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SERBIAN VS YUGOSLAV. DESTINY OF THE GRAVES OF SERBIAN AND AUSTRO- -HUNGARIAN (OF YUGOSLAV ORIGIN) SOLDIERS FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR – A FEW OBSERVATIONS

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After the end of the First World War, the graves of soldiers of the three armies that fought against each other – Serbian, Montenegrin and Austria-Hungarian, became war memorials of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia). The care of the state for these war graves was in constant conflict of desires and needs on the one hand, and financial possibilities on the other. Hence, there was an unequal posture towards the graves. Nevertheless, the state put in order a significant number of cemeteries and erected memorial ossuaries. In some of these ossuaries, the bodies of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers were laid together. After the Second World War, graves, cemeteries and ossuaries from the First World War fell into a state of neglect. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, a new phase of their existence begins. These soldiers are separated again, and the new, post-Yugoslav, states are now taking care of them.

Keywords: military graves, First World War, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Austria-Hungary



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Very soon after the end of the First World War the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SCS, from 1929 under the name Kingdom of Yugoslavia) was created. Soldiers of the three armies that had recently fought against each other – Serbian and Montenegrin on one side, and Austro-Hungarian, on the other, become citizens of the new state. Besides that, soldiers that were part of the Bulgarian army, and earlier (at the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century) part of the Ottoman army, also become citizens of the Kingdom of SCS.¹ Similarly, the graves of fallen soldiers from Serbia, Montenegro, and of those who originated from Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman territories, which came to be part of the Kingdom of SCS, become war memorials of the newly formed state.

According to the Treaty of Peace with Germany (Versailles Peace Treaty), and its articles 225-226, all war graves became the responsibility of the state on whose territory they were located. Each state was obliged to keep and maintain graves of soldiers, sailors, prisoners of war and interned civilians. Furthermore, they had to allow and facilitate the work of different commissions appointed by other states for the purpose of identifying, registering and caring for graves, erecting suitable memorials over them, or transferring the bodies of the dead to their own country (Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany). The same articles were incorporated in peace treaties signed with Austria (Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria, articles 171-172), Hungary (Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary, articles 155-156) and Bulgaria (Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, articles 116-117). Similar articles were part of the peace treaty with Turkey, but these were significantly elaborated in some segments (Treaty of Peace [with Turkey], articles 124-136).

The Kingdom of SCS declared a *Decree on the development and maintenance of our military cemeteries and graves in the homeland and abroad* at the end of 1919. It determined that all military cemeteries, and if possible individual graves, of all fallen soldiers should be developed and regularly maintained. All cemeteries have been declared temporary with the intention of transferring all remains to special ossuaries above which appropriate monuments in the form of chapels, churches or mausoleums would be erected. In them, every soldier of known identity would be specially laid down and marked. The Ministry of Religion was appointed as the highest body responsible for the care of military graves, and a supervisor for their maintenance and for the erection of ossuaries. The guarding and maintenance of these graves was entrusted to church com-

munities and priests in whose parishes they were located. Cemeteries and graves abroad were to be taken care of by the embassies and consulates of the Kingdom of SCS, and it was planned to appoint priests to take care of the largest cemeteries abroad. Families were allowed to transfer the remains of their relatives to their places of origin. It was also determined that the priests should make an inventory of all graves, in order that the state could make a list of all existing graves. (*Uredba o uređenju i održavanju naših vojničkih groblja i grobova u domovini i na strani*; Lajbenšperger & Mamula, 2014, p. 209; Manojlović Pintar, 2014, pp. 202-203; Jezernik, 2018, pp. 129-130; Hameršak, 2020, pp. 383-384; Živanović, 2020, pp. 83-85).

