

From Partisans with love, or not: The Western Allies' perceptions of Yugoslav WWII resistance

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This paper reconstructs written memoirs by members of Allied forces who encountered in Yugoslavia during the Second World War Partisan forces, having spent some time with them either as official emissaries of US and British government or as members of SOE and USS, or as medical staff, downed members of the Air Forces or former POWs who happened to be rescued by them. Their wartime reports were instrumental in policy decision-making by the Allied Forces. Also, they are very valuable as first-hand witness statements that should be used not only by historians but also by new post-Yugoslav political and intellectual elites in contemporary interpretations on Second World War. These interpretations, motivated by desire to construct new national identities often neglects or directly negates the Partisans. The author proposes a different approach, based on respect that many Allied forces war comrades demonstrate towards their Yugoslav fellows.

KEYWORDS: *Yugoslav Partisans, Allied Forces, Second World War, Memoirs*

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In the former Yugoslavia, the post-communist state-sponsored narratives about history have systematically underplayed the role of anti-fascist values. Consequently, in the identity discourses of the post-Yugoslav ruling

¹ Views expressed are of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Department of National Defence, or the Government of Canada.

nationalist elites the World War II Partisan movement's achievements were negated, misrepresented, or at best, forgotten.

Historical narratives are often analyzed through the lens of the culture of remembrance. In its narrow definition, the culture of remembrance is understood as an interaction between the individual, or society, and its past. However, more broadly, it is a dynamic relationship between various societal perceptions, norms, and goals, that pertain to identity-building, when remembering and interpreting history, and in this paper, I will follow such a broader understanding.²

Following this broader definition, it is also understood that while nation-states' elites use power and institutional instruments to impose an interest based national identity, and promote it through controlled narratives about remembrance, the society maintains its own agency and is often capable of interacting among its peers with its own interpretations of not only past, but also the interpretations of norms, and goals. Historical ruptures, such as generational variations, or regime changes and wars, present junctures where memories get re-interpreted.

In the case of post-Yugoslav states, the federation's break-up in 1991 was such a rupture, and it represented the beginning of a quest for new identities of the successor states, and new interpretations of the past. The trauma of the 1991 — 1999 civil wars was often monopolized by the ruling elites to mediate and ultimately control the interpretation of the past, including the memories of WWII. In the process, Partisans became the unwanted emanation of “Yugoslavness” and Communism, both being considered the nemesis of nationalist ideologues.³ The nationalism that reigned in the post-1991 Yugoslav successor states also re-interpreted various WWII quisling movements to the degree of normalizing their pro-fascist role.⁴ This ultimately silenced the biggest achievements of the Partisans, their anti-fascist struggle and victory in WWII.⁵

2 Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Especially pp 13–37, Chapter II: The invention of cultural memory: A short history of memory studies,

3 Vjeran Pavlakovic, *Memory Politics in the former Yugoslavia*, *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, No 18, 2020, pp. 9–32.

4 Jelena Djureinovic, *The Politics of Memory of the Second World War in Contemporary Serbia: Collaboration, Resistance and Retribution*, London, Routledge, 2020

5 Mihajlovic Trbovc J, Pavasovic Trost T (2013) Who were the anti-fascists? Divergent interpretations of WWII in contemporary post-Yugoslav history textbooks. In: Karner C, Mertens B (eds) *The Use and Abuse of Memory: Interpreting World War II in Contemporary European Politics*.

It should not be surprising that such a skewed historic interpretation had its opponents and numerous societal voices,⁶ especially in Croatia⁷, have been asking for a more comprehensive memory of anti-fascist struggle in WWII, ontologically resulting in the evolution from memory politics into culture of remembrance. Therefore, this aspect of free agency in societal interpretations has not been necessarily driven by politics, but more profoundly by the emancipatory aspirations, not only about historic perceptions, but also about desired societal norms and future societal goals. Thus, as it was already highlighted in the scholarship on culture of remembrance, the goal of society is often to ensure the freedom of interpreting, and ultimately the existence of multiple interpretations.

This paper, written from the perspective of the culture of remembrance, is an effort to contribute to the understanding of how the Partisans were perceived and portrayed by those who fought alongside them - the Western Allies.⁸ The paper also wants to make more visible the contribution of the Western Allies to the liberation of Yugoslavia, as the communist-era historiography largely constructed the Partisans' victory as something done without any outside help.

