, Bogomil, *Zarobljenici u Italiji i njihovo dobrovoljačko pitanje 1915-1918* (Novi Sad: 1980).

Hoare, Marko Attila, *The History of Bosnia: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: 2007).

Horne, John (ed.). *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: 1997).

Horvat, Josip. *Politčka povijest Hrvatske*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: 1990).

Horvat, Rudolf, *Hrvatska na mučilištu* (Zagreb: 1942).

Hynes, Samuel, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: 1990).

Irvine, Jill A, *The Croat Question: Partisan Politics in the Formation of the Yugoslav Socialist State* (Boulder, Oxford: 1993).

Janjatović, Bosiljka, *Poltički terror u Hrvatskoj 1918-1935* (Zagreb: 2002).

Janković, Dragoslav, *Jugoslovensko pitanje i krfska deklaracija 1917. godine* (Belgrade: 1967)

Jareb, Mario, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanku do travnja 1941. godine* (Zagreb: 2006).

Jaszi, Oskar, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: 1929).

Jelavich, Charles, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus: 1990).

Jelavich, Charles, and Jelavich, Barbara, *The Establishment of Balkan National States 1804-1920* (Seattle and London: 1977).

Jubilarni zbornik života i rada Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca 1918-1928 (3 vols.) (Belgrade: 1928).

Kann Robert, Kiraly, Bela K, and Fichtner Paula S (eds), *The Hasbsburg Empire in World War One: Essays on the Intellectual, Military, Political, and Economic Aspects of the Habsburg War Effort* (New York: 1977).

Kiraly, Bela K (ed.), *War and Society in East Central Europe Vol. XIII: the Effects of World War One: The Rise of Communist Parties* (New York: 1985).

Kolar-Dimitrijević, Mira, *Radni slojevi Zagreba od 1918. do 1931.* (Zagreb 1973).

Kramer, Alan, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: 2007).

Krizman, Bogdan, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske i stvaranje jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb: 1977).

Krizman, Bogdan, *Hrvatska u prvom svjetskom ratu: hrvatsko-srpski politički odnosi* (Zagreb: 1989).

Krizman, Bogdan, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše* (Zagreb: 1993).

Lacquer; Walter (ed.), *Fascism, a Reader's Guide: analyses, interpretations, bibliography* (London: 1979).

Lampe, John R, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge: 2000).

Lasić, Stanko, *Krleža: Kronologija života i rada* (Zagreb: 1982).

Lederer, Ivo John (ed), *The Versailles Settlement: Was it Foredoomed to Failure?* (Boston: 1960)

Lederer, Ivo John, *Yugoslavia and the Peace Conference: a Study in Frontiermaking* (New Haven: 1963).

Leed, Eric J, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: 1979).

Leeden, Michael Arthur, *The First Duce: D'Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore: 1977).

Macartney, C.A, *Independent Eastern Europe: A History* (London: 1962).

Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: 1994).

Malcolm, Noel, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: 1998).

Mandić, Ante, *Fragmenti za historiju ujedinjenja: povodom četrdesetgodišnjice osnivanja Jugoslovenskog odbora* (Zagreb: 1956).

Marjanović, Milan, *Stjepan Radić* (Belgrade: 1937).

Marwick, Arthur, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: 1965).

Matković, Hrvoje, *Svetozar Pribičević i Samostalna demokratska stranka do šestojanuarske diktature* (Zagreb: 1972).

Matković, Hrvoje, *Povijest hrvatske seljačke stranke* (Zagreb: 1999).

May, Arthur, *The Passing of the Habsburg Monarchy 1914-1918*, 2 vols. (Pennsylvania: 1966).

Mazower, Mark, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: 1998).

Mazower, Mark, *The Balkans* (Phoenix: 2002).

Mitrović, Andrej, *Serbia's Great War 1914-1918* (London: 2007).

Mosse, George L, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: 1990).

Mosse, George L, *Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: 1996)

Mužić, Ivan, *Stjepan Radić u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata, i Slovenaca* (Zagreb: 1987).

Nagy-Talavera, Nicholas, *The Green Shirts and the Others: a History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Iasi: 2001).