After the declaration of the Constitution of the new state, the temporary decree was replaced by a law. Passed in April 1922, the *Law on the development of our military cemeteries and graves in the homeland and abroad, as well as the graves of fallen soldiers and sailors, prisoners of war and internees, citizens of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, buried in our state territory* confirmed and further elaborated the provisions of the *Decree concerning cemeteries and graves in the country and abroad*. It was complemented by certain articles to comply with the mentioned articles from peace treaties related to the care of cemeteries and graves of enemy soldiers. The graves of soldiers from allied countries were treated in the same way as domestic ones, but it was pointed out that special agreements would be made with each state. The law more clearly defined the obligations of the Ministry of Religion and lower bodies (regional religious and political administrative authorities in the country and embassies, consulates and clergy abroad). It was determined that all graves should receive a permanent mark in the form of a concrete or stone cross with clearly written information about the buried person, as well as that all cemeteries should be fenced. Smaller cemeteries, below 200 graves, and all individual graves were to be concentrated in one, already existing, larger cemetery. The *Law* defined that expenses for the maintenance and development of the cemeteries should be financed by the Ministry of Religion, and regional and municipal administrations (*Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova u otadžbini i na strani, kao i grobova izginulih vojnika i mornara, ratnih zarobljenika i interniranih lica, državljana: Nemačke, Austrije, Ugarske i Bugarske, sahranjeni na našoj državnoj teritoriji*; Lajbenšperger & Mamula, 2014, p. 210; Manojlović Pintar, 2014, p. 203; Jezernik, 2018, p. 130; Šarenac, 2018, 227-228; Hameršak, 2020, pp. 384-385; Živanović, 2020, pp. 83-88). This *Law* was supplemented by another law and two changes of the laws, but with no bigger influence on the topic we are about to talk about.²

We would like to point out how the Kingdom of SCS saw soldiers from Serbian, allied and enemy armies in the aforementioned legal documents and in its everyday work on their identification, maintenance and development.

In the *Decree* it is defined that it relates to the graves of soldiers fallen from freedom and unification of *our* (italics by the author) people, regardless of the religion of the dead ones. It stressed that they made their sacrifice for the defense of our fatherland and our people with three names (thinking of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). There is no distinctive mark to tell us today if the word "our" relates only to the Serbian army, but we may say that it does because the Serbian army was the one who liberated occupied Serbian territories, militarily defeated Austria-Hungary and who possessed Austro-Hungarian territories that become part of the new state, where three South Slav nations lived together. Maintenance was foreseen for allied soldiers also. Enemy soldiers, or soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army, but of South Slav origin, were not mentioned at all (*Uredba o uređenju i održavanju naših vojničkih groblja i grobova u domovini i na strani*, Articles 1-3).

In the *Law on the development of our military cemeteries and graves in the homeland and abroad...* we also may find the term "our" regarding the fallen soldiers to whom it applies. However, soldiers from the enemy armies of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria are also explicitly mentioned, and it is written that graveyards and graves for the soldiers of these armies should be treated according to the articles from the peace treaties from Versailles, Saint-Germain, Trianon and Neuilly (Articles 1-2). Articles 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 26 of the *Law* made a clear difference between "our" graves, and graves of once enemy armies. So, it is obvious that by the term "ours" the state was thinking primarily and only of the soldiers that fought in the Serbian army during the First World War.

We saw that the Kingdom of SCS was responsible for the care of graves of enemy soldiers on its territory through international obligations, incorporating them into its own relevant legislation. But there was just general mention of enemy armies, without looking at the origin of the soldiers. The situation on the field was quite different – soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army were of different nations, among which there were a vast number of Slavs, and, again, among them a vast number of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. There were also people from other nations (or national backgrounds) that were living in the territories of former Austro-Hungary and in the Kingdom of SCS at that time. To the South Slav people, their relatives and friends who died in the Austro-Hungarian army were not enemies, but still relatives and friends. And they wanted to honour them accordingly.

With the division of Austria-Hungary, its territories became parts of newly formed countries (Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Kingdom of SCS) or part of already existing states (Romania and Italy). In these new circumstances, the dead soldiers of the former Empire received new citizenship. They were not treated as members of a state that did not exist anymore, but as members of states that ruled over the places of their origin (after the First World War). For example, a soldier from Szeged became a "Hungarian" soldier, one from Arad become "Romanian", from Trieste "Italian", and Trenčín "Czechoslovakian". At the same time, those from Srem, Bačka, part of the Banat, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Slovenia became dead soldiers of the Kingdom of SCS. In this way, the Kingdom SCS's responsibility to care for the graves of Serbian soldiers abroad very soon merged with the care for the graves of Austro-Hungarian soldiers of Yugoslav origin. In documents of the Ministry of Religion of the Kingdom of SCS, and later of the Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (to whom the department for military graves was transferred) we can see that the term "our" was transformed (Manojlović Pintar, 2014, pp. 137-138; Hameršak, 2020, p. 384).³ Once reserved only for soldiers who fought in the Serbian army, it became the term for both Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers of Yugoslav origin. But we must emphasise, it was not origin by nationality, but origin by territory. The largest number of them were really Slavs, but a smaller number were of German, Hungarian or of some other national origin. No matter their ethnic background, they were all treated according to place of birth, that is, as members of the new state.