The sources used here are predominantly from diaries and memoirs of direct participants. While these books are known to historians, the selection used here is rather unique as it includes the participants who belonged to British Special Operations Executive (SOE),⁹ American Office of Strategic

New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, pp. 173–191.

- 6 Throughout the former Yugoslavia there is a plethora of civil society groups that actively promote the culture of remembrance based on reconciliation and giving the voice to victims. Some are regional, such as Reconciliation Network (RECOM), Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), or national, such as Croatian Centre for Dealing with the Past.
- 7 Dragan Markovina, *Nova uklanjanja partizanskih spomenika u Hrvatskoj* [New Destructions of Partisan Monuments in Croatia], *Pescanik*, 04/11/2020. Where the author indicates that over 3,000 Partisan WWII memorials have been destroyed in Croatia since 1991.
- 8 Mirjana Trifkovic, *Culture of Remembrance: What do Young People Remember?*, <https://www.kulturesecanja.org/en/blog/culture-of-remembrance-what-do-young-people-remember/>
- 9 Jones, William [MAJ]. *Twelve Months with Tito's Partisans*. London: Bedford, 1946, as well as Peter Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields: The Story of an SOE Operative*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2002. While Michael Lees spent his mission in Serbia with Chetniks, a quisling formation, his views about Partisans are also taken into consideration, see Lees, Michael. *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

Services (OSS),¹⁰ British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS),¹¹ as well as escaped Anglo-American prisoners of war (POWs) transiting Yugoslavia,¹² but also those who joined the Partisans,¹³ as well as Allied military logistical officers,¹⁴ downed airmen,¹⁵ and surgeons working in Partisan hospitals.¹⁶ Mostly written after World War II, these sources represent a reflection upon events, and an interaction with history. I will argue that the narrative about Yugoslav Partisans, recorded in accounts and memoirs of Western Allied members, should complement remembrance achieved through other public mediums, such as monuments, textbooks, posters, or movies.

/ The mainstream portrayal of Partisans by senior Allied officers

The encounter of the Western Allies and Yugoslav Partisans gets its mainstream portrayal in the seminal books of the two most senior British officials who have spent a good part of 1943 and 1944 in Tito's headquarters. Besides being senior officers, Frederick Deakin (*The Embattled Mountain*, Oxford University Press, 1971) and Fitzroy MacLean (*Eastern Approaches*, The Book Society, 1949) were also Winston Churchill's personal emissaries and political and intellectual confidants of the British Prime Minister. Their reporting, portrayal, and assessment of Partisans was instrumental in the Allied decision during the 1943 Tehran Conference, to start providing material support and political recognition to this Communist-led guerrilla. Deakin and MacLean were politically focused on assessing Tito and the Partisan leadership's post-war intent,

- 10 Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia*, Stanford University Press, 1996
- 11 Ritchie, Sebastian. *Our Man in Yugoslavia. The Story of a Secret Service Operative*. London: Frank Cass, 2004.
- 12 See Allan Yeoman, *The long road to freedom*, Random Century, Auckland, 1991.
- 13 The most notably New Zealander John Denvir, see James Caffin, *Partisan*, New Zealand, Harper Collins, 2019.
- 14 Major Louis Huot, *Guns for Tito*, L.B.Fischer, 1945.
- 15 James M. Inks, *Eight Bailed Out*, W.W. Norton & Company, London, 1954.
- 16 The New Zealand medic Lindsay Rogers, *Guerrilla Surgeon*, Collins, London, 1957, and his Canadian colleague Colin Scott Dafoe in Brian Jeffrey Street, *The Parachute Ward: A Canadian Surgeon's Wartime Adventures in Yugoslavia*, Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1987.

while militarily they focused on assessing Partisans' combat strength, quality of command, and ideological leaning. Operationally, the quest was to determine the Partisans' ability to respond to the Allies' two key strategic objectives: tying up more German forces in Yugoslavia; and, disrupting German logistical lines.

Partisans were primarily perceived through the deliverance of those two objectives. However, numerous other Allied representatives, by virtue of being with the Partisans, have provided a much more detailed account of the Yugoslav anti-fascist movement. A typical Allied mission to Partisans was being parachuted from Italy or Egypt, and would be composed of three members: one senior officer, often with the rank of Major or Captain; and, two non-commissioned officers, one being the interpreter and the other one a radio operator.