Narodna enciklopedija: srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačko (Zagreb: 1926).

Očak, Ivan, *Barabaš* (Zagreb: 1978).

Očak, Ivan, *Jugoslavenski oktobarci: likovi i sudbine* (Zagreb: 1979).

Očak, Ivan, *Vojnik Revolucije: Život i rad Vladimira Čopiča* (Zagreb: 1980).

Očak, Ivan, *Afera Diamenstein: prvi antikomunistički proces u kraljevstvu srba, hrvata, i slovenaca (1919),* (Zagreb: 1988).

Okey, Robin, *The Habsburg Monarchy, c. 1765-1918: From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (Basingstoke: 2001).

Okey, Robin, *Taming Balkan Nationalism: The Habsburg Civilizing Mission in Bosnia 1878-1914* (Oxford: 2007).

Passmore, Kevin (ed.), *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945* (Manchester: 2003).

Paulová, Milada, *Jugoslavenski odbor: povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914-1918* (Zagreb: 1925).

Pavlowitch, Stevan , *Tito, Yugoslavia's Great Dictator: A Reassessment* (London: 1992).

Pavičić, Slavko, *Hrvatska ratna i vojna povijest* (Zagreb: 1943).

Petranović, Branko, and Zečević, Momčilo, *Jugoslavija 1918-1984: zbirka dokumenata* (Belgrade: 1985).

Pilar, Ivo [L. von Sudland], *Južnoslavensko pitanje* (Zagreb: 1944).

Plaschka, Richard Georg, *Cattaro-Prag, Revolt und Revolution: Kriegsmarine und Heer Österreich-Ungarns im Feuer der Aufstandsbewegungen vom 1. Februar und 28. Oktober 1918* (Graz: 1963).

Polonsky, Anton, *The Little Dictators: the History of Eastern Europe since 1918* (London: 1975).

Popović, Vladimir, *Izabrana djela: Josip Pavičić, Antun Boglić, Mato Lovrak* (Zagreb: 1971).

Potočnjak, Franko, *Iz emigracije IV: u Rusiji* (Zagreb: 1919).

Prost, Antoine, *In the Wake of the War: 'Les Anciens Combattants' and French Society 1914-1939* (Oxford: 1992).

Rachamimov, Alon, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: 2002).

Ramet, Sabrina P, *Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation 1918-2005* (Washington: 2006).

Ramet, Sabrina P, Felak, James R, and Ellison, Herbert J (eds), *Nations and Nationalisms in East-Central Europe, 1806-1948: A Festschrift for Peter F. Sugar* (Bloomington: 2002).

Rogel, Carole, *The Slovenes and Yugoslavism, 1890-1914* (Boulder: 1977).

Romsics, Gergely, *Myth and Remembrance: The Dissolution of the Habsburg Empire in the Memoir Literature of the Austro-Hungarian Political Elite* (trans. Dekornfeld, Thomas J., Hiltabidle, Helen D.) (New York: 2006).

Roszkowski, Wojciech, *Land Reforms in East Central Europe after World War One* (Warsaw: 1995).

Rothenberg, Gunther, *The Military Border in Croatia 1740-1881: a Study of an Imperial Institution* (Chicago: 1966).

Rothenberg, Gunther, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (Indiana: 1976).

Rothswald, Aviel and Stites, Richard (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War* (Cambridge: 2001).

Rothschild, Joseph, *East Central Europe Between the Wars* (Seattle: 1974).

Šepić, Dragovan, *Italija, saveznici, i jugoslavensko pitanje 1914-1918* (Zagreb: 1970).

Seton-Watson, Robert W, *The South Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy* (London: 1911).

Sičel, Miroslav, *Hrvatska književnost* (Zagreb: 1982).

Slijepčević, Pero, *Naši dobrovoljaci u svetskome ratu* (Zagreb: 1925).

Smith, Paul, Kalliopi Koufa, and Arnold Suppan, *Ethnic Groups in International Relations* (New York: 1991).

Strižić, Ivan, *Pero ili mač: hrvatski politički esej: izbor* (Zagreb: 2000).

Stone, Norman, *The Eastern Front 1914-1917* (London: 1975).