The general situation with the maintenance of warrior cemeteries on the territory of the Kingdom of SCS was not good. There were many testimonies that the cemeteries were in very bad condition, not well maintained, and that they fell into disrepair, regardless of the origin of the soldiers buried in them (Manojlović Pintar, 2014, p. 205, 210; Hameršak, 2020, p. 385; Živanović, 2020, pp. 89-93). Simply put, the new state did not have the strength to maintain all of them in good condition. The care of the Kingdom of SCS for these war graves was in a constant conflict of desires and needs on the one hand, and financial possibilities on the other. Hence, there was an unequal posture towards the graves not only of different armies, but also in different geographic locations (Jezernik, 2018, pp. 134-150; Dobrovšak, 2020, pp. 406-407). Nevertheless, the state and its inhabitants manage to put in order a significant number of cemeteries and erected numerous memorial osuaries.

The building of ossuaries and monuments was not done by the state only. Most of them were built thanks to private initiative and work. Different associations of veterans and citizens, and many ad hoc groups formed just for building one ossuary, managed to do much more than the state. Most of the ossuaries were built by these groups, collecting voluntary contributions from the whole state. With a certain, usually small, contribution, the state helped their efforts (Stefanović, 2009, pp. 11-17; Lajbenšperger & Mamula, 2014, pp. 212-214; Jezernik, 2018, p. 135; Živanović, 2020, p. 93).

When we talk about public and private memory of the war, we must point out that the official memory was the memory of victory in the war – the victory that brought liberation and unification (Manojlović Pintar 2014, pp. 128-136, 139; Šarenac, 2014, pp. 173-175; Sindbæk Andersen, 2016, pp. 38-39; Jezernik, 2018, pp. 134-140; 157-161; 271-272). But private memory was quite different, depending on what army a particular group served. Serbs from Serbia celebrated victory and mourned their relatives and friends who died in the war and in captivity, during the retreat through Albania, of diseases and hunger or due to enemy war crimes and atrocities. Croats, Slovenes, Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungarians and Germans whose relatives and friends had been part of the Austro-Hungarian army mourned them (Jezernik, 2018, pp. 135, 140-147). Even today in some houses in Vojvodina you can see pictures of ancestors in Austro-Hungarian uniform from the First World War. Some Muslims went to Turkey during the war and fought as volunteers in the Ottoman army. Many of them died in the Battle of Gallipoli. Their family remembered their sacrifice. To some families in Novi Pazar and its surroundings, the role of their ancestors in Gallipoli is still very important today.⁴ There was a very interesting situation in Macedonia, whose people served in three armies (the Ottoman, Serbian and Bulgarian) during the conflicts in the second decade of the 20th century (the Albanian uprising, Balkan Wars and the First World War). It seemed that, at least to one of them, participation in all three armies was part of their identity. When he died, four pictures were put on his tombstone. The first one is from his old age (he died in 1970). The second – in the uniform of the Ottoman army, and with the inscription beside it: "Turkish soldier from 1910–1912". The third – in the uniform of the Serbian army and with the inscription: "Serbian soldier from 1914–1915". And the fourth – in Bulgarian uniform and with the inscription: "Bulgarian soldier from 1916–1918" (Dimitrijević & Stojanoski, 2011, pp. 14-19). In this example, we can also see that people were devoted to the authorities that ruled over the territories in which

they lived, regardless of their national feelings. That is also why many Serbs fought in the Austro-Hungarian army against Serbia. Their private memory is a field that yet waits to be researched.

The focus in developing the cemeteries and building the ossuaries was on the Serbian army, as the victorious one. But throughout that work, people from different organisational boards also paid certain attention to enemy soldiers – specifically to those from the former Austro-Hungarian army. This was because, in fact, many South Slavs died on the enemy side, but they were not seen as enemies anymore, rather as brothers from the same country (or of Yugoslav origin). So, what we had in the field is the following situation: for example, some organisational boards decided to build an ossuary for deceased Serbian soldiers. They started to build it, and to plan the exhumation of Serbian soldiers, but eventually they became aware of the fact that there were also many dead Austro-Hungarian soldiers in the same area. Then people from the organisational boards decided to exhume soldiers from the former enemy Habsburg army also.