/ The more detailed portrayal of Partisans by junior Allied officers

New Zealand POW, John Denvir, spent more time with the Partisans than anybody else. From his capture in Crete by the Germans in the early summer of 1941, through his escape from the internment camp in the late summer of 1941, to his evacuation to Italy in the late fall of 1943, Denvir fought in a Partisan unit in Slovenia, under the *nom de guerre* Corporal Frank. He spent the most challenging time with Partisans - during the first two years of war when there was no contact with Allies, and no foreign material support. Yet, his account about Partisans is not that different from officers who arrived after the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943.

According to him, and comparing it with other accounts, the majority of Partisans were not communists, and the rank and file was very diverse, composed of representatives from different age, social, and ethnic groups. While Partisans in Slovenia were primarily composed of ethnic Slovenes, the units in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia were very multiethnic. The observation of rituals was more religious than atheist, especially for funerals and holidays. There was no description of units celebrating the Soviet, or communist holidays, but Christmas and Easter were always celebrated, often with the local population in liberated territories. In a joyous manner, and often by shooting in the air,

Partisans celebrated every news of Allied victories, such as the capitulation of Bulgaria (Dafoe).

However, a well-organized communist indoctrination was performed through lectures of political commissars, cultural programs in the evenings, and by disseminated printed pamphlets. Those activities occurred at the unit level, but often involved local population in liberated territories, especially if Partisans were in charge of a town, or even a village. On those occasions the typical evening cultural program consisted of public readings of select news items, political speeches, literary recital, and folk songs and dance at the end. While patriotic, the content was ideologically communist, and more oriented at glorifying the Red Army than the Western Allies. The communist leaning especially showed in local elections. Once Partisans would liberate some town, a new municipal governing authority would be elected, often in a vote with no opposing candidates, and with no secret ballot. The accompanying choreography that mimicked the Soviet system was a norm that many Western officers reported with significant disdain.

There were also Western emissaries who portrayed these developments with sympathies, describing them as a nascent democratic effort of a national liberation movement that simply had no time for formalities in the midst of brutal war. Denvir described social context in Slovenia primarily in such a fashion. Yet an official SOE representative, Major Jones, was returned to Italy for showing clear sympathy and fraternization with Partisans (Lindsay). Franklin Lindsay also mentioned George Wuchinich from the OSS who equally favorably reported on political leanings of Partisans.¹⁷ Years later, Wuchinich had his own problems during McCarthyism in the USA, and it was only his distinguished war record of bravery and medals that prevented him from falling into bigger disgrace, or even jail.¹⁸ Apparently several members of Allied missions, primarily interpreters who had Yugoslav ethnic background, even joined Partisans, including few who previously fought in the Spanish Civil War.

While the former Yugoslavia was predominantly an agricultural society, the Allies noted that Partisans had a significant number of middle-class members from urban areas. This was primarily explained to Allies as a consequence of limited life choices in cities where one had to choose either to be drafted

¹⁷ <https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/22810>

¹⁸ National Affairs: Look Good, That's Me! *Time*, June 22, 1953.

into one of the quisling militaries, to work in forced labor camps and factories, including deportation to the Third Reich, or to run to the forests and join Partisans. The population in rural areas only had to make those radical choices once the combat operations, or rather armed groups, came to their remote villages, and even then, it was possible to dodge such a choice by hiding in the woods, until the armed groups would leave the village.

Another often quoted reason for joining the Partisans was the practice of Nazi reprisals for killed German soldiers. Starting in fall of 1941, throughout Yugoslavia, Wehrmacht, and other occupying forces, would execute 100 civilians for every dead soldier. These massacres had a contrary effect, and instead of pacifying the local population they were making it staunchly pro-Partisan, as new recruits swelled Partisan ranks.

The presence of middle-class and urban population was especially visible in the top echelons of the Partisan movement, where they constituted a majority. However, the command structure of Partisans was composed, and this was almost unanimously noted by all Allied officers, as being the mix of two groups: the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia military officer cadre; and, the veterans of the Spanish Civil War who fought in the International Brigades for the Republicans. Both groups were not only well versed in organizing and conducting military operations, but what was especially important for the Allied officers, they were proficient in speaking foreign languages. Very often French, German or Italian were the primary languages used for the liaison functions with Allies, but if English was exclusively required, Partisans would quickly provide those speakers as well.

To the astonishment of Allied officers, there was a significant number of former emigre workers, who between the two World Wars went to work in North American factories, shipyards, mines, steel mills, and the logging industry, and returned back to their villages in Yugoslavia with savings to start families. Stumbling in the middle of the night in the wilderness of Croatia, or Slovenia into an elderly Partisan sentry who spoke English with a Canadian accent was not so rare.