Stuparić, Darko (ed.), *Tko je tko u NDH* (Zagreb: 1997).

Sugar, Peter (ed.), *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara: 1971).

Sugar, Peter (ed.), *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Washington: 1995).

Thompson, E.P, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: 1963).

Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: 2002).

Tomasevich, Jozo, *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Oxford: 1955).

Tomasevich, Jozo, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: 2001).

Vinaver, Vuk, *Jugoslavija i Mađarska 1918-1933* (Belgrade: 1971).

Voinovitch, Louis [Vojnović, Lujo.], *Dalmatia and the Jugoslav Movement* (London: 1920).

Wachtel, Andrew Baruch, *Making a Nation Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: 1998).

Williamson, Samuel, and Pastor, Peter (eds.), *War and Society in East Central Europe: Volume.5: Essays on World War One: Origins and POWs* (New York: 1983).

Wilson, Keith, *Decisions for War, 1914* (London: 1995).

Wingfield, Nancy M, *Gender and War in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: 2006).

Wingfield, Nancy M, and Bucur, Maria (eds), *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (Indiana: 2001).

Winter, Jay, *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work, and Welfare in Europe 1914-1918,* (with Robert Wall, eds.) (Cambridge: 1988).

Winter, Jay, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: 1995).

Winter, Jay, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (with Emanuel Sivan, eds.) (Cambridge: 1999).

Whalen, Robert Weldon, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914-1939* (Ithaca: 1984).

Zeman, Z.A.B, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire 1914-1918: A Study in National and Social Revolution* (Oxford: 1961).

Zeman, Z.A.B, *The Masaryks: The Making of Czechoslovakia* (London: 1976).

Živojinović, Dragoljub, *America, Italy, and the Birth of Yugoslavia 1917-1919* (Boulder: 1970).

Žutic, Nikola, *Sokoli: ideologija u fizičkoj kulturi Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929-1941,* (Belgrade: 1991).

Articles and Chapters in Edited Volumes

Banac, Ivo, '"Emperor Karl has become a Comitadji": the Croatian Disturbances of Autumn 1918', *Slavonic and Eastern European Review,* vol.70, no.2, April 1992.

Banac, Ivo, 'The Communist Party of Yugoslavia during the Period of Legality 1918-1921', in Bela K. Kiraly (ed.) *War and Society in East Central Europe Vol. XIII: the Effects of World War One: The Rise of Communist Parties* (New York: 1985).

Biondich, Mark, 'Vladko Maček and the Croat Political Right 1918-1941', *Contemporary European History,* vol. 16, no. 2, 2007.

Bokovoy, Melissa, 'Croatia' in Kevin Passmore (ed.) *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945* (Manchester: 2003).

Bourke, Joanna, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity, and the End of Trauma: The Sufferings of 'Shell-Shocked Men in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-1939', *The Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 35, no. 1, January 2000.

Eksteins, Modris, 'All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of the War', *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 15, no. 2, April 1980.

Gligorijević, Branislav, 'Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (ORJUNA)', *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, vol. 5 (Belgrade: 1963).

Gligorijević, Branislav, 'O pitanju ulaska predstavnika HRSS u davidovićevu vladu 1924 i o krizi i padu te vlade', *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova V11* (Belgrade: 1965).

Gross, Mirjana, 'Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine u Hvratskoj uoći i svetskog rata', *Historijski zbornik,* year XXI-XXII, (1969).

Gross, Mirjana, 'Croatian National-Integration Ideologies from the End of Illyrianism to the Creation of Yugoslavia', *Austrian History Yearbook,* 1979-1980.

Leed, Eric J, 'Fateful Memories: Industrialized War and Traumatic Neuroses', *The Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 35, no. 1, January 2000, pp. 85-100.

Linz, Juan J, 'Comparative Study of Fascism' in Walter Lacquer (ed.), *Fascism, a Reader's Guide: analyses, interpretations, bibliography* (London: 1979).

Janjatović, Bosiljka, 'Progroni triju političkih grupacija u Hrvatskoj (1918-1921), *Historijski zbornik*, year XLV (1992).

Janjatović, Bosiljka, 'O ubistvu dr. Milana Šufflaya, (with Petar Strčić), *Historijski zbornik,* year XLVI (1993).