While erecting the ossuary on Gučevo, in western Serbia, the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors asked and gained the permission from state authorities for an exhumation of the Austro-Hungarian cemetery from Banja Koviljača, to put them in the same ossuary with Serbian soldiers. Most of those Austro-Hungarian soldiers were Croats from Zagreb and its environs. The association explained the move by stating: "We want those who were led by tragic fate and by the enemy of the Slavs to fight against each other, and those whose bones lie in our present fatherland, to rest in peace together." (Udruženje rezervnih oficira i ratnika, Središnja uprava, 1929. p. 4; Lajbenšperger, 2015, pp. 509-510).

Ossuaries in Serbia that have Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers in them are situated in (or on): Lazarevac, Čelije, Krupanj, Mačkov kamen, Gučevo, Tekeriš, Dublje, Arandjelovac, Čačak and Mladenovac (Vukosavljević, 1975, p. 238; Sokolović, 1991, pp. 142-143; Pavlović, 1995, pp. 115-130; Pavlović, 2014, pp. 15, 24-35; Lajbenšperger, 2008, pp. 326-327; Lajbenšperger, 2014, pp. 14-16; Lajbenšperger, 2015, pp. 509-510; Obrenović, 2013, pp. 81, 132-133, 135, 137-138, 281-282, 288, 238-241, 340, 549-550; Bogdanović, 2018, pp. 342- 346, 459-474, 485, 489-492; Šarenac, 2018, pp. 230-234). The same thing happened abroad. All ossuaries in whose creation the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia participated, and that were built on the territories of the former Habsburg empire, contained soldiers from both armies (some of them even members of the former Montenegrin army). That is the case in Jindřichovice, Olo-

mouc, Prague and Trenčín, all in former Czechoslovakia (Radovanović, 2004, p. 282; Dobuševa & Krymova 2013, pp. 61-64; Obrenović, 2013; Lajbenšperger et al., 2015, pp. 262-270, 273-282; Skoupý, 2016, pp. 84-85; pp. 361-372; Borovnjak, 2017, pp. 267-287; Šarenac, 2018, p. 226). There are also a few ossuaries today with soldiers from both armies, alongside other nations in Austria (Lajbenšperger & Ranković Miladinović, 2018, pp. 383-384; Lajbenšperger, 2019, pp. 166, 169-170), and one in Italy, on the island Asinara (Obrenović, 2013, pp. 362-372, 377-378; Hameršak, 2020, p. 386).

Burial in the same ossuaries with Serbian soldiers was reserved for Austro-Hungarian soldiers, but not for the Germans or Bulgarians. We manage to find only one ossuary in which a very small number of German and Bulgarian soldiers⁵ were buried alongside Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers before the Second World War.⁶ It is situated in the Serbian town Čačak (Milekić, 1934, p. 3; Vukosavljević, 1975, p. 238; Pavlović, 1995, pp. 123, 125-127, 129; Pavlović, 2014, pp. 15 29-30, 32-35; Obrenović, 2013, pp. 238-241; Bogdanović, 2018, pp. 489-492). On the other hand, we do not know of any ossuaries with soldiers of the Ottoman army that died during the First Balkan War.

We found only a few examples of ossuaries for Serbian and allied soldiers that were built on Yugoslav territory. In all of them, the Austro-Hungarian soldiers also are buried. In an ossuary in Sombor, the deceased prisoners of war from the Russian and Romanian armies were also buried (Molnar, 2015, pp. 249-250; Živanović, 2020, pp. 104-106, 451). At least one Italian soldier is buried in the mentioned ossuary in Čačak (Vukosavljević, 1975, p. 238; Pavlović, 1995, pp. 128-129; Pavlović, 2014, pp. 15, 33-35; Bogdanović, 2018, p. 492). Russian soldiers lie in the ossuary at the Holy Cross Cemetery (today Žale Central Cemetery) in Ljubljana, while the prisoners of war from Montenegro, Russian and Romanian armies are in the ossuary at the Mirogoj City Cemetery in Zagreb (Dobrovšak, 2020, pp. 408-409; Živanović, 2020, pp. 108-109, 447, 449; Kukić, 2021).

We have cases of placing Serbian and allied soldiers in the same ossuaries abroad. One of them is in Tunisia. It was done by the French organisation *Souvenir Français* (Nikolić, 2010, pp. 193, 213-214; Lajbenšperger, 2018, pp. 301-303). Then we have two ossuaries in today's Czech Republic, where Russian soldiers were buried with Serbian ones – the first is in Prague, and the second in Jindřichovice, near Karlovy Vary (Lajbenšperger et al., 2015, pp. 262-270, 279-282).