Another astonishment for the Allies was the number and role of women in the Partisan movement. Almost every account mentioned that at least ten percent of the force was female, and that many participated in combat operations. The majority of women were engaged in hospitals, kitchens, and logistical services. The fraternization between men and women in military

units was prohibited, and Allies particularly noticed that the Partisans would champion equality and emancipation everywhere, thus empowering women in liberated territories.

The Allied missions were quite impressed by how Partisans were well organized. As the majority of Allied members were parachuted into the territory liberated by Partisans, they almost exclusively jumped, or landed, at night, into temporary drop zones, or makeshift airstrips. The whole event would only last a few minutes, and Allies and their equipment were whisked away and transferred to the headquarters often ten or more kilometers away, by an invisible army of sentries, cargo carriers, and close protection forces.

The system of sentries was very complex and often started kilometers away from the main bivouacs. Sentries ranged from very young teenagers to older people, and also relied on male and female couriers who would be sent to bring messages to headquarters. Particularly impressive was the system of couriers that was used to bring Allied representatives from one headquarters to another, because it would occur without any navigation or communication equipment. These transfers would usually take a few days and largely involved travel at night. Couriers would hand over the Allied party to another courier every few kilometers, or at significant landmarks such as river crossings. This invisible coordination continued even in situations when original plans had to be altered on the spot due to the enemy presence.

The majority of Allied missions were confined to Partisan headquarters. While they were impressed by the level of organization at these camps, the ingenuity of equipment repair shops, including the living quarters, field hospitals, kitchens and general hygiene levels, they were not free to travel around, and in particular were not involved in combat operations. The latter frustrated most of the Allied missions as they had to rely on Partisans for military information. Very often the information would come in the form of discussion over the battlefield maps in a daily briefing. Allied officers routinely would dine with the headquarter staff and the local commander and would also get the battlefield information on those occasions.

If there was a danger of enemy attack on their headquarters, Partisans would immediately relocate their bivouacs by marching towards new positions, essentially avoiding being encircled and forced into a direct combat. While Partisans accompanied Allied officers to conduct occasional reconnaissance missions, very rarely did Allied officers participate in Partisan guerilla attacks.

That does not mean Allied officers were out of harm's way, as on many occasions they would come under enemy fire during the marches from one location to another.

An ongoing frustration exhibited by several Allied missions was their inability to subordinate the Partisans to their operational objectives. For example, blowing a railway on a strategically important line for the Allies, was not always appealing to the Partisans, as it might not only attract more enemy troops to that area, but also result in more reprisals, such as mass executions, or burning of villages, by quisling or Axis forces. Blowing up some local railway line, or the small bridge was more tactically important for the Partisans, and their guerilla warfare.

Especially during 1944, the Allies were fixated on establishing the Partisan resistance in the Third Reich, in today's Austria.¹⁹ On many occasions the members of OSS pushed for this type of mission and were very disappointed when the Partisans did not support them. Partisans in Slovenia were more attuned to follow their strategic interests charted by the ethnic lines, as their movement had local population's support only in the lands inhabited by Slovenians, so it did not establish itself in areas dominated by German or Austrian population. The Allies understood this only once the Trieste crisis emerged in May 1945, because in more mixed areas, such as Trieste and its littoral, the Partisans' territorial claim that followed historical and political aspirations clashed with the populations' ethnic composition, and ultimately failed to materialize, but not before it sparked significant international tensions.

A particularly human account of Partisans was provided by the two surgeons, New Zealander Lindsay Rogers and Canadian Colin Dafoe. While they served in different regions and at different times in Yugoslavia, the two actually knew each other from the joint service during the campaign in North Africa and remained friends for the rest of their lives. Rogers was the first Allied surgeon parachuted to Partisans and was critical in ensuring proper medical kit was supplied in follow-on air-drops, as well as in teaching novel surgical procedures and wound treating techniques to Yugoslav doctors. Parti-

19 Even mentioned in Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles*, Houghton Mifflin, 1994. Dulles, who in 1953 became the Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), served during the World War II as an OSS operative in the American Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, where he had several meetings with Austrian officers in charge of Wehrmacht troops in Italy and Croatia. Yet, none of these efforts led to earlier surrender of these units.

sans were not joking when saying that one Allied surgeon was worth an Allied brigade. For example, Dafoe estimated that during combat operations, which meant every week, he conducted at least 15 operations per day. Both doctors were impressed by Partisan stoicism during amputations, or in situations of anesthetic shortages, by compassion of female nurses, and general sacrifices of young soldiers who would carry their wounded through forests for kilometers, in order to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Dafoe was disgusted when describing atrocities committed by Yugoslav quisling forces against wounded Partisans that were on occasion left behind in hidden underground hospitals. Upon return to those hidden hospitals, where usually immobile Partisans were left behind, Dafoe recounted finding their dead bodies with clear signs of torture and mutilation, including those of female nurses.