Janjatović, Bosiljka, 'Hrvatski seljaci i pitanje vojne obaveze 1918.-1925.', *Historijski zbornik*, year XLVIII (1995).

Janjatović, Bosiljka, 'Karađorđevičevska centralizacija i položaj Hrvatske u Kraljevstvu Serbs, Hrvata, i Slovenaca, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* year 27 (1) (1995).

King, Leroy, 'Leroy King's Reports from Croatia, March-May 1919', in *Journal of Croatian Studies,* vol. 1, 1960.

Kišić-Kolanović, 'Drama vojskovode Slavke Kvaternika, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* year 28 (3) 1996.

Kolar Dimitrijević, Mira, 'Lomljene višestoljetnih veza između Hrvatske i Mađarske nakon prvog svjetskog rata', *Historijski zbornik,* year XLVIII, 1995.

Kolar Dimitrijević, Mira, 'Put Stjepana Radića u Moskvu i pristup Hrvatske republikanske seljačke stranke u Seljačku internacionalnu', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* year 4 (3) (1972).

Lawrence, Jon, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain', *The Journal of Modern History* (75), September 2003, pp. 557-589.

Matkovic, Hrvoje, 'Veze izmedju Frankovaca i Radikala od 1922-1925', *Historijski zbornik,* year XV (1962).

Mirošević, Franko, 'Odraz političkih suprotstavljanja u južnoj dalmaciji u lokalnom tisku nakon stvaranja jugoslavenske države', *Historijski zbornik,* year XLIV (1991).

Mosse, George L, 'Introduction: The Genesis of Fascism', in *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 1, no. 1, 1966.

Mosse, George L, 'Shell-Shock as a Social Disease', *The Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 35, no. 1, January 2000.

Nora, Pierre, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire', Representations, vol. 26, Spring 1989.

Očak, Ivan, 'Povratnici iz sovjetske Rusije u borbi za stvaranje ilegalnih komunisitičkih organizacija uoči prvog kongresa SRPJ(k)', *Histrorijski zbornik*, year XXVII (1974-1975).

Ramet, Sabrina, 'From Strossmayer to Stepinac: Croatian National Ideology and Catholicism', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism,* vol. 12, no.1, 1985.

Ramet, Sabrina, 'Vladko Maček and the Croatian Peasant Defence in the Kingdom of Yugolsavia', *Contemporary European History*', vol. 16, no. 2, 2007.

Spence, Richard B, 'General Stephan Freiherr Sarkotić von Lovčen and Croatian Nationalism', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism,* Vol. xvii , no. 1-2, 1990.

Stone, Norman, 'Army and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1900-1914', *Past and Present,* vol. 33, 1966.

Suppan, Arnold, 'Jugoslavija i Austrija od 1919. do 1938, susjedstvo izmedju kooperacije i konfrontacije', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* year 20 (3) (1988).

Vago, Bela, 'Fascism in eastern Europe' in Lacquer, Walter (ed.), *Fascism: a Reader's Guide: Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography* (London: 1979).

Wandycz, Piotr, 'The Little Entente: Sixty Years Later', *Slavonic and East European Review,* vol. 59, no. 4, 1981.

Wingfield, Nancy 'The Battle of Zborov and the Politics of Commemoration in the Czech Lands during the Postwar Period' in *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 17, no. 4 (Winter 2003).

Winter, Jay, 'Shell-Shock and the Cultural History of the Great War', *The Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 35, no. 1, January 2000, pp. 7-11.

Yeomans, Rory, 'Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae: The New Ustasha Man and Women in the Independent State of Croatia', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2005.

Yeomans, Rory, 'Cults of Death and Fantasies of Annihilation: The Croatian Ustasha Movement in Power 1941-1945', *Central Europe,* vol. 3, no. 2, 2005.

Unpublished Doctoral Dissertations

Novosel, Nicholas Ivan, *Regno Regnum: Croatia's War Aims, 1914-1917* (Indiana University: 1986).

Spence, Richard Brian, *Yugoslavs, the Austro-Hungarian Army, and the First World War* (University of California Santa Barbara: 1981).