There are numerous locations in the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia or abroad where graves of Serbian soldiers were

lying alongside soldiers from one or more of the following countries: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, Albania, Romania, France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia and Greece. But there are many examples of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers that were transferred into the same ossuaries, and only one example of an ossuary in the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia with soldiers from other enemy armies (German and Bulgarian) and a few with allied soldiers. We can therefore clearly see that the state was making an effort to create a new nation through deceased soldiers as well. Although from two armies, the people from the same "tribe" were united in death, through their placement in the same chambers for eternal rest. National unity was built on the bodies of the dead soldiers from once enemy armies (Manojlović Pintar, 2014, p. 27). That way, parallels were drawn between the living tribesmen in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, and their dead countrymen. But the two sides were not equal. While the brotherhood between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes who were living in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia was in public discourse all the time, unification with dead soldiers was done with much less public attention. While the exhumation and relocation of Serbian soldiers in ossuaries was accompanied with adequate commemoration ceremonies, and with inscriptions in newspapers, the exhumation and relocation of Austro-Hungarian soldiers was not given the same attention. Sometimes it was mentioned in the newspapers, but big commemorative ceremonies were not organised. In honour of the dead, religious services by the Catholic clergy were held. Exceptions were made only for a little number of ossuaries that were built in Slovenia and Croatia. Ossuaries in Ljubljana and Zagreb were built for mostly Austro-Hungarian soldiers, but the Yugoslav component was underlined during the ceremonies of sanctification of these ossuaries, because a smaller number of Serbian soldiers (who died in captivity) were also transferred to them (Obrenović, 2013. pp. 93-84).

On some ossuaries dedicated to Serbian soldiers, but which also contain Austro-Hungarian soldiers in them, there is no inscription that bears witness to that. That is the case at the ossuaries on Gučevo, in Lazarevac, and many others. While on some others, we have inscriptions stating that Austro-Hungarian soldiers were also buried inside. An example of which is the ossuary in Dublje (a place in western Serbia). On the ossuary on Tekeriš, only Czechoslovakians were mentioned. It was done out of the need to show pan Slavic connections. Especially having in mind that some of them did not want to fight against Serbs and died because of that. We

also have a unique ossuary – the already-mentioned one in the Serbian town of Čačak. Its peculiarity is that four different religious symbols are on the monument over it. There is an Orthodox cross, Catholic cross, Jewish Star of David and an Islamic halfmoon. Because of that, this monument is called "The monument of four religions" (Vukosavljević, 1975, p. 234; Obrenović, 2013, pp. 238-241; Bogdanović, 2018, pp. 489-492).

Another symbol of the clear desire of the state to make a new nation, and to unite the living and the dead, is the Monument to the Unknown Hero. While in other European countries the tomb of the unknown soldier from the First World War was built in their capitals, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia it was done on the outskirts of Belgrade, its capital city. Furthermore, it was not an unknown soldier from the victorious Serbian army, but a soldier that gained the Yugoslav prefix. The soldier that was picked to represent all the known and unknown warriors was really from the Serbian army, but the state determined that they should represent the new country: the country that arose from the war efforts of the Serbian army, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and not the state which won the war, the Kingdom of Serbia. The remains of the unknown hero were put in a tomb which is part of the bigger memorial: Monument to the Unknown Hero. For pointing out the Yugoslav attributes of the dead soldiers, and the so much needed unity between different South Slavic tribes in Yugoslavia, on the front and the back side of the monument big caryatids were situated representing different parts of Yugoslavia (Ignjatović, 2007, pp. 218-229; Ignjatović, 2010, pp. 624-650; Manojlović Pintar, 2014, pp. 221-236; Borić, 2017, pp. 78-86).

When we look at the available documentation about the state funding of developing cemeteries and building ossuaries, we can see that much more money was given to the places linked to Serbian soldiers, than to those linked only to, or predominantly to, Austro-Hungarian soldiers. But we must emphasise that most of the funding did not come from the state, but from the contributions of citizens or different firms. This goes both for Serbian and Austro-Hungarian cemeteries (Obrenović, 2013, pp. 84-89). When we look at ossuaries abroad, we may see that far more funds were given by the states in which the memorial was located or by individual contributions, than by the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (Nikolić, 2010, pp. 187-254; Lajbenšperger et al., 2015, pp. 263-270; 273-281; Lajbenšperger, 2018, pp. 301-302). The only exceptions to this would be two ossuaries in Greece – one on the island of Vido, and another at Zejtinlik cemetery in Salonica.