Dafoe is one of the few Allied officers that described how the Partisans treated their POWs. Few other Allied officers noted that German and Italian POWs would be quickly transferred to higher headquarters, and would not know of their further destiny, but assumed they were there for questioning, intelligence gathering, and ultimately exchange of prisoners. They were less certain of the fate of various quisling forces. Dafoe actually witnessed in late 1944 few instances of Partisans capturing some Chetniks and convening the unit level assembly to decide what to do with them. If anyone in such an assembly was aware of atrocities previously committed by those prisoners, they would be executed on the spot. If no such testimony was voiced, the prisoners would be offered the chance to join Partisans, yet were closely monitored for the fear of escaping from or betraying the Partisans. The refusal to join Partisans would also end in summary execution.

Both Rogers and Dafoe were bestowed with the highest Yugoslav medals, as some of their achievements went beyond the usual course of duty. On one occasion, Dafoe was present when, on a makeshift airstrip in eastern Bosnia, eight Allied *Dakotas* landed bringing weapons and medical supplies and were supposed to airlift back to Italy some heavily wounded Partisans. Dafoe somehow managed to board on those planes hundreds of civilian refugees from nearby burnt villages.

Allan Yeoman provided vivid accounts of New Zealand and Australian soldiers who escaped from POW camps in northern Italy and were sheltered and protected by Slovenian Partisans, and later escorted to the Dalmatian coast for transfer across the Adriatic to Allied forces in Italy. Sometimes these convoys

would have almost one hundred POWs, and as they moved South, would usually swell in numbers by adding Allied downed air crews and escaping Jews from labour camps. Yet, there were several, almost comical, situations when POW escapees did not want to join Partisans and decided to return to POW camps. They would do this for fear of Partisans' communist leanings, but perhaps more importantly for being aware that German armed forces were not observing the 1929 Geneva and Hague conventions vis-à-vis Partisans, and in such company would be risking an immediate execution.

James Inks, an American aviator whose plane was downed over Montenegro, had an unbelievable journey largely motivated by the same fears. In order to avoid the Partisans he and his crew decided to seek refuge with the Chetniks, a quisling formation that was fighting alongside German units. Thus, these seven Americans spent almost eight months mingling with Germans, who took them for hairy, bearded, and ragtag dressed Chetniks. Their journey included the retreat on foot from Podgorica, all the way to northern Bosnia, along the Drina River canyon, where they were bombed during the day by Allied airplanes and attacked at night by Partisans. His party finally surrendered to Partisans in northern Bosnia, and to his astonishment, in less than two weeks, he was repatriated to Italy. So much for the fear of the communist guerrilla.

Similar fear of or even disdain towards Partisans was exhibited by Lees. While his book is primarily addressing a perceived British communist conspiracy in Cairo SOE headquarters to favour Tito's Partisans over Chetniks, he did provide some insights about Partisans while describing his mission to the Chetniks in southern Serbia. Lees lamented that Chetnik ranks, sometimes including senior officers, were suffering from defections to the Partisans, yet never witnessed any Partisans joining Chetniks.

The account of Major Huot provides a detailed description of the establishment of regular Allied equipment supply lines to Partisans. It all started with an adventurous docking of a Partisan ship in an Allied liberated port in Italy in the late summer of 1943. This quickly led to the ship returning to the island of Vis loaded with a cargo of weapons and ammunition. American Major Huot, being a logistics officer, embarked with them and after solidifying future shipment schedules for Vis, went to the Dalmatian mainland in order to reconnoiter and chart the best route for future weapons supply. On this unplanned and rather adventurous journey he eventually ended in

the middle of Bosnia, zig-zagging between liberated territories, and across German-held roads, ending in November 1943 in the city of Jajce, where the Partisans' government held its foundational convention. On that occasion he even met with Tito.