But poorly preserved and still insufficiently researched archival materials cannot yet give us the correct information. Among cemeteries with mostly Austro-Hungarian soldiers in which the developing, exhumation or building was funded by the state, we may single out those in Osijek (in Croatia), Ptuj, Rogoznica and Ljubljana (in Slovenia) (Ministarstvo pravde, 1941a; 1941b).

Looking at part of the preserved documentation, we may see that the state did not have only financial problems, but also dealt with organisational ones as well. For example, we see that more than 80% of the budget of the Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia designated for commemorations and memorials in 1931 was not spent in that year. Instead, it was transferred to the next year (Glavna kontrola, 1932). For 1933, the percentage was higher – 90% of the budget was not spent (Glavna kontrola, 1934). We don't know the real reasons for that, but we assume that there were not enough people in the ministry who could work on the adequate distribution of that money. Another problem was the slow decision-making process. Whatever the reason, we can say with certainty that it was not the lack of places where that money could have been spent.

Big differences between the treatment of Serbian and other soldiers aroused dissatisfaction among Croats and Slovenes (Jezernik, 2018, pp. 129-161, 230-232; Njuman, 2018, pp. 171-211; Šarenac, 2018, p. 226). They also did not like continual Serbian insistence that the Serbian army came out of the war a victor, and that owing to them other South Slavs were freed from Habsburg rule. But we must look at those processes from the viewpoint of that time. In the decades between the two world wars, victory gained in war was still sacrosanct, and there were very few pacifist voices. To the simple Serbian man, victory in war was very important, because in it they defeated invaders, alongside great suffering during the war. Because of that, and in addition to the wish for unity in death, we witnessed the divisions of nationalities in the period of the Kingdom. There are many ossuaries (and monuments over them), but also separate monuments that commemorated the victims from only one of the Yugoslav peoples. To be precise – only one of the people's names was inscribed on the monument. On many ossuaries in Serbia and Macedonia there are inscriptions that they are dedicated to the Serbian soldiers.

After the Second World War, graves, cemeteries and ossuaries from the First World War fell into the background, and

often became almost completely forgotten for several decades. Some of them were even destroyed (Nikolić, 2010, pp. 257-230; Lajbenšperger & Mamula, 2014, pp. 220-221). By deliberate destruction of cemeteries of the German and Ustasha soldiers from the Second World War, many military graveyards from the First World War vanished also. Not just German cemeteries, but also Austro-Hungarian ones with South Slav soldiers, and with warriors from the Serbian army (Molnar, 2015, p. 249; Dobrovšak, 2020, pp. 412-413; Hameršak, 2020, p. 387).

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, a new phase had begun. Soldiers from once hostile countries were separated again. Their graves and cemeteries were now taken care of, or commemorations were held on them, by the new, post-Yugoslav, states (Sindbæk Andersen, 2016, pp. 41-49) Because of the lack of knowledge, some war cemeteries or ossuaries were appropriated by only one of the former Yugoslav nations. For example, it was thought that the ossuary in Olomouc in the Czech Republic was clearly a Serbian ossuary, but the research conducted proved that it contained a far larger number of Austro-Hungarian soldiers than the number of soldiers from the Serbian army who died in captivity (Lajbenšperger et al., 2015, p. 274; Skoupý, 2016, pp. 84-85; Šarenac, 2018, p. 239). At the Austro-Hungarian cemetery in Lebring in Austria, among the buried soldiers are Austro-Hungarian soldiers alongside prisoners of war from Italy, Romania, Russia and Serbia. Among Austro-Hungarian soldiers, the vast majority are from former Yugoslavia, and among them, the most numerous are people of Islamic faith from Bosnia. This cemetery is today the most important place of memory of the First World War for the official authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1998, Bosnia and Herzegovina erected its own monument there (Neumayer & Schmidl, 2008, p. 151; Lajbenšperger, 2019, pp. 162-163; Hameršak, 2020, pp. 389-391).

Decades of neglect of the heritage of the First World War, deliberate destruction, and not paying enough attention to existing cemeteries, caused some of them to disappear entirely. Ossuaries were neglected also, but they were made of stone and concrete so it was harder for them to vanish. But their physical existence did not mean that knowledge of their history and specifics had survived. During the years, some facts about ossuaries were forgotten, and when interests about them arose, an interesting thing began to happen. Firstly, as most of them were related to the Serbian soldiers, they were mentioned on different occasions as purely Serbian ossuaries. Secondly, when some old information came to light (such as the fact that Austro-Hungarian soldiers were lying in the same

tombs as the Serbian army), the Serbian press, tourist organisations, local authorities and individuals started to point out that some ossuaries are unique in the world because they contain the remains of soldiers from enemy armies. They saw an opportunity to say that something in their area is unique, not knowing that there are many examples like that, not just in Serbia, but in the world as well.

In the end, we may draw a clear parallel between the fate of dead soldiers and their fellow countrymen and ancestors later on. First, they fought in different armies during the First World War, and some of them died in it. Second, after the war they became part of a new country – both the living and the dead. Third, they went through two dissolutions of Yugoslavia (1941, and 1991). And now, they are part of some new states, in which the memory of their role in the First World War differs.

NOTES

¹ These are mainly inhabitants of today's areas of South Serbia, and North Macedonia, which were part of the Ottoman Empire before the First Balkan War (1912–1913) and occupied by Bulgaria during the First World War (1915–1918).

² *Zakon o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu, Zakon o izmenama i dopunama u Zakonu o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu, Zakon o izmenama i dopunama Zakona o uređenju naših vojničkih groblja i grobova u otadžbini i na strani od 22. aprila 1922. godine; Zakon o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu od 23. avgusta 1925. godine i Zakona o izmenama i dopunama u Zakonu o narodnom priznanju zaslužnima za Otadžbinu od 31. decembra 1928. godine.* Lajbenšperger & Mamlu, 2014, p. 211.

³ Besides the cited literature, the author of these lines based his view on this topic, and many others that follow, on archival material kept in the archives in Serbia. Above all, material from the Archives of Yugoslavia, the Fund of the Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (63), Religious Department, boxes from 210 to 240. That documentation contains material about developing cemeteries in the whole state and abroad, and about constructing ossuaries, exhumations of the deceased soldiers and their transfers to ossuaries.

⁴ During their visit, one of the Muslim political leaders in Novi Pazar gave a gift to the museum in that city. It was a copy of the hat that volunteers from the Novi Pazar and Sandžak area wore while serving in the Ottoman army during the First World War and the Battle of Gallipoli.

⁵ At least one of them was a deserter from the Bulgarian army.

⁶ During 1942 an ossuary with German, Austro-Hungarian and Serbian soldiers was built by the German occupiers in the Serbian town Kragujevac (Karamijalković, 2020, p. 141).

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Zakon o uređenju naših vojničkih grobalja i grobova u otadžbini i na strani, kao i grobova izginulih vojnika i mornara, ratnih zarobljenika i interniranih lica, državljana: Nemačke, Austrije, Ugarske i Bugarske, sahranjeni na našoj državnoj teritoriji, *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS*, 87/1922), 87/1922 (*Official Gazette*, 87/1922).

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Srpski prema jugoslavenskima. Sudbina grobova srpskih i austroугarskih (jugoslavenskog podrijetla) vojnika iz Prvoga svjetskog rata – nekoliko zapažanja

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Nakon završetka Prvoga svjetskog rata grobovi vojnika triju vojski koji su se u Prvom svjetskom ratu borili jedni protiv drugih – srpske, crnogorske i austroугarske – postaju ratni memorijali novonastale Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca (Jugoslavije). Briga države o tim vojničkim grobovima u stalnom je sukobu želja i potreba s jedne strane te financijskih mogućnosti s druge. Stoga je postojao i nejednak odnos prema tim grobovima. Ipak, država uređuje znatan broj groblja i podiže spomen-kosturnice. U dijelu tih spomen-kosturnica zajednički su položena tijela srpskih i austroугarskih vojnika. Nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata, grobovi, groblja i kosturnice iz Prvoga svjetskog rata padaju u drugi plan. S raspadom Jugoslavije dolazi i nova faza

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SERBIAN VS...

njihova života – kada se ovi vojnici ponovo odvajaju, a o njima brigu vode nove države nastale raspadom bivše Jugoslavije.

Ključne riječi: vojnički grobovi, Prvi svjetski rat, Srbija, Jugoslavija, Austro-Ugarska



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