What followed Major Huot's mission was an avalanche of Allied supply to Partisans, at that point arriving not just through air-drops, but more substantially by ship.²⁰ The quantities were astounding, well known to historians through the American seven volume edition *The Army Air Forces in WWII* (University of Chicago Press, 1949), though these data were often omitted in Yugoslav communist historiography. The preference in highlighting the importance of foreign assistance was often granted to the Soviet Red Army weapons donations, yet those occurred only after October 1944, and did not contain food, medical supplies, or evacuation of wounded and refugees.²¹

/ The post-ww II prologue: The continuation of respect and suspicion

The post-wwII period was another phase of Partisans' and Allies' interactions, this time as diplomatic and government officials. Numerous former SOE and especially OSS operatives ended up working for British and American governments in very senior roles, and were instrumental for the favorable treatment that Tito's government received from the West following the break with Stalin in 1948.²² For that rapprochement, the Allies often provided two

- 20 By one account at least 6,000 tons were provided by ships from October to December 1943. The air drops ranged from almost 600 tons in April of 1944, to 1,612 tons, by 734 sorties, in June of that year, See William M. Leary, *Fueling the Fires of Resistance, Army Air Forces Special Operations in the Balkans during World War II*, Air Force History and Museums Program, 1995.
- 21 While the Red Army provided medical assistance while in the same theater as Partisans, essentially from October until December 1944, the Western Allies had a consistent medical air evacuations. For example, on August 22 and 23, 1944 almost 1,000 wounded partisans were evacuated from Brezna, Montenegro, by a squadron of C-47s. See Leary.
- 22 For example, several OSS and SOE officers became leading Western scholars on Eastern Europe. Wayne S. Vucinich at Stanford University was one of the leading academics on Yugoslavia, Henry L. Roberts at Columbia and Dartmouth University was the expert on Romania, while Christopher Woodhouse, was one of the utmost authorities in British diplomatic and academic circles on Greece.

insights. First, the Allies often reported that Partisans, despite their communist indoctrination and leftist leadership, were staunchly patriotic and national movement, hence not eager to surrender their freedom to any foreign power, including to the Soviet Union. Second, the Allies (Lindsey; Dafoe) noted that in the post-war encounters Partisans admitted that a joint life, conversations, and camaraderie during World War II years helped them overcome stereotyping the West as imperialist and bourgeois enemy of the working class. Therefore, as much as Allied officers were learning about Partisans, so were the Yugoslav fighters learning about the Western lifestyle, governance, and freedoms.

Upon their repatriation, or once the war was over, Partisans bestowed many Allied members with medals and kept them on the guest of honour invitation lists at Yugoslav embassies abroad. For example, on Yugoslav holidays or during Tito's visits, they would be invited to diplomatic receptions. For those who attended, and especially if they expressed vocal sympathies towards Partisans, the Cold War realities implied being blacklisted by their internal secret services, and occasionally questioned, or followed by police. Dafoe and Jones in Canada and Rogers and Denvir in New Zealand had to endure such a treatment. For example, Denvir, a true hero, while getting some of the highest Yugoslav medals, did not earn any New Zealand veteran recognition even for the post-war employment assistance, and ended up working as a taxi driver.

/ So, if not love, how about respect?

From the beginning of armed resistance in Yugoslavia in the summer of 1941, the Western Allies' governments knew that Partisans were a communist-led guerilla. Each of direct participants whose memoirs were presented here also knew this. However, as soon as Partisans were measured against fascism, the foundational measure emerged and solidified them as a respected Ally. Therefore, the anti-fascist nature of the Partisan movement was the core, upon which its military relevance became the essential motivation for the Western Allies' efforts at supporting the Yugoslav guerilla. Some accounts here went at length at minimizing the significance of communist side of the guerilla, while the others did not like that aspect at all. Yet, all accounts vividly portrayed the anti-fascist commitment and the ensuing patriotism that fuelled the Partisan ranks. And all noted that those ranks were getting bigger and bigger with time,

despite harsh, and often inhumane conditions. So, if not loving, all the portrayals of the Partisans were respectful.

Perhaps this might be the lens that the contemporary post-Yugoslav society's portrayal of Partisans should follow. Otherwise, the post-Yugoslav states' identity building will continue negating a segment of their own historic glory, and instead of bestowing this remembrance with pride, will continue clashing with the memory of Partisans that was valiantly preserved and gallantly recognized by their own Western brothers-in-arms.

It would be a reciprocally gallant gesture if those Western brothers-in-arms, in a fashion similar to what the post-Franco Spanish government did to all those international volunteers who fought for the Republic, were posthumously granted the Yugoslav citizenship. The realities of today are that for the country that is there no more, but has splintered into several states, some Western Allies would be eligible to get more than one passport.